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THE SEMIOTIC CONSTRUCTION OF LEADERSHIP AND CREDIBILITY IN THE POPULIST DISCOURSES OF DONALD TRUMP AND JAVIER MILEI: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT: The research examines the semiotic construction of the political leadership of Donald Trump and Javier Milei. Drawing on Greimas' structural semiotics and engaging with the works of Barthes, Floch, Landowski, Foucault, Baudrillard, and Eco, the research investigates how images, slogans, symbolic objects, and media performances contribute to the construction of political credibility. The study adopts a qualitative, semiotic-interpretive methodology based on the comparative analysis of a corpus of representative images depicting the two political leaders. The analysis is articulated through multiple analytical levels —including values and identities, semi-narrative structures, emotional configurations, enunciation, actors and spaces, aspectuality, plastic level, processes of resemanticization, and isotopies— with the aim of identifying the principal strategies through which meaning and performative authenticity are produced. The findings highlight two distinct models of mediatized populist leadership: Trump constructs an ethos grounded in strength, dominance, and national restoration, whereas Milei develops a leadership centered on rupture, anger, and the destabilization of the traditional political system. In both cases, digital platforms play a crucial role in transforming politics into a visual, memetic, and algorithmic performance in which political credibility increasingly depends on the production of authenticity effects, emotional engagement, and virality rather than solely on the factual accuracy of political discourse. KEYWORDS: Media Semiotics, Post-Truth, Donald Trump, Javier Milei, Political Communication, Digital Populism, Leadership, Digital Platforms, Veridiction.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. CONTEXT AND RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC

Political communication has undergone a profound transformation within contemporary digital environments. Political visibility is no longer concentrated primarily around electoral campaigns, televised debates, institutional speeches, or other temporally delimited events. It has become continuous, pervasive, and increasingly organized through digital platforms whose infrastructures select, rank, circulate, and recirculate political content.

Leaders are consequently exposed to a condition of permanent visibility in which their public identities are constructed not only through speeches and policy positions but also through images, gestures, objects, slogans, short videos, memes, visual compositions, and recurring forms of bodily performance. Within this environment, political identity cannot be understood simply as a pre-existing reality that media subsequently represent.

From a semiotic perspective, identity is itself progressively constructed through signifying practices. A gesture acquires political meaning because it enters into relation with other gestures and discourses, an object becomes ideologically charged because it is repeatedly inserted into a recognizable narrative, a color or spatial configuration can become associated with particular values through reiteration, a slogan can cease to function merely as a verbal statement and become a condensed marker of collective belonging.

Political communication therefore operates through systems of differences, correspondences, repetitions, and transformations that make particular interpretations of the political world recognizable and socially available.

This perspective becomes especially relevant in the context commonly described as the era of ***post-truth***. The concept should not be understood as implying the disappearance of truth or the irrelevance of factual verification. Rather, it points to a communicative environment in which factual claims coexist and compete with other mechanisms of credibility: emotional identification, perceived authenticity, ideological belonging, visual evidence, narrative coherence, repetition, and trust or distrust toward institutions. What matters politically is consequently not only whether something is true, but also how truthfulness, sincerity, authenticity, competence, and authority are made perceptible.

The distinction is particularly important for semiotic analysis. Political credibility does not derive exclusively from the correspondence between a statement and an external state of affairs. It is also constructed through ***effects of truth,*** regimes of veridiction, narrative structures, bodily performances, and culturally recognizable signs. A political leader may appear credible because a particular gesture is interpreted as spontaneous, because a repeated visual configuration produces familiarity, because an object condenses an ideological program, or because an antagonistic narrative provides an apparently coherent explanation of otherwise complex social phenomena.[1]

Donald Trump and Javier Milei constitute two particularly significant cases for examining these processes. Both have developed intensely personalized political communication, constructed powerful antagonisms between "the people" and different representations of an establishment, and demonstrated an exceptional capacity to produce recognizable signs that circulate beyond conventional political communication. Their public personas are highly compatible with an environment dominated by audiovisual fragments, social media feeds, memes, viral images, and continuous processes of remediation.

Nevertheless, treating Trump and Milei as equivalent manifestations of the same political phenomenon would obscure important differences. Their political trajectories emerge from distinct historical, institutional, economic, and cultural contexts. The United States and Argentina possess different political traditions, media systems, collective memories, and experiences of economic and institutional crisis. Their ideological positions are also not interchangeable. The value of comparison therefore lies not in establishing an identity between the two leaders, but in identifying **structural similarities alongside different semiotic realizations**.

Trump's communicative universe tends to organize itself around strength, victory, national greatness, success, hierarchy, and restoration. His political imagery repeatedly constructs the possibility of recovering an order represented as lost or endangered. Milei's communicative universe, by contrast, is more frequently organized around rupture, anger, destruction of the existing order, anti-institutional intensity, and radical transformation. If Trump tends to represent political change through the restoration of greatness, Milei tends to represent it through the necessity of breaking with a system portrayed as irredeemably corrupt or exhausted.

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[1] Barthes, Roland, "L'effet de réel", in *Communications,* No. 11, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1968. https://doi.org/10.3406/comm.1968.1158

These differences are visible not only at the level of explicit political discourse but also in the organization of images, bodies, spaces, colors, rhythms, and symbolic objects. Trump's raised fist, MAGA cap, American flags, monumental staging, and imagery of economic success belong to a system of signification that cannot be reduced to their individual meanings.

Similarly, Milei's chainsaw, bodily agitation, anti-caste slogans, aggressive gestures, and memetic appropriations form a recognizable system in which disruption itself acquires positive value. The analytical question therefore concerns the relations through which heterogeneous signs become coherent components of broader political worlds.

The digital platform environment intensifies this process. Social media favor content capable of remaining recognizable even when separated from its original context. Images are cropped, videos are clipped, statements become captions, screenshots migrate between platforms, and political symbols are appropriated by supporters and opponents alike.

A successful political sign must therefore often possess a high degree of **semantic condensation**: it must retain sufficient recognizability to survive processes of fragmentation, repetition, remixing, and recontextualization.

This does not mean that algorithms mechanically produce populism or determine political interpretation. Such a technologically deterministic explanation would be insufficient. Rather, certain characteristics of contemporary populist communication —personalization, antagonism, emotional intensity, repetition, simplification, symbolic condensation, and spectacularization— are particularly compatible with infrastructures organized around attention, engagement, circulation, and reproducibility. Platformization consequently creates conditions under which particular semiotic strategies may acquire increased visibility and persistence.

The study of Trump and Milei therefore offers an opportunity to investigate a broader transformation of political communication: the emergence of leadership as a **continuous semiotic performance**.

The leader is not merely represented through media but repeatedly reconstructed through a constellation of signs whose coherence depends upon their circulation and recognition. Political identity becomes serial, visual, embodied, and increasingly participatory, since users themselves contribute to the reproduction, reinterpretation, parody, and transformation of political signs.

This participatory dimension complicates the traditional distinction between political production and audience reception. Supporters, critics, journalists, influencers, meme creators, and ordinary users can all become secondary enunciators of political content. They redistribute images, alter captions, isolate gestures, create comparisons, transform political objects into memes, and insert fragments of political discourse into new interpretive environments. The political text therefore no longer has a single stable form: it becomes a **family of transformations** circulating through interconnected media spaces.

For this reason, the relevance of the present research extends beyond the analysis of two individual political leaders. Trump and Milei provide two particularly visible cases through which to examine the changing relationship among political leadership, visual culture, platformization, populism, and credibility. Their comparison makes it possible to explore how contemporary political actors construct worlds of meaning capable of being immediately recognized, emotionally inhabited, and continuously reproduced.

The central hypothesis is that the effectiveness of these political identities cannot be explained solely through ideological positions or verbal rhetoric. It also depends upon the construction of coherent semiotic systems in which narrative roles, passions, bodies, objects, spaces, colors, rhythms, and modes of circulation converge.

Trump and Milei differ substantially in the values they privilege and in the aesthetic regimes through which they represent political action, but both demonstrate how contemporary leadership increasingly operates through the capacity to **make political meaning visible, affectively intense, and reproducible**.

Semiotics is particularly suited to investigating this transformation because it does not ask only what an image, slogan, or political gesture means in isolation. It examines the relations that allow signs to become meaningful within broader structures.

The question is therefore not simply what Trump or Milei communicates, but **how their communicative universes become internally coherent**, how they construct subjects and opponents, how they organize values and passions, how they produce effects of authenticity and credibility, and how those structures interact with the affordances and circulatory logics of digital platforms.

The comparison will consequently proceed from the visible surface of political communication toward the deeper structures that organize it. Rather than assuming that the two leaders embody the same form of populism, the analysis will investigate how they provide distinct semiotic solutions to a common problem of contemporary mediatized politics: **how to construct a leadership that appears recognizable, authentic, credible, and necessary** within an environment of permanent competition for visibility and attention.

1.2. THEORETICAL POSITIONING

The semiotic analysis of contemporary political communication requires a theoretical framework capable of accounting for several interconnected dimensions: the organization of values, the construction of political subjects and antagonists, the production of credibility, the role of images and material objects, the affective dimension of political identification, and the transformation of meaning produced by circulation across digital platforms. No single theoretical tradition is sufficient to explain all these processes. For this reason, the present study adopts an integrated semiotic perspective whose primary foundation is Greimasian structural semiotics, while drawing selectively on the contributions of Roland Barthes, Jean-Marie Floch, Eric Landowski, Umberto Eco, Michel Foucault, and Jean Baudrillard.

The point of departure is the structural and generative conception of meaning developed by **Algirdas Julien Greimas**. From this perspective, meaning does not reside naturally in individual words, images, or objects; it emerges from relations, differences, oppositions, and transformations. This principle is particularly productive for the study of political communication because political identities are rarely constructed through isolated signs. They emerge instead from recurrent configurations in which values, actors, passions, objects, spaces, and actions become mutually intelligible.

Greimasian semiotics makes it possible to move beyond the manifest surface of political discourse and reconstruct the deeper structures that organize it. The **semiotic square**, for example, allows the analyst to identify systems of opposition and contradiction through which political universes become axiologically structured. Concepts such as order and disorder, continuity and rupture, establishment and anti-establishment, strength and weakness, freedom and constraint do not operate independently; they acquire meaning through their relational position within broader systems of value.[2]

[2] Greimas, Algirdas Julien and Courtés, Joseph, *Sémiotique. Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage,* Paris, Hachette, 1979.

This relational perspective is especially important in the comparison between Donald Trump and Javier Milei. Trump's discourse frequently constructs strength in opposition to weakness, national restoration in opposition to decline, and patriotic belonging in opposition to various representations of external or internal threat. Milei's discourse, by contrast, repeatedly organizes meaning through oppositions between freedom and coercion, citizens and "the caste", productive transformation and institutional paralysis, or rupture and continuity. The task of semiotic analysis is therefore not simply to catalogue these values but to understand the structures that make them mutually dependent.

The **actantial model** and the **canonical narrative schema** provide a second essential component of the analytical framework. Political communication continually distributes narrative roles: subjects pursue objects of value; opponents prevent their realization; helpers facilitate political action; destinators legitimate missions; and collective subjects are constructed as beneficiaries of transformation. These categories make it possible to analyze political leadership not merely as personal representation but as a narrative position within a broader political world.

Trump can consequently be examined as the subject of a restorative narrative program whose object of value is the recovery of a threatened national greatness. Milei can instead be examined as the subject of a disruptive narrative program in which the desired transformation requires the destruction or radical reconfiguration of an existing political order. The analytical relevance of this distinction lies precisely in the fact that both leaders may share an anti-establishment grammar while assigning different values to the transformation they promise.

Greimasian **modal theory** further contributes to the analysis by distinguishing among wanting, having-to, knowing-how, and being-able-to act. Political leadership depends not only on the representation of desirable goals but also on the construction of the leader as a competent subject capable of achieving them.

Images of physical strength, economic success, determination, confrontation, expertise, or refusal of compromise may therefore function as signs of modal competence. They help construct the leader as someone who not only *wants* transformation but *can*, *knows how to*, or *must* bring it about.

This dimension is closely connected to the **semiotics of passions**. Contemporary political communication cannot be adequately explained through cognitive or ideological categories alone.

Fear, anger, resentment, enthusiasm, pride, indignation, hope, and a sense of belonging organize political experience and influence the interpretation of signs. These passions should not be treated simply as psychological states located inside individual subjects. Semiotic analysis approaches them as structured configurations produced and made intelligible through discourse.

In the Trump corpus, fear of decline or threat may be transformed into patriotic mobilization and confidence in restoration. In the Milei corpus, frustration and indignation may be reorganized as anger, anti-caste enthusiasm, and acceptance of radical disruption.

The political effectiveness of these emotional configurations lies partly in their capacity to transform diffuse social tensions into narratively oriented passions: there is an opponent responsible for the crisis, a subject capable of confronting it, and an object of value whose attainment promises collective transformation.

If Greimas provides the principal architecture for reconstructing these deep structures, **Roland Barthes** offers an indispensable framework for understanding how culturally specific signs can become naturalized as apparently self-evident meanings. His theory of myth is particularly relevant to political communication because it shows how historically contingent values can be transformed into seemingly obvious representations of reality. Political imagery does not merely communicate ideological positions explicitly; it can make them appear natural.[3]

The MAGA cap provides a clear example. As a material object, it is an ordinary item of clothing. Through repetition, political use, media circulation, and collective recognition, however, it becomes a second-order signifier associated with a complex universe of values: national restoration, political belonging, loyalty to Trump, rejection of liberal elites, and identification with a particular representation of "America". The object thus exceeds its practical function and becomes mythic in the Barthesian sense.

A comparable transformation occurs with Milei's chainsaw. Its political significance does not derive from the object itself but from the discursive and visual system into which it is inserted. The chainsaw condenses the promise of cutting public expenditure, attacking the political establishment, dismantling bureaucracy, and breaking with the existing order. Through repeated circulation, an initially provocative campaign prop becomes a recognizable ideological operator.

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[3] Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies,* Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1957.

Barthes is also important for understanding the relationship between **denotation and connotation** in political imagery. A photograph may denote a politician raising a fist, holding an object, standing before a flag, or addressing a crowd. Its political force frequently resides in connotative structures: resistance, courage, rebellion, authority, sacrifice, authenticity, victory, or collective belonging. These connotations are culturally organized and historically situated rather than inherent in the image itself.[4]

The analysis of the visual and material dimensions of the corpus is further developed through the work of **Jean-Marie Floch**. Floch's visual semiotics allows the study to move from figurative content toward the plastic organization of images: chromatic contrasts, spatial relations, forms, lines, textures, orientations, and compositional structures. These elements are not merely decorative. They participate directly in the production of meaning.[5]

The distinction between **figurative** and **plastic** levels is especially productive for the present corpus:

- at the figurative level, the analyst may identify recognizable objects such as flags, podiums, chainsaws, aircraft, clothing, or crowds;
- at the plastic level, the same image can be analyzed through verticality and horizontality, centrality and marginality, saturation and desaturation, continuity and fragmentation, symmetry and asymmetry, luminosity and darkness.

These configurations can enter into semisymbolic relations with ideological values.

Trump's recurrent centrality, frontal posture, verticality, monumental scale, and patriotic chromatic organization may consequently participate in the construction of authority, stability, hierarchy, and national identification.

Milei's bodily tension, diagonality, visual fragmentation, saturated contrasts, and aggressive gestures may instead contribute to values of rupture, acceleration, instability, and anti-institutional intensity.

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[4] Barthes, Roland, "L'effet de réel", op. cit.

[5] Floch, Jean-Marie, *Sémiotique, marketing et communication. Sous les signes, les stratégies,* Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1990.

Floch's contribution is therefore fundamental to demonstrating that political meaning is produced not only by *what* images represent but also by *how* they organize the visible.

Floch's ***axiology of consumption*** also provides a useful interpretive instrument when applied cautiously outside its original field. His distinction among practical, critical, utopian, and ludic valorizations makes it possible to examine how political communication can simultaneously promise functional results, justify ideological choices, construct collective ideals, and transform politics into spectacle. In both Trump's and Milei's communication, these valorizations coexist, although their relative importance and specific articulation differ.

A further theoretical dimension is provided by **Eric Landowski**, whose sociosemiotic approach shifts attention toward interaction, presence, risk, and regimes of meaning. This contribution is particularly relevant to highly performative political communication.

Not all political meaning is produced through stable narrative programs or explicitly coded symbolic systems. Meaning may also emerge through bodily copresence, affective contagion, unpredictability, confrontation, and the perceived immediacy of the political event.[6]

Rallies, improvised gestures, aggressive exchanges, moments of apparent spontaneity, and bodily performances can generate effects of authenticity precisely because they appear less controlled than conventional institutional communication. Landowski's interactional perspective helps explain why the possibility of accident, excess, or unpredictability may itself become politically productive. What might traditionally be interpreted as a communicative failure can, under certain conditions, reinforce the impression that a leader is genuine, unscripted, or resistant to institutional conventions.[7]

This is particularly important for Milei, whose political persona often transforms excess and unpredictability into positive signs of authenticity. It also applies to Trump, whose public communication repeatedly incorporates improvisation, provocation, and departures from conventional presidential decorum. In both cases, the political body becomes a site where meaning is not merely stated but enacted.

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[6] Landowski, Eric, *Présences de l'autre. Essais de socio-sémiotique,* Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1997.

[7] Landowski, Eric, *Les interactions risquées,* Limoges, Pulim, 2005.

Umberto Eco contributes another essential dimension through his theories of interpretation, textual cooperation, codes, and the limits of interpretation. Digital political communication is characterized by an unusually high degree of interpretive mobility. Images and statements circulate across communities that do not necessarily share the same ideological assumptions. The same sign may therefore function as celebration for supporters, scandal for opponents, evidence for journalists, and raw material for memetic transformation.[8]

This plurality does not imply unlimited interpretation. Political signs retain constraints generated by their textual organization, cultural codes, and contexts of circulation. Eco's work is useful precisely because it allows the analysis to avoid two symmetrical errors: assuming that political signs possess one fixed and universally shared meaning, or assuming that audiences can make them mean absolutely anything. Interpretation is open, but not arbitrary.[9]

The relevance of this principle becomes particularly visible in the circulation of memes. A hostile meme can be appropriated by supporters; a critical image can become an emblem of resistance; an object originally used as parody can be integrated into the leader's own communicative repertoire. Such transformations reveal the dynamic relationship between textual constraints and interpretive communities. They also show how political communication increasingly depends on the ability of signs to survive and acquire new functions across heterogeneous contexts.

The contribution of **Michel Foucault** enters the framework at a different level. His work on discourse, power, regimes of truth, and the production of legitimate knowledge provides a broader perspective for understanding why credibility is never merely an individual psychological judgment. Societies establish procedures, institutions, authorities, and discursive practices through which some statements become recognizable as legitimate, authoritative, or true.[10]

Digital political communication destabilizes some of these traditional arrangements. Political leaders can address audiences directly, challenge journalistic mediation, delegitimize experts, and construct alternative networks of credibility. The significance of this transformation is not that

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[8] Eco, Umberto, *Trattato di semiotica generale,* Milan, Bompiani, 1975.

[9] Eco, Umberto, *Lector in fabula. La cooperazione interpretativa nei testi narrativi,* Milan, Bompiani, 1979.

[10] Foucault, Michel, *L'ordre du discours,* Paris, Gallimard, 1971.

institutional truth simply disappears, but that the struggle over **who is authorized to speak truthfully** becomes increasingly visible and politically contested.

The post-truth environment can therefore be interpreted as a field of competing regimes of credibility. Institutional journalism, political leadership, expert knowledge, influencer cultures, partisan communities, and platform metrics may all provide different signs through which credibility is evaluated. Visibility, repetition, virality, emotional resonance, and community endorsement can coexist—and sometimes conflict—with traditional forms of evidentiary authority.[11]

Finally, **Jean Baudrillard** provides a critical vocabulary for analyzing the increasing instability of the distinction between political representation and media spectacle. His concepts of simulation and hyperreality are particularly suggestive for environments in which political images circulate independently of the events that originally produced them, are repeatedly edited and recombined, and sometimes acquire greater social visibility than the events themselves.[12]

The relevance of Baudrillard does not lie in claiming that contemporary politics has become wholly unreal. Such an interpretation would be both theoretically reductive and empirically unsustainable. Rather, his work helps illuminate situations in which the representation of a political event becomes an autonomous object of circulation. The photograph, meme, video fragment, slogan, or symbolic gesture can become politically consequential regardless of whether audiences possess detailed knowledge of the context from which it originated.[13]

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives allow the present study to formulate what may be described as a **semiotics of political credibility**. Credibility is understood here not as a fixed property possessed by a political actor but as an effect produced through relations among discourse, narrative structure, visual form, bodily performance, passion, cultural codes, media circulation, and audience interpretation.

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[11] The term *post-truth* is not used here to suggest the disappearance of factual truth or to identify contemporary political communication exclusively with misinformation. It refers instead to a communicative condition in which factual verification interacts with affective identification, ideological belonging, perceived authenticity, repetition, and platform-mediated visibility in the construction of political credibility.

[12] Baudrillard, Jean, *Simulacres et simulation,* Paris, Galilée, 1981.

[13] Baudrillard, Jean, *Le système des objets,* Paris, Gallimard, 1968.

This approach distinguishes credibility from factual truth without separating the two completely. Factual verification remains politically and epistemically significant. The analytical point is different: a statement or political actor can generate an effect of credibility through mechanisms that are not reducible to factual accuracy. Conversely, factually accurate communication does not automatically produce credibility if it fails to correspond to the interpretive codes, expectations, identities, or affective structures through which audiences evaluate political discourse.

The concept of **veridiction**, inherited from Greimasian semiotics, is central in this respect. The analysis asks how political discourse organizes the relations among being, seeming, not-being, and not-seeming; how leaders construct the appearance of sincerity; how authenticity is performed; and how signs of competence, strength, rebellion, sacrifice, proximity, or spontaneity contribute to the perception that a leader "tells the truth" or "is genuine".

The comparison between Trump and Milei therefore does not seek to determine which leader is more truthful, authentic, populist, or successful. Nor does it treat semiotics as an instrument for psychological diagnosis or ideological judgment. Its purpose is to reconstruct the **signifying mechanisms through which particular forms of leadership become intelligible and credible** within specific political and platform environments.

This theoretical positioning also clarifies the relationship between semiotics and platform studies in the present research. Platforms are not treated as neutral channels, but neither are they conceived as autonomous causal agents. Their relevance lies in the ways their affordances and circulation mechanisms interact with semiotic forms. Repetition, recognizability, emotional intensity, visual condensation, personalization, conflict, and remixability can become particularly effective under conditions in which political content competes continuously for attention and engagement.

The theoretical framework is therefore deliberately relational. Greimas provides the generative and narrative architecture; Barthes explains processes of connotation, myth, and naturalization; Floch allows the analysis of plastic form and semisymbolic relations; Landowski introduces interaction, presence, and risk; Eco accounts for interpretive cooperation and transformation; Foucault situates credibility within broader struggles over truth and discursive authority; and Baudrillard provides a critical perspective on the increasing autonomy of political representation within media environments.

Rather than combining these authors indiscriminately, the research assigns each theoretical contribution a specific analytical function. This distinction is methodologically important. The aim is not to construct a single synthetic "grand theory" of digital populism, but to develop a coherent analytical apparatus capable of moving across different levels of the corpus while preserving the conceptual specificity of each approach.

On this basis, the present study investigates Trump and Milei as two distinct but comparable configurations of mediatized populist leadership. Their comparison provides an opportunity to examine how values become narratives, narratives become performances, performances become images, images become circulating signs, and circulating signs participate in the construction of political credibility. It is precisely this movement —from deep structures of value to the platformized circulation of visible forms— that defines the theoretical perspective adopted throughout the analysis.

1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The primary objective of this research is to investigate how political leadership and credibility are semiotically constructed within contemporary digital populism through a comparative analysis of Donald Trump and Javier Milei. Rather than approaching populism exclusively as an ideology, a rhetorical style, or an electoral strategy, the study examines it as a complex system of signification in which values, narratives, bodies, images, objects, emotions, spatial configurations, and platform practices interact in the production of recognizable political identities.

The analysis therefore focuses not only on what Trump and Milei explicitly say, but also on the broader semiotic environments through which their leadership becomes visible and intelligible.

Political meaning is produced through multiple expressive resources: verbal statements and slogans coexist with gestures, facial expressions, clothing, colors, symbolic objects, spatial arrangements, photographic framing, audiovisual rhythms, memes, and forms of digital circulation.

These heterogeneous elements contribute to the construction of political identities that can remain recognizable even when individual signs are detached from their original contexts and recirculated across different media environments.

A first objective is consequently to reconstruct the **axiological structures** underlying the two leaders' communicative universes. The research asks which fundamental values organize their political identities and how those values are articulated through relations of opposition, contradiction, and implication.

In Trump's case, particular attention is devoted to the recurring relations among strength, greatness, national belonging, success, order, threat, and restoration. In Milei's case, the analysis focuses on freedom, rupture, anti-establishment identity, anger, destruction, institutional rejection, and radical transformation.

The comparison is intended to determine not simply whether the two leaders share certain values, but how apparently similar values acquire different meanings within distinct semiotic systems. Opposition to the establishment, for example, does not necessarily perform the same function in the two corpora. Trump frequently integrates anti-establishment discourse into a restorative narrative that promises the recovery of an authentic and powerful America. Milei more often incorporates anti-establishment discourse into a transformative narrative in which the existing institutional order must be radically dismantled. The same broad political category can therefore participate in different narrative and axiological configurations.

A second objective is to examine the **narrative organization of leadership**. Political leaders do not merely present positions or policy proposals; they construct themselves and others as actors within stories. They identify crises, designate opponents, define objects of value, mobilize collective subjects, and represent political action as a movement from an undesirable present toward a desired future. The study therefore investigates the actantial positions and narrative programs through which Trump and Milei become intelligible as political protagonists.

This dimension is particularly important because the construction of political agency depends on the relationship between crisis and competence. A leader becomes narratively necessary when the political world is represented as requiring precisely the capacities that the leader claims to embody. If the crisis is defined as weakness, the leader may be constructed through strength; if it is defined as institutional corruption, political competence may be represented through the capacity to destroy or bypass existing institutions. Political communication thus establishes a relationship between the diagnosis of the present and the modal identity of the subject who promises to transform it.

A third objective concerns the **passional organization of political communication**. The study investigates how emotions are semiotically structured and how they participate in the production of collective identification. Fear, anger, pride, resentment, enthusiasm, hope, indignation, and belonging are not considered secondary effects added to an otherwise rational political message. They are treated as constitutive dimensions of the political text, capable of orienting interpretation and transforming social conditions into narratively meaningful experiences.

The comparative perspective makes it possible to examine whether Trump and Milei mobilize similar emotional resources while organizing them toward different political outcomes. Trump's communication may transform perceptions of national decline or external threat into patriotic cohesion, confidence, and the desire for restoration. Milei's communication may transform economic frustration and distrust of political institutions into anger, anti-caste identification, and acceptance of disruptive transformation. In both cases, passions participate in the conversion of political complexity into intelligible and emotionally inhabitable narratives.

A fourth objective is to analyze the **visual and embodied construction of leadership**. The political body is treated as a signifying surface through which authority, authenticity, proximity, aggression, vulnerability, control, or resistance can be performed. Posture, gaze, gesture, movement, clothing, bodily tension, and the occupation of space become components of political enunciation.

This dimension is especially relevant in an environment in which political communication is increasingly encountered through photographs, short videos, thumbnails, screenshots, and other visually condensed formats. A gesture capable of being isolated from an event and transformed into an iconic image can acquire a political afterlife far beyond the original communicative situation. Trump's raised fist and Milei's performance with the chainsaw illustrate, in different ways, the capacity of the political body to produce condensed visual narratives.

The research therefore asks how corporeal configurations interact with broader ideological values. Trump's frontal posture, centrality, verticality, and controlled occupation of space may contribute to a semiotics of dominance and stability. Milei's bodily tension, expansive gestures, shouting, and apparent disregard for institutional decorum may instead construct urgency, rebellion, and anti-institutional authenticity. These are not treated as psychological expressions of an inner personality but as observable elements within public performances whose meaning emerges relationally.

A fifth objective concerns the role of **objects and material signs** in political communication. Certain objects become exceptionally effective condensers of political meaning because they translate abstract ideological programs into visible and reproducible forms. The MAGA cap, the American flag, Trump's jet, and Milei's chainsaw are not merely accessories surrounding political discourse. Their repetition and circulation allow them to become recognizable nodes within larger systems of signification.

The research investigates the processes through which ordinary or pre-existing objects acquire political value. This requires attention to connotation, myth, symbolic condensation, and resemanticization. An object may move from practical use to ideological function, from campaign prop to identity marker, or from hostile representation to appropriated emblem. The analysis consequently examines not only what objects signify at a particular moment but also how their meanings change through repetition and circulation.

A sixth objective is to investigate **political credibility as a semiotic effect**. This constitutes one of the central theoretical problems of the study. Credibility is not treated as a direct measurement of factual accuracy, nor as a psychological characteristic possessed by the leader. Instead, the research examines how political discourse produces recognizable signs of sincerity, competence, authenticity, authority, proximity, strength, rebellion, or consistency.

From this perspective, the analysis of credibility necessarily intersects with the problem of **veridiction**. Political communication continually organizes relationships between what appears to be and what is presented as being, between concealment and revelation, between institutional truth and allegedly suppressed truth, and between authenticity and simulation. The political leader may present himself as the person who "says what others will not say", who exposes hidden realities, or whose very rejection of conventional decorum functions as evidence of sincerity.

This mechanism is particularly relevant to populist communication because anti-establishment leadership often depends on a reversal of conventional signs of authority. Institutional restraint, technical language, or mediated communication may be represented as evidence of artificiality, while spontaneity, aggression, simplification, or transgression may become signs of authenticity. The study therefore asks how different semiotic resources contribute to the transformation of political style into an argument about truthfulness.

A seventh objective concerns the relationship between these semiotic constructions and **digital platformization**. The study investigates how platform environments affect the visibility, circulation, repetition, and transformation of political signs. The analytical claim is not that platforms determine political meaning, but that their affordances create particular conditions of circulation under which some forms become especially reproducible.

Recognizability is crucial in this respect. Political signs circulating through feeds and fragmented audiovisual environments must often communicate identity rapidly.

Repeated colors, objects, slogans, gestures, facial expressions, and visual compositions can function as identity markers that remain legible under conditions of decontextualization.

Political communication consequently develops forms of semiotic redundancy: the same values are encoded across multiple expressive levels so that the leader remains recognizable even when individual fragments circulate independently.

The research also examines **participatory resemanticization**. Digital circulation allows political signs to be appropriated, parodied, celebrated, attacked, remixed, and reintroduced into political discourse. Meaning is therefore not controlled exclusively by the original enunciator. Supporters, opponents, journalists, creators, and algorithmically organized publics contribute to the social career of political signs.

This process raises a central question concerning the relationship between intention and meaning. The research does not assume that every interpretation corresponds to a strategy deliberately designed by Trump, Milei, or their communication teams. Semiotic analysis concerns the organization and circulation of meaning, not the reconstruction of private intentions. A political image can produce effects that exceed its original communicative purpose, particularly once it enters highly participatory digital environments.

The comparative design is therefore guided by one overarching research question:

- ***RQ. How are leadership and political credibility semiotically constructed in the digital populist communication of Donald Trump and Javier Milei?***

This general question is articulated through a series of more specific research questions:

- *RQ2. Which values, oppositions, and narrative structures organize the political identities constructed around Trump and Milei?*
- *RQ3. How do bodily performances, visual configurations, colors, spaces, and symbolic objects contribute to the production of authority and authenticity?*
- *RQ4. Which passional configurations structure the relationship among leader, antagonists, and collective political subjects in the two corpora?*
- *RQ5. How are regimes of veridiction constructed, and through which signs do the two leaders produce effects of sincerity, competence, authenticity, and credibility?*
- *RQ6. How does digital circulation contribute to the repetition, transformation, appropriation, and resemanticization of political signs?*
- *RQ7. Which structural similarities and differences emerge between Trump's restorative model of leadership and Milei's disruptive model of leadership?*

These questions are deliberately formulated as analytical rather than causal questions. The study does not seek to demonstrate that a particular image, gesture, or platform practice causes electoral support, nor does it attempt to measure the psychological effects of individual signs on audiences. Such claims would require different empirical methods, including experimental research, surveys, reception studies, or large-scale behavioral data.

The objective is instead to identify the **conditions of semiotic intelligibility** through which particular forms of political leadership are constructed. The research asks what makes Trump recognizable as Trump and Milei recognizable as Milei across heterogeneous media texts; how recurrent signs become connected to values; how those values are narrativized; and how narrative, passion, embodiment, visual form, and circulation converge in the production of political credibility.

This distinction also defines the limits of the comparative approach. The analysis does not claim that Trump and Milei represent the totality of contemporary populism, nor that the categories identified in the two corpora can automatically be generalized to other political actors. They are treated as theoretically productive cases whose comparison allows the research to identify recurring semiotic mechanisms while preserving the specificity of their respective political and cultural contexts.

The ultimate objective is therefore not classificatory but explanatory at the level proper to semiotics. The study seeks to show how contemporary populist leadership becomes a **coherent signifying form**: how a political subject is constructed through the convergence of values, stories, bodies, passions, objects, spaces, visual structures, and circulation practices, and how this convergence produces recognizable effects of authenticity and credibility within the contemporary platform environment.

1.4. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The research adopts a **qualitative, comparative, and semiotic-interpretive methodology** designed to investigate the processes through which political leadership and credibility are constructed within digital and mediatized environments. The study does not aim to measure the frequency of specific communicative features, establish statistical correlations between visual strategies and electoral behavior, or determine the causal effects of individual messages on audiences. Its purpose is instead to reconstruct the systems of relations through which selected political signs acquire meaning and participate in broader configurations of leadership.

The methodological perspective is therefore consistent with the theoretical assumptions outlined above. If meaning is relational rather than inherent in individual signs, the analysis cannot be limited to identifying the manifest content of an image. Each text must be examined as a structured configuration in which figurative elements, plastic properties, narrative roles, values, passions, bodily performances, spatial relations, and modes of enunciation interact. The analytical object is not simply the isolated image but the **semiotic organization of the political world that becomes visible through it**.

The empirical corpus consists of **ten images**, five centered on Donald Trump and five on Javier Milei. The corpus is intentionally limited because the research privileges analytical depth over quantitative breadth. The selected images are treated as theoretically significant cases through which recurrent features of the two leaders' political communication can be examined at multiple semiotic levels.

The selection does not claim statistical representativeness. The ten images cannot, by themselves, represent the entirety of Trump's or Milei's political communication, nor can they support generalizations about all forms of contemporary digital populism. Their relevance derives instead

from their **analytical salience**: each image condenses recurrent values, symbolic objects, bodily configurations, narrative positions, or modes of circulation that are particularly useful for reconstructing the semiotic architecture of the two leadership models.

The corpus was therefore constructed according to a **purposive selection criterion** rather than through random sampling. Images were selected because they make visible specific dimensions relevant to the research questions: leadership, antagonism, national identity, symbolic objects, bodily performance, spectacularization, crisis, authenticity, restoration, rupture, and digital circulation. The principle guiding selection was not simply visibility or popularity, but the capacity of each text to contribute a distinct analytical function within the comparative design.

For Donald Trump, the corpus includes images associated with five recurrent dimensions of his public persona: the **MAGA symbolic universe**, the raised-fist image following the Butler assassination attempt, the construction of economic success and luxury, the circulation of anti-immigration imagery, and the representation of antagonism toward political or media adversaries. Taken together, these texts make it possible to examine the relationships among patriotism, strength, success, threat, resistance, and restoration.

For Javier Milei, the selected images similarly concentrate on recurrent components of his political communication: the **chainsaw as an anti-state and anti-caste symbol**, the bodily performance of anger and confrontation, the representation of institutional rupture, the use of graphs or economically coded visual materials, and the circulation of memetic or digitally reworked representations of the leader. These cases allow the analysis to examine the relationships among freedom, destruction, crisis, technical competence, anti-institutional identity, and disruptive transformation.

The comparative structure of the corpus does not require each Trump image to possess an exact equivalent in the Milei corpus. The purpose is not to construct five mechanically symmetrical pairs but to compare the **systems of relations** emerging from the two sets of texts. Certain correspondences nevertheless become analytically productive. The MAGA cap and Milei's chainsaw, for example, can both be examined as material objects transformed into ideological operators, although they signify through very different axiological and narrative structures. Similarly, Trump's raised fist and Milei's aggressive bodily performances can both be studied as condensed corporeal signs without assuming that they perform identical political functions.

The corpus is approached through a **multilevel analytical procedure.**

The first level concerns **axiological and identity structures**. Here the analysis identifies recurrent values and reconstructs the oppositions through which they acquire meaning. The semiotic square is employed where appropriate to formalize relations such as strength/weakness, order/disorder, continuity/rupture, freedom/constraint, establishment/anti-establishment, and authenticity/ artificiality.

The second level concerns **narrative structures**. The actantial model and canonical narrative schema are used to examine how political subjects, objects of value, opponents, helpers, destinators, and beneficiaries are organized within the texts. This makes it possible to reconstruct the narrative programs underlying the two leadership models and to identify how political crises are transformed into stories requiring particular forms of action and competence.

The analysis subsequently considers **modalization** (third level). Wanting, having-to, knowing-how, and being-able-to are examined as dimensions through which political agency is constructed. The leader must not merely desire transformation; the communicative text must also provide signs that he possesses the knowledge, capacity, legitimacy, or obligation required to accomplish it. Modal competence therefore provides an important connection between narrative structure and political credibility.

A fourth level addresses **passional configurations**. The study examines how fear, anger, pride, resentment, enthusiasm, hope, indignation, and belonging are organized within the texts and connected to specific objects, opponents, and collective identities. Rather than inferring the actual psychological states of audiences, the analysis reconstructs the **passional positions offered by the texts**: the ways in which viewers are invited to recognize threats, participate in indignation, celebrate strength, experience belonging, or accept disruption as necessary. This distinction is methodologically essential.

The presence of a semiotic configuration of fear in a political image does not demonstrate that every viewer experiences fear, just as an image organized around patriotic pride does not prove that audiences respond with pride. Semiotic analysis identifies structures of meaning and potential positions of interpretation; it does not substitute for empirical reception research.

A fifth analytical level concerns **enunciation and veridiction**. The research investigates how images construct relations among enunciator, represented leader, audience, and political world. Particular attention is devoted to the production of effects of presence, sincerity, authenticity, authority, and truthfulness. The analysis asks not whether the political claims represented in the corpus are objectively true, but how the texts organize the distinction between **being and seeming**, and through which expressive resources particular representations are made to appear credible.

The sixth level concerns **proxemic and kinesic configurations**. Political bodies are analyzed in relation to posture, gaze, gesture, movement, bodily tension, orientation, distance, and occupation of space. These dimensions are particularly significant because the body can function as a site of political modalization: control may be made visible through stability and frontal positioning, while rupture may be expressed through expansive movement, tension, or collision with conventional spatial arrangements.

Space itself is treated as a signifying component. Rally stages, institutional settings, crowds, aircraft interiors, television studios, streets, and digitally constructed backgrounds do not merely contain political action; they participate in its semantic organization. Centrality and marginality, elevation and horizontality, proximity and distance, enclosure and openness can contribute to the construction of hierarchy, belonging, exclusion, authority, or confrontation.

A seventh level examines **aspectuality and temporality**. Political narratives construct beginnings, durations, repetitions, interruptions, accelerations, and anticipated endings. Trump's restorative discourse frequently presupposes a temporal structure in which an earlier state of greatness has been lost and must be recovered. Milei's disruptive discourse more often represents the present as an intolerable duration that must be interrupted through radical transformation. Temporal organization therefore contributes directly to the ideological construction of political change.

The eighth level concerns **figurative and plastic analysis**. Following the tradition of visual semiotics, the study distinguishes recognizable figures and objects from the formal organization of the image: at the figurative level, attention is devoted to elements such as flags, caps, chainsaws, crowds, vehicles, clothing, graphs, microphones, and institutional symbols; at the plastic level, the analysis examines chromatic organization, spatial composition, lines, forms, contrasts, textures, luminosity, saturation, verticality, horizontality, centrality, and fragmentation.

The distinction is crucial because ideological meaning can be produced through correspondences between plastic categories and content categories. Verticality may participate in the construction of dominance; centrality may reinforce leadership; chromatic continuity may support national identification; fragmentation may contribute to an aesthetic of instability; visual saturation may intensify an effect of excess. Such correspondences are examined as **semisymbolic relations** when a systematic relationship can be identified between categories of expression and categories of content.

A ninth analytical level concerns **myth, connotation, and symbolic condensation**. Political objects and images are examined in terms of their capacity to transform historically situated values into apparently immediate and recognizable meanings. This level is particularly important for understanding how material objects such as the MAGA cap or Milei's chainsaw cease to function merely as accessories and become condensed representations of larger political programs.

The tenth level concerns **resemanticization and circulation**. The meaning of a political sign may change as it moves between contexts, platforms, users, and interpretive communities. Images can be detached from their original events, recaptioned, parodied, appropriated, attacked, celebrated, or transformed into memes. The analysis therefore considers the "social career" of signs where the corpus makes such transformations observable.

Resemanticization is not interpreted as unlimited semantic freedom. The transformation of meaning occurs within constraints established by recognizable figures, cultural codes, previous uses, ideological contexts, and the textual organization of the sign itself. A chainsaw cannot arbitrarily signify anything, but its meaning can expand considerably once it becomes associated with political austerity, anti-caste rhetoric, libertarian transformation, and the public persona of Milei.

An eleventh level concerns **isotopies and recurring semantic structures**. Repetition across heterogeneous expressive forms allows the analysis to identify semantic continuities that stabilize the political identities under examination. Strength, greatness, patriotism, victory, and restoration form recurrent isotopic networks in the Trump corpus; rupture, freedom, anger, anti-caste opposition, and destruction of the existing order form comparable networks in the Milei

corpus. These repetitions contribute to the recognizability and internal coherence of each political universe.

The methodological procedure therefore moves between **close reading of individual texts and comparative reconstruction of recurrent structures**. Each image is first examined in its own configuration. The analysis then identifies correspondences and differences within each leader's corpus before comparing the two systems. This sequence is designed to prevent the comparative categories from being imposed prematurely on individual texts.

In practical terms, the procedure can be summarized as a movement through four analytical phases:

- the first is **description**, in which the observable elements of each image are identified without immediately assigning them broader ideological meanings;
- the second is **segmentation and relational analysis**, in which significant oppositions, spatial relations, chromatic contrasts, bodily configurations, and narrative positions are reconstructed;
- the third is **interpretation**, in which these relations are connected to broader values, myths, passions, and regimes of credibility;
- the fourth is **comparison**, in which recurrent structures are examined across the two corpora.

Maintaining a distinction between description and interpretation is especially important in political semiotics. Without such a distinction, there is a risk of treating the analyst's ideological expectations as properties of the text.

The research therefore seeks, wherever possible, to make explicit the semiotic pathway connecting an observable feature to an interpretive claim. A color does not signify patriotism merely because the analyst declares that it does; its interpretation must be supported by its relation to other elements, recurrent cultural codes, context, and repetition within the corpus.

The same caution applies to intentionality. The research does not claim that every semiotic effect identified in the corpus was consciously planned by the political leader, photographer, communication team, supporter, or meme creator. The object of analysis is the **textual and**

circulatory organization of meaning, not the inaccessible intentions of individual producers. Intentional strategy is discussed only when it can be independently supported by contextual evidence.

A further methodological distinction concerns the use of the term **digital populism**. The study does not assume that populism is produced by digital platforms or that digital communication constitutes an autonomous ideological category. The term refers here to the intersection between populist forms of political articulation and a communication environment increasingly structured by platforms, algorithmic visibility, participatory circulation, personalization, and audiovisual condensation.

The research also avoids treating "the audience" as a homogeneous entity. The circulation of political signs involves heterogeneous publics with different ideological orientations, cultural competencies, media practices, and interpretive frameworks.

A single image can generate admiration, irony, indignation, identification, rejection, or parody. Consequently, claims concerning audience response are formulated as **semiotically available reading positions** rather than empirically demonstrated reception effects.

This methodological limitation is particularly important in relation to virality. The fact that an image circulates widely does not demonstrate that its dominant interpretation is favorable to the leader represented in it.

High visibility may result from support, criticism, parody, journalistic amplification, controversy, or combinations of these factors. Circulation and consensus must therefore remain analytically distinct.

Similarly, the research does not infer electoral effectiveness directly from semiotic coherence. A highly recognizable political identity may be electorally successful or unsuccessful depending on numerous variables outside the scope of this study.

The purpose of the analysis is to explain the **organization of political meaning**, not to reduce voting behavior to communication.

The comparative method also requires attention to contextual asymmetry. Trump and Milei operate in different national histories, party systems, economic environments, media cultures, and institutional traditions.

The analysis therefore compares semiotic structures without erasing contextual difference. Similar forms —such as anti-establishment rhetoric or direct communication through social media— may perform different functions because they enter different cultural and political systems.

For this reason, the comparison is based on **functional equivalence rather than empirical identity**. Two signs can be compared when they perform analogous structural roles within their respective political universes, even if their material forms and historical contexts differ. Conversely, visually similar signs are not assumed to possess the same meaning merely because they resemble one another.

The corpus should ultimately be understood as a **strategic qualitative corpus**: limited in size, theoretically constructed, and selected for the density of the semiotic phenomena it makes observable. Its value lies not in numerical representativeness but in its capacity to sustain a detailed reconstruction of how political leadership is organized across multiple levels of signification.

This approach makes it possible to connect micro-level visual features with broader structures without collapsing one into the other. A gesture can be related to a modal configuration; an object to an ideological value; a chromatic opposition to an identity structure; a meme to a process of resemanticization; a bodily posture to a regime of credibility.

The analytical strength of the method lies precisely in tracing these connections while keeping their inferential status explicit.

The methodology therefore provides the basis for the chapters that follow. The analysis proceeds from values and identity toward narrative structures, passions, enunciation, spatiality, temporality, plastic organization, resemanticization, and isotopic coherence.

These levels are analytically distinguishable but not independent: their interaction is what ultimately allows the two corpora to construct coherent and recognizable models of political leadership.

In this sense, the research treats political communication as a **multilayered semiotic system**. Trump’s and Milei’s leadership identities emerge not from a single slogan, image, gesture, or ideological proposition, but from the recurrent convergence of heterogeneous signs.

The comparative method is intended to make that convergence visible and to clarify how it participates in the construction of credibility within contemporary platformized political communication.

1.5. CORPUS AND ANALYTICAL LEVELS

The empirical corpus is organized around **ten visual texts**, equally distributed between Donald Trump and Javier Milei. The decision to construct two corpora of equal numerical size responds primarily to the comparative architecture of the study.

Numerical symmetry does not imply that the two sets of images are historically, politically, or communicatively equivalent; rather, it provides a balanced analytical framework within which different semiotic configurations can be examined with comparable depth.

Each image has been selected because it concentrates one or more dimensions considered particularly significant for the construction of the leader's public identity.

The corpus therefore does not reproduce a chronological history of the two political careers. Nor does it attempt to document every major event in Trump's or Milei's political communication. It is organized according to **semiotic relevance**.

The five Trump texts are designated **IMG 1a–IMG 1e**, while the five Milei texts are designated **IMG 2a–IMG 2e**. This coding system allows the individual images to be referenced consistently throughout the analysis while preserving the distinction between the two subcorpora.

Within the Trump corpus, **IMG 1a** centers on Trump's **raised-fist gesture** following the assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania. The image is analytically significant because it brings together bodily vulnerability and political strength, danger and resistance, contingency and subsequent iconicization. The gesture allows the analysis to examine how an event can be transformed into a condensed visual narrative and how the political body can become the surface on which competence, resilience, and collective identification are inscribed.[14]

IMG 1b condenses into a single image the **posture of dominance** constructed at rallies and in public debates. At an initial stage, frontality, visual centrality, and low-angle framing simply suggest an image of strong leadership; through media circulation, these elements are subsequently actualized as part of the construction of a charismatic and dominant leader. Finally, through

[14] Image 1 – IMG 1a – BBC News – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQG_8tfRXlc (raised-fist frame within the video)

iconographic repetition, Trump's figure tends to become monumentalized, consolidating an ethos grounded in symbolic superiority, control of space, and performative strength.[15]

IMG 1c concerns **airplanes** and the imagery of economic success, wealth, or luxury associated with Trump's public persona. Airplanes and the gilded interiors evoke the subject's personal wealth; within media communication, these elements are subsequently actualized as part of a celebrity-business aesthetic, merging politics, luxury, and celebrity culture. Finally, this symbolic device becomes stabilized in the figure of Trump as the embodiment of the winner, the successful businessman capable of transforming wealth into a source of political legitimacy. Such imagery allows the research to investigate the transformation of material abundance into a sign of political competence. Wealth does not function solely as biographical information; within a particular value system it can become evidence of success, mastery, independence, or capacity to govern.[16]

IMG 1d concerns **the MAGA symbolic universe** and provides a privileged entry point into the relationship among slogan, material object, chromatic identity, national mythology, and collective belonging. The red cap operates simultaneously as clothing, campaign merchandise, ideological marker, and portable sign of political affiliation. Its semiotic relevance derives precisely from this capacity to condense multiple levels of meaning into a highly recognizable visual form.[17]

Finally, **IMG 1e** concerns **anti-immigration imagery** and the construction of threat. Its analytical relevance lies in the way visual material can participate in the production of political alterity. The image makes it possible to examine the relationship among representation, fear, simplification, antagonism, and the construction of collective boundaries. Fake images depicting immigrants allegedly ***"eating cats"*** also display a significant semiotic evolution. At an initial stage, such content operates as a form of political criticism and as a conflict-oriented narrative directed against previous political leadership and immigration policies; it is subsequently actualized as viral and polarizing imagery within the digital media ecosystem. Ultimately, polarization itself becomes

[15] Image 2 – IMG 1b – POTUS, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DYGae1qkSoZ

[16] Image 3 – IMG 1c – Facebook – https://www.facebook.com/DonaldTrump/posts/via-eric-trump-debate-readymakeamericagreatagain-trumptrain/10156613640555725

[17] Image 4 – IMG 1d – POTUS, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DYaFGIKRkn1

stabilized as an enduring mechanism for generating political support, whereby media conflict and the construction of an enemy become structural features of Trumpian communication.[18]

The Milei corpus is constructed according to an analogous principle of semiotic density.

IMG 2a centers on the **chainsaw**, probably the most immediately recognizable material sign associated with Milei's political rise. The object provides a particularly productive case for examining symbolic condensation: a mechanical instrument is transformed into a representation of fiscal reduction, destruction of bureaucracy, anti-caste politics, and radical discontinuity.[19]

IMG 2b focuses on **bodily performance** and the public expression of anger, intensity, or confrontation. Milei's gestures, facial expressions, shouting, and expansive occupation of space make it possible to investigate the political productivity of excess. Rather than being interpreted automatically as failures of self-control, such configurations may enter a semiotic system in which intensity itself becomes evidence of sincerity and anti-institutional authenticity.[20]

IMG 2c concerns the representation of **institutional rupture** and opposition to the political "caste". This text allows the analysis to examine the construction of political antagonism not merely as competition among parties but as a moralized opposition between an allegedly parasitic system and the subject who promises to dismantle it.[21]

IMG 2d concerns **"productive chaos"** which emerges with particular clarity. Initially, shouting, provocations, hyperbole, and spectacular confrontations may be perceived as mere communicative disorder; through their media actualization, however, these elements also converge into a chaotic, accelerated, and tension-driven visual aesthetic. Ultimately, chaos itself becomes stabilized as a form of transformative energy and a distinctive marker of Milei's leadership, capable of converting destabilization into political authenticity.[22]

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[18] Image 5 – IMG 1e – Semiotigram, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DXV7sMRDGV2 (slide 6 in the carousel)

[19] Image 6 – IMG 2a – Javier Milei, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DTlQn0yiS9U

[20] Image 7 – IMG 2b – Javier Milei, Instagram Reel – https://www.instagram.com/reel/DM-_PYQIx12

[21] Image 8 – IMG 2c – Javier Milei, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DX_8fxDEzD0

[22] Image 9 – IMG 2d – Javier Milei, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DVQ5DIjDo1_

Finally, **IMG 2e** concerns **inflation charts** through which Milei's discourse constructs a relationship between technical knowledge and political legitimacy. Texts like this are instruments for criticizing the state and the economic management of previous governments, contributing to the stabilization of libertarianism as a spectacularized identity, and transforming economic data into symbolic instruments of political legitimation. The disruptive and theatrical dimensions of Milei's persona here coexist with attempts to construct economic expertise and epistemic authority.[23]

The ten texts are therefore not treated as isolated illustrations. Each performs a specific role within the analytical architecture, while the relationships among them make it possible to reconstruct recurrent structures. The corpus is designed to move from individual signs toward **systems of recurrence**.

At the first analytical level, the study examines **values and identity**. This involves identifying the fundamental semantic oppositions through which the two political worlds are organized. The objective is to reconstruct the axiological matrices that make individual signs mutually intelligible.

The second level concerns **semi-narrative structures**. Here the images are read as components of broader political stories involving subjects, opponents, objects of value, transformations, tests, sanctions, and modalities of action.

The third level concerns **emotional and passional configurations**. The analysis investigates how the texts organize fear, anger, pride, hope, resentment, enthusiasm, indignation, and belonging, and how these passions are connected to narrative roles and political values.

The fourth level concerns **enunciation and veridiction**. Attention is directed toward the ways the texts construct positions of seeing and speaking, relationships with the viewer, and effects of authenticity or truthfulness.

The fifth level examines **actors and spaces**. Political meaning is reconstructed through the distribution of protagonists, opponents, collective subjects, crowds, institutions, boundaries, centers, margins, stages, and environments.

The sixth level concerns **aspectuality**. The study examines the temporal organization of political transformation: beginnings and endings, continuity and interruption, acceleration and duration, repetition and rupture.

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[23] Image 10 – IMG 2e – Javier Milei, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DTf2U5ADhSg

The seventh level addresses **plastic analysis**, considering eidetic, topological, and chromatic dimensions. Shapes, orientations, spatial distributions, colors, contrasts, textures, and compositional relations are analyzed as signifying structures rather than aesthetic additions.[7]

The eighth level examines **resemanticization**. Particular attention is devoted to signs whose political meaning changes through repetition, appropriation, parody, conflict, or circulation.

The ninth level concerns **isotopies**, allowing the research to identify recurrent semantic networks that traverse otherwise heterogeneous images and contribute to the coherence of each leadership model.

The tenth and final level reconstructs **semisymbolic relations and overarching patterns**, bringing together expression and content in order to identify the broader aesthetic regimes through which the two political identities become recognizable.

These levels should not be understood as a rigid sequence mechanically applied to every image. Some texts are more productive for plastic analysis, others for narrative analysis, others for resemanticization or veridiction. Methodological consistency therefore does not require analytical uniformity. It requires that each interpretive instrument be applied where the characteristics of the text make its use theoretically justified.

The resulting analytical matrix allows the corpus to be examined both **vertically and horizontally**. A vertical reading reconstructs the multiple semiotic dimensions operating within a single image. A horizontal reading compares the recurrence and transformation of particular values, forms, objects, passions, or narrative roles across the corpus.

This double movement is fundamental to the comparative design. It prevents the analysis from reducing complex images to single meanings while also preventing individual interpretations from remaining disconnected from the broader political identities under investigation.

Ultimately, the corpus functions as the empirical interface between theoretical concepts and political communication. The following chapters will therefore progressively reconstruct how Trump and Milei emerge from these visual texts not merely as empirical political actors, but as **semiotic subjects**: recognizable configurations of values, narrative roles, bodily performances, passions, objects, spaces, temporalities, and visual forms whose recurrence produces distinctive models of contemporary populist leadership.

II. VALUES AND IDENTITY

2.1. TRUMP: ETHOS OF STRENGTH

The semiotic construction of Donald Trump's political identity is organized around a relatively stable constellation of values in which **strength, success, dominance, national belonging, and restoration** occupy central positions. These values do not operate independently. They form an interconnected axiological system through which the leader, the nation, political opponents, and the very meaning of political action become mutually defined.

At the most fundamental level, Trump's communicative universe repeatedly establishes an opposition between **strength and weakness**. This opposition exceeds the representation of individual personality. Strength functions as a general criterion through which political subjects, institutions, nations, policies, and historical periods can be evaluated. A strong leader corresponds to a strong nation; political weakness becomes associated with national decline, loss of sovereignty, insecurity, economic deterioration, and diminished international prestige.

The relation between leader and nation is therefore constructed through a form of **axiological homology**. Trump's personal strength becomes capable of signifying the desired strength of the United States itself. The leader does not simply promise to implement policies intended to strengthen the country; his body, gestures, language, material environment, and public performances contribute to embodying strength before the promised political transformation has occurred.

This mechanism is visible in the recurrent representation of Trump as a figure of **verticality, centrality, and resistance**. His occupation of the visual center, frontal positioning, controlled gestures, and monumental staging repeatedly place the political body in a dominant relation to the surrounding space. The leader is constructed not as one element among others but as the organizing center around which the political scene becomes intelligible.

The raised-fist image associated with the Butler assassination attempt provides an especially concentrated manifestation of this logic. The political body is represented at a moment in which vulnerability could potentially destabilize the ethos of strength. The subsequent gesture reverses the semantic direction of the event. Physical exposure to danger is transformed into evidence of

resistance; vulnerability becomes resilience; the possibility of defeat becomes a demonstration of survival.

This transformation is semiotically significant because strength is not represented merely as the absence of vulnerability. On the contrary, vulnerability can become the condition through which strength is made visible. The sequence produces an implicit narrative movement:

THREAT

↓

WOUND/VULNERABILITY

↓

RESISTANCE

↓

REASSERTION OF STRENGTH

The raised fist therefore condenses a miniature narrative program. The leader is subjected to a test and responds through a gesture conventionally associated with resistance, determination, and collective mobilization. What could have interrupted the political performance becomes incorporated into it.

This dynamic also reinforces the construction of Trump as an **embattled protagonist**. Political antagonism is not external to his leadership identity; it is one of the conditions through which that identity becomes meaningful. The existence of enemies, obstacles, hostile institutions, critical media, political adversaries, or other forms of opposition allows the leader to be continually tested and therefore continually confirmed.

The Trumpian ethos of strength is consequently inseparable from an **agonistic structure**. Strength requires something against which it can manifest itself. The political world is organized as a field of confrontation in which actors are evaluated according to their ability to prevail, resist, dominate, negotiate from a position of power, or refuse submission.

The value of **victory** becomes particularly important within this structure. Trump's political vocabulary has long incorporated semantic fields connected to winning and losing, success and failure, strength and humiliation. These oppositions contribute to a broader representation of politics as competitive performance. Political legitimacy becomes partly intelligible through the ability to win.

Success consequently functions as more than an economic or biographical attribute. It becomes a **modal sign of competence**. The successful individual is represented as someone who knows how to act and possesses the power to transform circumstances. Wealth, luxury, business imagery, branded environments, and representations of material achievement can therefore be translated from the economic sphere into the political sphere.

Within this system, the imagery surrounding Trump's wealth or private aircraft acquires a specific semiotic function. Luxury is not merely displayed as personal consumption. It can signify mastery, achievement, autonomy, and the capacity to operate beyond ordinary constraints. The economic biography of the leader becomes a reservoir of signs through which political competence is constructed.

The transformation is based upon an implicit equivalence:

ECONOMIC SUCCESS = PERSONAL COMPETENCE = POLITICAL CAPACITY

This equivalence is neither logically necessary nor politically neutral. It is a semiotic operation through which values belonging to one domain are transferred into another. The ability to accumulate wealth becomes interpretable as evidence of the ability to govern; business success becomes a signifier of executive competence.

The spectacular dimension of this imagery is equally important. Trump's public persona has historically developed at the intersection of business, celebrity culture, television, branding, and politics. The distinction between political authority and spectacular visibility is therefore particularly porous. Success must not only exist; it must be **made visible** through recognizable signs.

Gold, monumental interiors, aircraft, branded architecture, carefully staged entrances, crowds, flags, and other elements participate in an aesthetic economy in which power becomes perceptible through display. The political leader is constructed as someone whose success has already acquired a visible form.

The Trumpian ethos of strength is also deeply connected to **national identity**. The leader's personal qualities are repeatedly articulated with a representation of the United States as a collective subject whose authentic condition should be greatness. This relationship is condensed with exceptional effectiveness by the slogan **Make America Great Again**.

From a semiotic perspective, the slogan is based upon a presupposition. If America must become great *again*, greatness is represented as a previous condition that has been lost or diminished. The slogan therefore contains an implicit temporal narrative:

PAST GREATNESS → PRESENT DECLINE → FUTURE RESTORATION

The political project derives its intelligibility from this temporal structure. The desired future is not represented primarily as an unknown order that must be invented, but as the recovery of a valued condition whose legitimacy is grounded in an imagined or selectively remembered past.

The word *again* is consequently crucial. It transforms political change into **restoration**. The future acquires value through its relationship with the past, and the leader becomes the subject capable of reconnecting a disrupted temporal continuity.

This structure distinguishes Trump's political temporality from more explicitly revolutionary forms of populism. The existing situation must certainly be transformed, but the transformation is justified as a return to an authentic national condition. Innovation is subordinated to recovery; rupture is legitimized in the name of continuity.

The MAGA cap materializes this temporal and axiological program. At the denotative level, it remains an ordinary item of clothing bearing a political slogan. At the connotative level, however, its repeated use and circulation transform it into a recognizable sign of belonging. The object connects the body of the individual wearer with a broader political narrative.

The cap can therefore be interpreted as a **portable identity device**. When worn by Trump, it reinforces the correspondence between leader and movement. When worn by supporters, it allows the slogan to migrate from the political stage to everyday social space. The body of the supporter becomes a secondary surface of political enunciation. This transformation illustrates the Barthesian mechanism through which an ordinary object can acquire a mythic function.

The cap no longer simply communicates support for a candidate. It can condense a larger narrative involving the "real America", patriotic belonging, rejection of political elites, dissatisfaction with the present, and the promise of national restoration.

Color contributes significantly to this process. The recurrent red of MAGA imagery possesses high visual salience and is repeatedly integrated with the red, white, and blue of American national symbolism. Through repetition, chromatic recognition can precede detailed verbal interpretation: the political identity becomes perceptible before the slogan is fully read.

The connection between Trump and national symbols is therefore not merely thematic. It is also **plastic and spatial**. Flags, patriotic colors, rally scenography, podiums, and crowds organize a visual environment in which the leader appears immersed in signs of Americanness. The political subject and the national symbolic system continually reinforce one another.

This produces an important semiotic effect: the distinction between **support for the leader and belonging to the nation** can become rhetorically compressed. Trump is not simply represented as one political actor proposing a particular vision of the United States. His communicative universe repeatedly constructs his leadership as the privileged expression of an authentic national subject.

The resulting identity depends upon the construction of an antagonistic outside. If there is a "real America", the system implicitly permits the identification of actors represented as alien to, hostile toward, or responsible for the weakening of that America. Political opponents, sections of the media, bureaucratic institutions, undocumented immigrants, foreign competitors, and cultural elites can occupy different positions within this broader grammar of threat.

These actors are not equivalent, and they should not be analytically collapsed into a single category. What connects them at the level of the political text is their potential function as **opponents** within a narrative of national restoration. They can be represented as obstacles separating the collective subject from the desired object of value.

The opposition between strength and weakness consequently intersects with another fundamental opposition:

AUTHENTIC NATION vs. THREATENED NATION

The authentic nation is associated with strength, sovereignty, prosperity, security, and pride. The threatened nation is represented through decline, disorder, porous boundaries, economic vulnerability, or loss of international status.

The leader occupies the mediating position between these two configurations. His narrative function is to convert the threatened nation back into the strong nation. Personal strength therefore acquires collective meaning because it becomes the modal competence necessary for national restoration.

This can be formalized through a simplified narrative sequence:

DECLINE

↓

RECOGNITION OF THREAT

↓

EMERGENCE OF THE STRONG LEADER

↓

CONFRONTATION

↓

RESTORATION

The political identity constructed through this sequence is simultaneously **heroic and managerial**. Trump can appear as the protagonist who confronts enemies and as the successful executive capable of restoring efficiency. Heroism and competence converge in the same figure.

The relationship between strength and authenticity is another central component of this ethos. Conventional political restraint can be represented as weakness, calculation, or artificiality, whereas directness, repetition, hyperbole, confrontation, and refusal of conventional decorum can function as signs of sincerity.

This creates a paradoxical regime of credibility. The leader may appear authentic not because his discourse minimizes performance, but because the **performance itself becomes culturally recognizable as authenticity**. Recurrent stylistic traits generate consistency; consistency produces recognizability; recognizability can reinforce the impression that the leader remains "himself" regardless of institutional expectations.

Authenticity therefore does not stand outside performance. It is produced through performance.

This point is essential for avoiding a simplistic opposition between "real Trump" and "media Trump". From a semiotic perspective, the analytical object is precisely the public identity generated through repeated signs. Whether individual performances correspond to an inaccessible private personality is irrelevant to the analysis. What matters is their internal coherence and their capacity to generate recognizable expectations.

Trump's ethos can consequently be interpreted as a **semiotic redundancy of strength**. Strength is encoded verbally through slogans and confrontational rhetoric; narratively through victory over opponents; modally through competence and power; corporeally through posture and gesture; spatially through centrality and elevation; materially through signs of wealth; chromatically through patriotic imagery; and temporally through the promise of restored greatness.

The repetition of the same axiological nucleus across heterogeneous expressive forms gives the political identity considerable stability. An individual image need not communicate the entire ideological system because it enters a network in which other signs already support the same values.

This redundancy is particularly functional in platform environments. Digital content is frequently encountered in fragmented conditions, without extensive contextual information. A photograph, ten-second clip, meme, slogan, or screenshot must often remain recognizable independently. A strongly redundant political identity can survive this fragmentation because its central values are distributed across multiple signs.

The ethos of strength is therefore not simply a rhetorical theme. It functions as an **organizing principle** connecting different levels of Trump's political communication. It provides a bridge among personal identity, national mythology, narrative agency, visual form, and political credibility.

From the perspective of Greimasian axiology, the opposition **strength/weakness** can be treated as a generative distinction whose implications extend throughout the corpus. Strength is positively valorized and connected to leadership, sovereignty, success, security, and national greatness. Weakness is negatively valorized and associated with decline, vulnerability, disorder, failure, and loss of status.

The corpus also shows that the system is more complex than a simple binary opposition. Vulnerability can be transformed into strength, as in the raised-fist image; opposition can become evidence of legitimacy; attacks can reinforce the identity of the embattled leader. Negative positions are therefore capable of being **resemanticized** and incorporated into the positive construction of the subject.

This ability to absorb contradiction is one of the most significant characteristics of the Trumpian political identity. The leader's strength does not require the disappearance of crisis. On the contrary, crisis continually supplies the tests through which strength can be demonstrated.

Trump's ethos of strength is therefore structurally dependent on the persistence of antagonism. A completely pacified political environment would deprive the identity of one of its principal mechanisms of confirmation. Conflict repeatedly reconstructs the conditions under which the leader can appear necessary.

At the deepest level, the corpus thus suggests a **restorative form of political life** organized around the conviction that collective order has been damaged, authentic identity has been threatened, and strength is required to re-establish the proper relation between nation, sovereignty, prosperity, and authority.

Trump's political persona condenses this worldview into an embodied figure. His leadership signifies not only a political program but a particular answer to the question of how one should inhabit a world perceived as competitive, threatened, and unstable: through strength, resistance, victory, loyalty, and the restoration of an order represented as both desirable and authentically American.

The resulting ethos is therefore simultaneously personal, political, and mythic. Trump is constructed as a strong individual, as the competent subject of a restorative narrative, and as the visible embodiment of a national promise. The coherence among these dimensions helps explain why apparently heterogeneous signs—the fist, the cap, the flag, the jet, the rally stage, the slogan—can participate in the same political identity. What unifies them is not their material similarity but their position within a common **axiological grammar of strength**.

2.2. MILEI: ETHOS OF RUPTURE

If Trump's political identity is predominantly organized around strength and restoration, Javier Milei's communicative universe is structured around a different axiological center: **rupture**. His leadership is represented not primarily as the capacity to recover an order that has been lost, but as the capacity to interrupt an order whose continuation is itself constructed as intolerable.

This distinction is fundamental. Milei's political discourse does not merely describe Argentina as experiencing a temporary crisis requiring correction. It repeatedly constructs the crisis as the consequence of a deeper and more enduring system composed of political elites, bureaucratic structures, public expenditure, interventionist economic policies, and the actors condensed by the category of the **"casta"**.

The political problem is therefore narratively configured as **systemic**. If the existing order itself generates decline, transformation cannot consist simply of managing that order more efficiently. It must involve discontinuity.

The central opposition can initially be represented as:

CONTINUITY / RUPTURE

Within the Milei corpus, continuity tends to acquire negative value when it signifies preservation of the existing political system. Rupture, conversely, acquires positive value because it becomes the condition for liberation from an order represented as corrupt, inefficient, coercive, or exhausted.

This inversion is significant. In many conventional political discourses, stability and continuity are positively valorized while rupture is associated with uncertainty or danger. Milei's communication frequently reorganizes this axiological relation: **stability itself can become suspicious** if what is being stabilized is an unacceptable system.

Rupture consequently becomes not a risk to be avoided but a political necessity.

The chainsaw constitutes the most powerful material condensation of this logic. At the level of ordinary use, a chainsaw is an instrument designed to cut through material. Once inserted into Milei's political performance, however, its practical function becomes available for metaphorical and ideological transformation.

The object establishes an unusually direct relation between **form and political program**. To cut becomes to reduce; to sever becomes to dismantle; mechanical force becomes political determination. Abstract arguments concerning public expenditure, bureaucracy, state intervention, or institutional reform are condensed into an immediately intelligible action.

The chainsaw does not explain an economic program. It **visualizes a logic of action**.

Its semiotic effectiveness derives partly from this reduction of conceptual complexity to material gesture. Fiscal adjustment, administrative reform, anti-establishment politics, and libertarian ideology can be translated into the elementary physical operation of cutting.

The object therefore participates in a transformation:

TOOL → POLITICAL PROP → IDEOLOGICAL SYMBOL → IDENTITY MARKER

As with the MAGA cap, repeated circulation allows an ordinary material object to become inseparable from a political persona. The two objects construct fundamentally different relationships with political action. The cap primarily signifies **belonging** and restoration; the chainsaw signifies **intervention**, cutting, and rupture.

The distinction can be expressed as:

MAGA CAP → WEAR / BELONG / RESTORE

CHAINSAW → ACT / CUT / DISRUPT

This difference already reveals two distinct models of populist embodiment. Trump's symbolic object can be worn by supporters and incorporated into a collective visual identity. Milei's chainsaw is initially more closely associated with the exceptional action of the leader. It dramatizes the capacity to perform the rupture that the political narrative demands.

The leader is consequently constructed as an **agent of discontinuity**.

This role is reinforced by Milei's bodily performance. Shouting, expansive gestures, facial tension, rapid movement, pointed fingers, and confrontational posture produce an embodied style markedly different from the controlled monumentality recurrent in Trump's imagery.

Milei's body often appears as if it were traversed by the same instability attributed to the political system he seeks to transform. This apparent instability does not necessarily undermine his ethos. Within the relevant axiological system, bodily excess can be positively reinterpreted as intensity, conviction, refusal of compromise, and evidence that the leader is not assimilated to conventional institutional behavior.

This produces another important inversion:

INSTITUTIONAL SELF-CONTROL → POSSIBLE ARTIFICIALITY

EXCESS / TRANSGRESSION → POSSIBLE AUTHENTICITY

The relationship is not automatic, nor will every audience interpret the performance in this way. The semiotic point is that Milei's communicative universe makes such a reading structurally available.

His anger can therefore function not merely as an emotion but as a **political competence**. It signals recognition of an intolerable situation and willingness to confront it. Anger becomes meaningful because the political narrative has already constructed an object toward which indignation can legitimately be directed.

That object is frequently condensed in the category of the **"casta"**. The term performs an extraordinary operation of semantic simplification. Heterogeneous actors, institutions, professional political practices, and historical responsibilities can be reorganized into a single antagonistic category.

The category is powerful precisely because of its flexibility. It does not require the opponent to be represented through a single institution or person. It creates a **collective anti-subject** against which Milei's own political identity can be defined.

The resulting structure can be schematized as:

PEOPLE / PRODUCTIVE SUBJECTS → VICTIMS

CASTA / SYSTEM → OPPRESSOR

MILEI → AGENT OF RUPTURE

FREEDOM → OBJECT OF VALUE

This narrative configuration connects rupture with another fundamental value: **freedom**.

Freedom within the Milei corpus is not simply one policy objective among others. It functions as a meta-value capable of organizing economic, political, moral, and identity claims. State intervention, taxation, bureaucracy, political privilege, and collectivist ideology can be represented as different manifestations of constraint, while market autonomy, individual agency, and institutional dismantling are associated with liberation.

The opposition therefore extends beyond continuity/rupture:

FREEDOM / CONSTRAINT

and intersects with:

INDIVIDUAL / STATE

PRODUCTIVE / PARASITIC

NEW / OLD

AUTHENTIC / CASTA

These oppositions contribute to an intensely polarized political universe. Intermediate positions tend to become difficult to sustain because the narrative is organized around a fundamental choice between the reproduction of an unacceptable system and the radical transformation necessary to escape it.

Milei's ethos consequently possesses a strongly **eschatological dimension**, although in a secular and political sense: the existing order is represented as approaching exhaustion, while rupture opens the possibility of a radically different future.

Unlike Trump's restorative temporality, however, Milei's future is not primarily legitimized as the recovery of a recent national greatness. It is represented as the outcome of a break with an *ancien régime* whose continuation has prevented Argentina from realizing its potential.

The temporal structure can therefore be represented as:

PROLONGED DECLINE → INTOLERABLE CRISIS → RUPTURE → REFOUNDATION

The present occupies a particularly important position in this sequence. It is not merely a transitional moment but the point at which continuation becomes impossible. Political urgency emerges from the representation of time itself: **the system has lasted too long**.

This temporal construction helps explain the recurrent role of acceleration in Milei's political style. Urgency justifies intensity. If crisis is systemic and delay reproduces crisis, gradualism can be represented as complicity with the existing order.

The ethos of rupture thus produces a distinctive relationship with **moderation**. Moderation does not necessarily appear as prudence; within the radicalized narrative it can become a sign of insufficient determination. Compromise can be interpreted as accommodation to the system that must be overcome.

This contributes to the political value of transgression. Institutional language, established protocols, conventional bodily comportment, and traditional expectations of presidential communication can themselves become signs of the old political world. Violating them may therefore reinforce the representation of exteriority to the system.

Milei's anti-institutional authenticity is constructed through precisely this distance. The leader appears credible because he does not fully conform to the codes traditionally associated with political professionalism.

The apparent paradox is that this anti-institutional identity must eventually inhabit the institutions it contests. Once Milei becomes president, rupture must be performed from within the institutional order. This creates a potentially productive tension between **institutional role and anti-institutional persona**.

Semiotically, the presidential position does not necessarily neutralize the outsider identity. The communicative system can preserve exteriority by continuously relocating the antagonistic "system" elsewhere: in Congress, bureaucracy, opposition parties, unions, journalists, inherited economic structures, or other actors represented as obstacles to transformation.

The anti-system leader can therefore remain anti-system even after occupying the center of state power, provided that the boundaries of "the system" are continually reconstructed.

This dynamic demonstrates that populist identity is relational rather than positional. Being institutionally inside does not automatically mean being semiotically represented as part of the establishment.

The Milei corpus also reveals an important relationship between **spectacle and technical competence**. His spectacular performances might initially appear incompatible with the construction of economic expertise. The two dimensions can reinforce rather than contradict one another.

Graphs, figures, economic terminology, lectures, interviews, and technical explanations construct a subject who claims to **know**, while the chainsaw, aggressive gestures, and anti-caste performances construct a subject who claims to **dare**.

The resulting modal identity combines:

KNOWING-HOW + WANTING + BEING-ABLE-TO

Technical discourse provides epistemic competence; spectacular rupture provides volitional intensity and performative capacity.

The political persona therefore oscillates between the economist and the insurgent, between technical explanation and emotional confrontation. Rather than necessarily fragmenting the identity, this duality can construct a leader who presents himself as simultaneously capable of diagnosing the system and willing to destroy the mechanisms responsible for its failure.

The ethos of rupture is also highly compatible with **memetic circulation**. The visual extremity of the chainsaw, hair, facial expressions, gestures, slogans, and confrontational performances provides abundant material for digital transformation.

Milei's public persona possesses a high degree of **memetic legibility**: distinctive visual traits can be isolated, exaggerated, recombined, and recognized even after extensive transformation.

This does not mean that memes necessarily support Milei. Parody and criticism remain important possibilities. What matters semiotically is that the identity is sufficiently distinctive to survive manipulation.

Indeed, hostile representations may sometimes be appropriated and transformed into positive signs. Excess, madness, aggression, or eccentricity—categories potentially intended to discredit—can be resignified within the supporter community as courage, originality, authenticity, or proof that the leader remains uncontaminated by conventional politics.

The identity thus demonstrates a capacity for **semiotic absorption** similar in structural terms, though different in content, to the Trumpian transformation of attack into evidence of resistance.

In Milei's case:

ACCUSATION OF EXCESS → REAPPROPRIATION → AUTHENTICITY

CHAOS → ENERGY

AGGRESSION → DETERMINATION

INSTITUTIONAL DEVIANCE → OUTSIDER CREDIBILITY

The political subject can therefore convert potentially negative signs into confirmation of the very rupture he claims to embody.

From the perspective of Barthesian myth, the chainsaw and other recurrent signs progressively naturalize a particular political proposition: that Argentina's crisis requires not incremental adjustment but radical cutting. A historically contingent economic and ideological diagnosis becomes condensed into a visual operation that can appear immediate and self-explanatory.[24]

At the level of Greimasian axiology, rupture consequently functions as the positive term around which a broader system is organized. Continuity is negatively associated with the reproduction of crisis; freedom is opposed to constraint; productive activity to parasitism; authenticity to political professionalism; transformation to stagnation.

The leader emerges as the subject capable of crossing the boundary between the two worlds.

This makes Milei's ethos fundamentally **transformational**. His political identity does not promise simply to administer the existing order more effectively but to alter the rules through which that order reproduces itself.

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[24] Barthes, Roland, *Mythologies,* op. cit.

The body, objects, slogans, economic discourse, and memetic circulation all participate in the same general configuration. As in Trump's case, there is therefore considerable semiotic redundancy—but the repeated value is different.

Where Trump's signs repeatedly answer the question **"Who can restore order?"**, Milei's signs repeatedly answer the question **"Who is willing to break the order?"**

The difference is decisive.

Milei's ethos of rupture ultimately constructs a form of political life in which crisis demands decision, authenticity requires resistance to conventional codes, freedom requires dismantling constraints, and political agency becomes meaningful through the willingness to produce irreversible transformation.

The resulting identity is not simply libertarian in ideological content. It is **disruptive in semiotic form**. Rupture is stated, embodied, materialized, visualized, dramatized, and circulated.

Milei therefore becomes not merely the advocate of rupture but its **living sign**.

2.3. COMPARATIVE AXIOLOGY

The comparison between Donald Trump and Javier Milei reveals two distinct axiological configurations of contemporary populist leadership. Both political identities are strongly personalized, conflict-oriented, anti-establishment, and highly compatible with the communicative logic of digital platforms. The values around which they are organized differ substantially, as do the transformations they promise and the forms of credibility they seek to produce.

At the deepest level, the Trumpian and Mileian systems can be understood as two different responses to a shared narrative premise: the present political order is represented as inadequate, compromised, or unable to guarantee the values considered essential to the collective subject. The difference lies in the way each leader defines the desired transformation.

Trump's system is fundamentally **restorative**. The present is evaluated negatively because it is interpreted as a deviation from an earlier condition of national greatness. Political action is therefore oriented toward recovery. Milei's system is instead fundamentally **disruptive**. The present is evaluated negatively because it is understood as the product of a structurally corrupt or exhausted

order that cannot simply be repaired. Political action is consequently oriented toward rupture and refoundation.

The first opposition can therefore be formulated as:

RESTORATION / REFOUNDATION

This distinction is not merely terminological. It organizes different temporalities, different models of agency, and different representations of political legitimacy.

In Trump's case, the desired future acquires meaning through continuity with an idealized past. The slogan *Make America Great Again* presupposes that greatness existed, was subsequently lost or weakened, and can be recovered through the action of a sufficiently strong leader. The political future is therefore legitimated by memory, continuity, and return.

In Milei's case, the desired future is more frequently constructed through a radical break with the past. The existing system is not simply represented as having deviated from an authentic national condition; it is represented as having produced the crisis itself. The future must therefore be created through discontinuity rather than recovery.

The temporal grammar can be represented as follows:

TRUMP:

PAST GREATNESS → PRESENT DECLINE → RESTORATION

MILEI:

PROLONGED CRISIS → RUPTURE → REFOUNDATION

This temporal difference has major consequences for the construction of leadership. Trump must appear capable of **re-establishing order**. Milei must appear capable of **breaking an order represented as illegitimate**.

A second fundamental opposition therefore emerges:

CONTROL / DISRUPTION

Trump's political identity repeatedly associates leadership with control of the body, control of space, control of adversaries, control of borders, and control of the national trajectory. Even moments of vulnerability can be resemanticized as demonstrations of regained command. **IMG 1a** is especially significant in this respect: the raised fist following the assassination attempt transforms exposure to danger into a visible reassertion of resistance and agency.

The same value appears in **IMG 1b**, where frontality, visual centrality, low-angle framing, and spatial dominance contribute to the construction of a leader who appears to master the scene. Control is therefore not expressed only verbally. It is inscribed in bodily posture and visual composition.

Milei's system works differently. His political credibility is less dependent on the appearance of composure and more closely tied to the ability to embody **rupture, urgency, and refusal of institutional containment**. In **IMG 2b**, bodily intensity, gestures, shouting, and expansive occupation of space construct a leader whose authenticity can emerge through excess rather than restraint. **IMG 2d** reinforces this logic through what may be described as "productive chaos", where communicative disorder is reinterpreted as evidence of transformative energy.

The contrast can therefore be formulated as:

TRUMP: CONTROL AS CREDIBILITY

MILEI: DISRUPTION AS CREDIBILITY

The political body plays an essential role in making these values visible. Trump's body tends toward stabilization and monumentalization; Milei's tends toward acceleration and tension. Trump appears as the figure who resists disorder; Milei as the figure who introduces disorder into a system that, within his discourse, deserves to be disrupted.

This distinction extends to the treatment of **strength**. Both leaders construct strength as a positive value, but strength does not signify the same thing in the two systems.

For Trump, strength is associated with dominance, resilience, victory, national sovereignty, and the capacity to re-establish hierarchy. It is a stabilizing force.

For Milei, strength is associated with determination, radical decision, refusal of compromise, destruction of political obstacles, and acceleration of transformation. It is a disruptive force.

The shared value of strength therefore generates two different semiotic realizations:

STRENGTH → ORDER in Trump

STRENGTH → RUPTURE in Milei

This is an important comparative result. It shows why the identification of isolated values is insufficient. Two political actors may share the same positively valorized category while embedding it within different systems of relations.

The distinction becomes particularly clear through the symbolic objects associated with the two leaders.

IMG 1d places the **MAGA cap** within Trump's symbolic universe. The cap condenses belonging, repetition, national identity, and continuity with the movement's restorative narrative. Its material function is relatively passive: it is worn, displayed, recognized, and reproduced. It allows political identity to be incorporated into the body of the supporter.

IMG 2a, by contrast, centers on Milei's **chainsaw**, whose semiotic force is fundamentally active. The chainsaw cuts. Its ideological meaning depends on action, reduction, dismantling, and discontinuity. It dramatizes the transformation that the leader promises to perform.

The opposition between the two objects is analytically productive:

MAGA CAP → IDENTIFICATION

CHAINSAW → INTERVENTION

or, more precisely:

MAGA CAP → BELONGING TO THE RESTORATIVE COMMUNITY

CHAINSAW → ENACTING THE DISRUPTIVE PROGRAM

This difference does not mean that the MAGA cap lacks agency or that the chainsaw lacks identity value. Both objects perform multiple functions. Their dominant semiotic orientation differs: one stabilizes collective belonging, while the other spectacularizes political action.

A further comparative axis concerns **order and chaos**.

In Trump's system, chaos is primarily located outside the desired political order. It may be associated with immigration, institutional weakness, political opposition, social disorder, or national decline. The leader's role is to contain, reverse, or overcome it.

In Milei's system, chaos is more ambiguous. The existing political order can itself be represented as the source of dysfunction, while disruptive chaos may acquire a temporary positive value if it becomes the necessary passage toward refoundation.

This creates a significant inversion.

In Trump:

CHAOS → THREAT

ORDER → DESIRED STATE

In Milei:

EXISTING ORDER → SOURCE OF CRISIS

DISRUPTION → NECESSARY TRANSITION

NEW ORDER → DESIRED STATE

Milei's communication therefore does not simply valorize chaos for its own sake. Rather, it can resemanticize temporary disorder as a productive condition of transformation. **IMG 2d** is especially relevant because the "productive chaos" represented there makes instability itself intelligible as a sign of movement and political vitality.

This difference helps explain the contrasting relationship of the two leaders with **institutionality**.

Trump's communication is strongly anti-establishment, it often mobilizes symbols of national continuity, sovereignty, patriotism, and institutional grandeur. His political identity is therefore anti-establishment without necessarily being anti-state in the same sense as Milei's. The leader claims to restore the nation by defeating actors represented as having corrupted or weakened it.

Milei's discourse, by contrast, can target the institutional apparatus itself as a source of coercion or inefficiency. The opposition to the "casta" can extend from specific political actors to broader structures of bureaucracy, state intervention, and professional politics.

The comparative opposition may therefore be stated as:

TRUMP: PURIFY / RESTORE THE POLITICAL ORDER

MILEI: DISMANTLE / REFOUND THE POLITICAL ORDER

A fifth major axis concerns national belonging and individual freedom.

Trump's system places exceptional emphasis on collective national identity. The nation functions as a central object of value and as the principal collective subject that must be protected, restored, and made "great again". Patriotism, flags, national colors, slogans, and symbolic references to the "real America" organize the individual within a broader community.

Milei's system places greater emphasis on freedom as an organizing meta-value. Individual autonomy, economic freedom, rejection of coercive institutions, and libertarian rhetoric contribute to a political imaginary in which the subject is defined partly through liberation from collective structures represented as oppressive.

The distinction is not absolute. Trump also invokes freedom, and Milei also invokes the nation. The dominant axiological emphasis differs:

TRUMP → NATIONAL BELONGING

MILEI → LIBERTARIAN AUTONOMY

This difference affects the way the public is constructed.

Trump's collective subject tends to emerge as a **patriotic people** whose identity is stabilized through shared national symbols. The political promise is to restore the conditions under which this people can once again occupy its rightful position.

Milei's collective subject is more frequently constructed as a **betrayed or constrained people** whose productive capacities have been limited by the political caste, bureaucracy, inflation, and state intervention. The desired transformation is liberation from those constraints.

These two constructions produce different forms of populist opposition.

Trump's populist grammar tends toward:

AUTHENTIC NATION / CORRUPTING OR THREATENING FORCES

Milei's tends toward:

PRODUCTIVE OR FREE SUBJECTS / PARASITIC OR COERCIVE SYSTEM

Both simplify political complexity by organizing heterogeneous adversaries within a recognizable antagonistic structure. The moral logic of the opposition differs.

Another key comparative dimension concerns **success and competence**.

In the Trump corpus, **IMG 1c** makes wealth, airplanes, luxury, and the celebrity-business aesthetic relevant to the construction of political competence. Success is made visible materially. Economic achievement becomes a sign capable of migrating into political evaluation.

The underlying semiotic operation is:

WEALTH → SUCCESS → COMPETENCE → CAPACITY TO GOVERN

In the Milei corpus, **IMG 2e** performs a different operation. Economic graphs, inflation indicators, quantitative comparison, and technical discourse contribute to the construction of epistemic authority. Political competence is connected not primarily to visible wealth but to the claim of possessing correct economic knowledge.

The Mileian sequence can therefore be represented as:

ECONOMIC KNOWLEDGE → DIAGNOSIS

↓

EPISTEMIC AUTHORITY

↓

LEGITIMACY TO TRANSFORM

This produces an important contrast:

TRUMP: COMPETENCE THROUGH SUCCESS

MILEI: COMPETENCE THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND RADICAL DIAGNOSIS

Both leaders require signs of competence, but they construct them through different semiotic resources.

This difference is particularly useful for preventing a reductive interpretation of Milei's communication as purely emotional. **IMG 2e** demonstrates that the disruptive and spectacular dimensions of his identity coexist with a competing or complementary ethos of technical-economic authority. His political persona does not rest exclusively on anger; it also claims the right to govern through expertise.

Similarly, Trump's communication cannot be reduced to nationalism or confrontation. **IMG 1c** shows how the mythology of economic success contributes to the modal construction of the leader as someone who *can* govern because he has already demonstrated the capacity to win elsewhere.

A further comparative axis concerns **authenticity**.

Both leaders construct themselves as authentic by opposing forms of communication represented as artificial, mediated, scripted, or institutionally conventional. The form of authenticity differs.

Trump's authenticity is strongly connected to **consistency and recognizability**. His recurrent rhetorical style, slogans, gestures, confrontational language, branding, and visual identity produce the sense of a public persona that remains stable across contexts. The leader appears authentic because he appears repeatedly as the same recognizable figure.

Milei's authenticity is more closely associated with **intensity and transgression**. Anger, shouting, refusal of decorum, aggressive gesture, and anti-institutional language can signify authenticity because they appear incompatible with the conventions of professional political self-presentation.

The contrast can be summarized as:

TRUMP → AUTHENTICITY THROUGH CONSISTENT PERFORMANCE

MILEI → AUTHENTICITY THROUGH TRANSGRESSIVE PERFORMANCE

In both cases, authenticity is nevertheless a performance. It does not stand outside mediation. It is produced through recurring codes that audiences learn to recognize as signs of sincerity or genuineness.

This point is essential because it prevents the analysis from confusing **authenticity as an effect of meaning** with authenticity as an empirically verifiable psychological property.

The two systems also differ in their dominant relation to **spectacle**.

Trump's spectacle tends toward monumentalization. Rally stages, patriotic iconography, celebrity culture, visual centrality, and luxury produce a political aesthetic in which leadership appears larger than ordinary life. Spectacle stabilizes hierarchy.

Milei's spectacle tends toward collision. Chainsaw performances, shouting, memetic imagery, accelerated contrasts, and productive chaos create an aesthetic in which leadership is made visible through disruption. Spectacle destabilizes convention.

Thus:

TRUMP → SPECTACLE OF DOMINANCE

MILEI → SPECTACLE OF DISRUPTION

Both are highly mediatized, but their mediatization produces different political imaginaries.From the perspective of Floch's axiological framework, both leaders can be read as activating **practical, critical, utopian, and ludic valorizations**, though in different proportions and with different content.[25]

Trump's **practical valorization** emerges in promises concerning security, borders, economic prosperity, jobs, and national strength. His **critical valorization** appears in attacks on political elites, media, bureaucracies, and policies represented as ineffective or damaging. His **utopian valorization** is concentrated in the promise of national greatness and restoration. His **ludic valorization** is visible in the spectacular, theatrical, and celebrity-oriented dimensions of his communication.

[25] Floch, Jean-Marie, op. cit.

Milei also activates all four regimes. His **practical valorization** is connected to inflation, fiscal policy, state expenditure, and economic reform. His **critical valorization** is particularly intense in the construction of the "casta" and the delegitimation of existing institutions. His **utopian valorization** concerns the promise of a libertarian refoundation. His **ludic valorization** emerges through provocative performances, memes, spectacular objects, and the theatricalization of political conflict.

The similarity is therefore structural rather than substantive. Both systems combine the same broad modes of valorization, but they populate them with different values and organize them around different dominant transformations.

The comparison can be summarized through two overarching configurations:

TRUMP

- strength;
- control;
- restoration;
- victory;
- success;
- national belonging;
- order;
- monumentalization;
- consistency;
- patriotic continuity.

MILEI

- rupture;
- acceleration;

- refoundation;
- anger;
- radical decision;
- libertarian autonomy;
- productive chaos;
- collision;
- transgression;
- anti-institutional discontinuity.

These two constellations should not be understood as closed or mutually exclusive. Trump can employ disruption, and Milei can invoke order. The analytical claim concerns **dominant tendencies** and the way recurrent signs are organized into relatively coherent value systems.

It is useful, therefore, to distinguish between surface similarity and deep axiological difference.

At the surface level, both leaders may:

- attack elites;
- use provocative language;
- mobilize social media;
- personalize political conflict;
- cultivate outsider identities;
- rely on highly recognizable symbols;
- transform opposition into evidence of authenticity.

At the deeper level, however, these shared strategies serve different political grammars.

Trump's anti-establishment position serves a **restorative narrative**: the system has betrayed the authentic nation and must be brought back into alignment with it.

Milei's anti-establishment position serves a **refoundational narrative**: the system itself is the problem and must be radically dismantled.

This distinction provides the basis for two analytical categories that will be used throughout the remainder of the study: ***restorative populist leadership*** and ***disruptive populist leadership***. These expressions are used here as analytical categories developed within the present research.[26]

By ***restorative populist leadership,*** the study refers to a political configuration in which the leader constructs legitimacy through the promise of recovering an authentic collective order represented as lost, weakened, or betrayed. Strength is directed toward restoration; antagonism separates the authentic community from the actors represented as responsible for decline.

By ***disruptive populist leadership,*** the study refers to a configuration in which legitimacy is constructed through the promise of breaking with an existing order represented as structurally incapable of reform. Political competence is demonstrated through willingness to interrupt, dismantle, accelerate, or radically reorganize institutional continuity.

The categories are therefore not ideological taxonomies but semiotic descriptions of the dominant transformation encoded by the two corpora.

They also clarify why both Trump and Milei can construct themselves as **anti-establishment leaders** without producing identical political identities. Anti-establishment discourse is not the final meaning of either system; it is a relational mechanism inserted into different programs of transformation.

The comparison further suggests that the value of **conflict** is central to both systems. Conflict is not merely a consequence of political polarization. It is productive of identity. Trump requires conflict because resistance against opponents confirms strength. Milei requires conflict because rupture against opponents confirms authenticity and transformative determination.

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[26] The expressions "restorative populist leadership" and "disruptive populist leadership" are used in this study as analytical categories developed specifically for the comparative interpretation of the two corpora. They are not intended to designate established or universally applicable typologies of populism, but rather to describe the dominant semiotic configurations through which political transformation is constructed in the communicative universes of Donald Trump and Javier Milei.

The function of conflict can therefore be represented as:

TRUMP: CONFLICT → TEST OF STRENGTH

MILEI: CONFLICT → PROOF OF RUPTURE

This difference will become especially important in the following chapter on semi-narrative structures, where opponents, objects of value, helpers, modalities, and sanctions will be reconstructed more systematically.

The axiological comparison therefore leads to a broader conclusion. Trump and Milei do not simply communicate different policy programs through different styles. They construct **different forms of political life**.

Trump's form of life is predominantly **restorative, agonistic, hierarchical, patriotic, and success-oriented**. Political existence is represented as a struggle to defend the nation, defeat its enemies, recover greatness, and reaffirm a legitimate hierarchy.

Milei's form of life is predominantly **disruptive, anti-institutional, libertarian, accelerated, and transformational**. Political existence is represented as a struggle to break constraints, dismantle an illegitimate system, free productive subjects, and construct a new order through radical discontinuity.

In both cases, political leadership becomes more than representation. It becomes an **embodied value system**. Trump does not merely speak about strength; he is semiotically constructed as strength. Milei does not merely speak about rupture; he is semiotically constructed as rupture.

This convergence between political values and the public figure of the leader is one of the defining characteristics of contemporary mediatized populism. The leader becomes the most condensed sign of the political world he proposes.

The comparison therefore reveals two distinct solutions to the same semiotic problem: how to transform a complex political program into a recognizable and reproducible identity.

Trump answers through **restorative strength**. Milei answers through **disruptive rupture**. The difference between them is not simply rhetorical. It organizes the entire relation among leader, people, enemies, time, space, body, objects, passions, and political credibility.

III. SEMI-NARRATIVE STRUCTURES

3.1. TRUMP: THE RESTORATIVE NARRATIVE PROGRAM

The axiological system identified in the previous chapter acquires a more precise structure when examined at the narrative level. Trump's political communication does not simply associate the leader with strength, success, patriotism, and national greatness; it organizes these values into a **narrative program of restoration** in which a collective subject is represented as having lost a valued condition and the leader emerges as the actor capable of recovering it.

From a Greimasian perspective, political communication can be examined as a system of relations among **subjects, objects of value, destinators, receivers, helpers, and opponents**. These positions should not be interpreted as fixed empirical identities. They are actantial functions that can be occupied by different actors or institutions according to the specific political text. Their analytical usefulness lies precisely in allowing the reconstruction of the deeper narrative grammar underlying apparently heterogeneous images and discourses.

At the center of the Trumpian narrative is an initial state of **disjunction**. The collective subject —primarily constructed as the American people or, more specifically, the authentic patriotic nation—is represented as separated from a series of positively valorized objects: greatness, security, prosperity, sovereignty, international prestige, social order, and control over national borders.

The basic structure can therefore be represented as:

$$\text{AMERICAN PEOPLE} \cup \text{GREATNESS}$$

where the symbol of disjunction indicates the initial separation between the collective subject and its desired object of value.

The political narrative becomes meaningful because this separation is not presented as natural or inevitable. It is constructed as the consequence of a process of **loss**. America was great, powerful, prosperous, secure, or respected; something subsequently interrupted that condition. The present is therefore narrated as the result of a negative transformation.

This structure is already condensed in the temporal presupposition of *Make America Great Again*. The slogan does not merely define an objective. It contains a miniature narrative: there was an earlier conjunction between America and greatness; that conjunction has been broken; political action must restore it.

The desired final state can consequently be represented as:

AMERICAN PEOPLE ∩ GREATNESS

The transition from disjunction to conjunction constitutes the fundamental narrative program of Trumpian communication. This model explains why **restoration** is more analytically precise than a generic reference to political change. The transformation promised by Trump is meaningful because it is presented as the recovery of an object that legitimately belongs to the collective subject. Greatness is not constructed as something entirely new that Americans must discover; it is represented as something that has been taken away, abandoned, weakened, or betrayed.

Such a structure has significant consequences for political legitimacy. If the desired object is conceived as previously possessed, the program of restoration can appear less as the creation of a partisan future than as the **correction of an illegitimate deviation**. Political change is thereby framed as a return to the proper state of things.

Within this narrative, Trump occupies the actantial position of the **subject of doing**: the actor charged with producing the transformation that will reconnect the collective subject with the lost object of value.

This does not mean that Trump and the American people occupy completely separate positions. Populist communication frequently allows the leader to oscillate between different actantial functions. Trump can simultaneously appear as the subject who acts, the representative of the collective subject on whose behalf the action is performed, and the embodiment of the values to be restored.

The relation can therefore be formulated as:

TRUMP → ACTING SUBJECT

THE PEOPLE / AMERICA → COLLECTIVE BENEFICIARY

GREATNESS / SECURITY / SOVEREIGNTY / PROSPERITY → OBJECTS OF VALUE

This structure contributes to the intense personalization of the political program. Abstract political transformation becomes narratively concentrated in the competence of a single protagonist.

The corpus makes this personalization particularly visible. **IMG 1b**, centered on Trump's posture of dominance, frontality, visual centrality, and low-angle framing, contributes to the construction of a subject capable of occupying the position required by the narrative. The image does not simply depict a leader; its organization participates in the production of **modal competence**.

The leader appears as someone who **can act**.

This is a crucial distinction. Narrative programs require competent subjects. Wanting an object of value is insufficient: the subject must acquire or display the modalities necessary to obtain it. Greimasian narrative semiotics makes it possible to distinguish, among others, **wanting-to-do, having-to-do, knowing-how-to-do, and being-able-to-do**.

Trump's political identity distributes these modalities across different signs; his recurrent declaration of political objectives constructs **wanting-to-do**; the representation of national emergency or decline constructs **having-to-do**: intervention becomes not merely desirable but necessary.

The business and success imagery associated with **IMG 1c** contributes to **knowing-how-to-do**: previous economic achievement can be transformed into evidence of executive competence.

Finally, bodily strength, dominance, electoral victory, confrontation, and resistance contribute to **being-able-to-do**. The leader's competence is therefore produced through a multimodal system rather than a single claim.

This is particularly evident when **IMG 1b** and **IMG 1c** are considered together. In **IMG 1b**, competence is **corporeal and spatial**: Trump occupies and dominates the scene. In **IMG 1c**, competence is **economic and biographical**: airplanes, luxury, gilded interiors, and the celebrity-business aesthetic transform material success into a sign of capability.

The two images consequently support different modalities of the same narrative subject:

IMG 1b → POWER / DOMINANCE

IMG 1c → SUCCESS / COMPETENCE

Together, they contribute to the construction of a protagonist who appears simultaneously capable of imposing himself upon opponents and competent to achieve the promised transformation.

The narrative program also requires an **opponent**. Without an obstacle separating subject and object, there would be no meaningful political transformation. Trumpian communication therefore constructs a heterogeneous set of antagonistic actors whose specific identities can vary while their narrative function remains relatively stable.

Political elites, Democratic opponents, sections of the mainstream media, undocumented immigrants, foreign competitors, bureaucratic actors, and other figures can all, in different texts, occupy the actantial position of the **opponent**.

It would be analytically incorrect to treat these actors as substantively equivalent. Their political roles, responsibilities, and empirical characteristics are clearly different. Their comparability exists only at the level of narrative function: each can be represented as an obstacle preventing the collective subject from achieving security, prosperity, sovereignty, or greatness.

This distinction becomes particularly important in relation to **IMG 1e**, where anti-immigration imagery participates in the construction of threat. The fake images depicting immigrants allegedly "eating cats" constitute an especially revealing case because the visual representation does not merely communicate a proposition concerning immigration. It participates in the figurativization of an antagonist.

An abstract and complex political issue—migration—is transformed into a concrete scene of transgression. The alleged behavior attributed to immigrants intensifies alterity by presenting the out-group as violating ordinary cultural expectations and boundaries.

At the narrative level, the image can therefore reinforce a structure in which:

COLLECTIVE SUBJECT → COMMUNITY TO BE PROTECTED

IMMIGRANT/FOREIGN OTHER → FIGURE OF THREAT

LEADER → PROTECTIVE SUBJECT

SECURITY / ORDER → OBJECT OF VALUE

The effectiveness of this structure does not depend, from the standpoint of semiotic analysis, on the factual truth of the depicted event. On the contrary, the fact that **IMG 1e** involves fabricated imagery makes the distinction between **factual reference and narrative efficacy** especially important.

The image can perform a narrative function even when its referential basis is false. This is one of the points at which the analysis of post-truth intersects directly with narrative semiotics: a representation can contribute to the construction of a coherent antagonist and a recognizable political world independently of its factual reliability.

This does **not** imply that truth and falsity are politically equivalent. Rather, it means that the analytical question addressed here concerns the mechanisms through which a text becomes meaningful and politically usable. Factual verification and semiotic efficacy are different analytical dimensions.

The opponent performs an additional function. By obstructing the protagonist, the antagonist provides the conditions through which the protagonist's competence can become visible.

Trump's narrative therefore depends upon a recurrent **logic of the test**. The leader must confront something.

An obstacle may threaten the nation; an adversary may attack the leader; an institution may resist his program; a journalist may challenge his claims; an electoral opponent may dispute his legitimacy. Each confrontation can be transformed into a narrative test in which the protagonist's qualities are evaluated.

This is particularly evident in **IMG 1a**, the raised-fist image following the assassination attempt in Butler. The event introduces an extreme form of narrative test: the protagonist is physically endangered.

At the level of the event, the attack creates vulnerability.

At the level of subsequent visual signification, however, the raised fist permits a rapid narrative reversal:

ATTACK

↓

VULNERABILITY

↓

RESISTANCE

↓

REAFFIRMATION

The image is powerful because the subject does not simply survive the test; he immediately performs a sign through which survival can be interpreted as resistance.

The body becomes the site of narrative sanction.

The wound or exposure to danger could signify weakness. The raised fist redirects the interpretation toward strength. The protagonist emerges from the test with his central axiological attribute reinforced rather than diminished.

In Greimasian terms, the test therefore contributes to the **sanction** of the subject. The narrative trajectory confirms the competence previously attributed to him: the leader represented as strong behaves, at the crucial moment, in a manner that can be interpreted as strength.

This produces an important form of semiotic circularity:

TRUMP IS STRONG BECAUSE HE RESISTS

and

HIS RESISTANCE CONFIRMS THAT HE IS THE STRONG LEADER

(THE NARRATIVE ALREADY CONSTRUCTED)

The event becomes incorporated into a pre-existing identity system.

The Trumpian narrative consequently possesses a considerable capacity to **absorb contingency**. Events that could potentially destabilize the leader's public identity can be reinterpreted according to the dominant narrative grammar. Attack becomes persecution; vulnerability becomes courage; opposition becomes evidence that the leader threatens entrenched interests; criticism can become proof of establishment hostility.

This mechanism is not unlimited, but it helps explain the resilience of a highly coherent political persona. New events are interpreted through already available narrative roles.

The role of the **destinator** is more complex. Within the canonical narrative schema, the destinator is the instance that establishes the value of the object and legitimates the subject's mission. In Trump's political communication, this function can be distributed across several figures rather than embodied in a single actor.

The **nation**, the **people**, patriotic history, constitutional or founding ideals, and the imagined memory of American greatness can all operate as sources of legitimacy. The mission is represented as necessary because it responds to something greater than the leader's individual ambition.

The slogan *Make America Great Again* is especially efficient in this respect because "America" simultaneously functions as collective subject, beneficiary, and source of normative legitimacy. The leader acts for America because America itself is constructed as demanding restoration.

The narrative thus tends toward a form of **destinatorial circularity**:

AMERICA LEGITIMATES THE MISSION

↓

TRUMP PERFORMS THE MISSION

↓

AMERICA BENEFITS FROM ITS SUCCESS

This circular structure strengthens the symbolic identification between leader and nation.

IMG 1d, centered on the MAGA symbolic universe, performs a particularly important function here. The red cap and slogan materialize the narrative program and allow it to migrate from the leader to the supporter.

The supporter who wears the cap does not merely observe the political narrative. He or she becomes incorporated into its enunciative and actantial structure.

This introduces the role of the **helper**. Trump's supporters, rally crowds, campaign activists, sympathetic media actors, and digital communities can function as helpers insofar as they reproduce, amplify, defend, and circulate the political program. Their role is not limited to electoral support. Through digital communication, they can participate directly in the replication of signs.

The MAGA cap makes this especially visible because the supporter's body becomes a site of political inscription. The narrative program is no longer expressed only by Trump; it is physically reproduced across a collectivity.

The relation can therefore be formulated as:

LEADER → PRINCIPAL SUBJECT OF TRANSFORMATION

SUPPORTERS → HELPERS AND SECONDARY ENUNCIATORS

MAGA SYMBOLS → DEVICES OF NARRATIVE AND IDENTITY REPLICATION

This is where narrative semiotics intersects with platformization. Digital supporters can become narratively productive actors by selecting, recirculating, commenting on, remixing, and defending signs associated with the leader.

The distinction between **helper and receiver** consequently becomes porous. The public is both the beneficiary of the promised restoration and an active participant in its symbolic construction.

This dual role is characteristic of contemporary platformized political communication. The collective subject does not simply wait for the leader to complete the narrative program; it can continually perform its belonging to that program.

The structure is particularly visible in rally imagery. Crowds provide a visual sanction of leadership: their presence demonstrates that the protagonist possesses followers, recognition, and collective investment. At the same time, the crowd experiences itself as the community whose restoration is being promised.

Leader and public therefore enter into a relation of reciprocal confirmation.

THE LEADER REPRESENTS THE PEOPLE

while

THE PEOPLE'S VISIBLE PRESENCE LEGITIMATES THE LEADER

This reciprocity is central to the construction of populist leadership.

Another important narrative dimension concerns the role of **IMG 1c** and the mythology of success. Trump's economic biography can be interpreted as a form of **qualifying test** preceding the principal political program.

Before becoming the subject who promises to restore America, Trump is narratively presented as someone who has already demonstrated competence in another domain.

Business success functions as a previous test.

The implied structure becomes:

SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN

↓

PROVEN COMPETENCE

↓

POLITICAL CANDIDATE

↓

CAPABLE NATIONAL LEADER

The political narrative therefore draws legitimacy from a pre-political biography. Celebrity and business are transformed into reservoirs of modal competence.

The aircraft and gilded interiors represented in **IMG 1c** do not simply signify wealth. Within the narrative structure, they can function as **evidence of an accomplished previous program**: the subject has pursued success and obtained it.

This makes possible an analogical transfer:

HE SUCCEEDED FOR HIMSELF → HE CAN MAKE AMERICA SUCCEED

Again, the relationship is semiotic rather than logically necessary. Its political force derives precisely from the ability of narrative structures to connect heterogeneous domains through a common value: success.

The Trumpian program is therefore supported by several interconnected narrative sequences:

BIOGRAPHICAL PROGRAM:

ambition → business action → wealth/success → competence

POLITICAL PROGRAM:

national decline → leadership → confrontation → restoration

IDENTITY PROGRAM:

threat → resistance → strength → recognition

These programs converge in the same protagonist.

The result is a particularly dense form of **narrative personalization**. The values of the political program become inseparable from the biography and body of the leader.

The success of the nation is narratively prefigured by the success of Trump. The strength of the nation is embodied by the strength of Trump. The resistance of the nation is dramatized through the resistance of Trump. The restoration of the nation becomes dependent upon the agency of Trump.

This convergence helps explain the centrality of the leader within the visual corpus. The protagonist is not simply the spokesperson for a collective project. He becomes the principal **operator of transformation** connecting the initial state of loss with the desired final state.

The overall narrative sequence can therefore be reconstructed as follows:

1. **INITIAL STATE**

   America is separated from greatness, security, sovereignty, prosperity, or proper recognition.

2. **DIAGNOSIS**

   The loss is attributed to identifiable political failures, elites, adversaries, external threats, or weakened institutions.

3. **MANDATE**

   The restoration of America becomes necessary.

4. **COMPETENCE**

   Trump is constructed as wanting, knowing how, being able, and being required to act.

5. **CONFRONTATION**

   The protagonist encounters opponents and undergoes recurrent tests.

6. **PERFORMANCE**

   The leader acts—or promises to act—to overcome the obstacles separating the collective subject from its objects of value.

7. **SANCTION**

   Victory, survival, visible support, economic indicators, institutional achievements, or symbolic demonstrations of strength can be interpreted as confirmation of competence.

8. **PROMISED CONJUNCTION**

   America is represented as capable of becoming “great again”.

This sequence closely corresponds to the logic of the **canonical narrative schema**, while acquiring a specifically Trumpian political content.

However, the narrative does not necessarily reach definitive closure. This is particularly important. In electoral and platform communication, complete narrative resolution would risk eliminating the very conditions that sustain mobilization. Threats can therefore continually reappear; opponents can change; new crises can be incorporated; restoration can remain incomplete.

The political narrative becomes **serial**. Each victory can be followed by another test. Each opponent can be replaced by another. Each restored value can be represented as threatened again.

This seriality is particularly compatible with digital platforms, whose communicative temporality depends on continuous production, updating, conflict, and renewed attention.

The restorative narrative is consequently paradoxical: it promises closure while structurally benefiting from **permanent incompletion**.

The leader must restore order, but the continued presence of disorder repeatedly confirms the necessity of the leader.

This produces one of the deepest tensions in the Trumpian narrative program:

RESTORATION IS THE PROMISED END

but

THREAT IS THE CONDITION OF NARRATIVE CONTINUITY

The political story can therefore reproduce itself indefinitely.

From this perspective, Trump's narrative identity is not merely that of the victorious leader. It is that of the leader who must be **recurrently tested and recurrently victorious**.

IMG 1a and **IMG 1b** become especially significant when read together. **IMG 1b** constructs the stable competence of dominance; **IMG 1a** dramatizes that competence under conditions of extreme threat. One presents the leader as already powerful; the other narratively demonstrates the persistence of that power through resistance.

IMG 1c provides biographical competence.

IMG 1d extends the narrative into collective belonging.

IMG 1e constructs one of the possible figures of threat.

The five images therefore perform distinct but interconnected narrative functions within the corpus:

IMG 1a → TEST / RESISTANCE / SANCTION

IMG 1b → DOMINANCE / MODAL COMPETENCE

IMG 1c → SUCCESS / PREVIOUS COMPETENCE

IMG 1d → COLLECTIVE MANDATE / BELONGING / HELPERS

IMG 1e → THREAT / ANTAGONISM

This distribution is important because it demonstrates that the Trump corpus does not simply repeat the same message five times. Each text contributes a different component to the same broader narrative architecture.

Taken together, they construct a protagonist whose legitimacy depends on a precise relation among **loss, threat, competence, confrontation, resistance, and restoration**.

The Trumpian narrative program can ultimately be reduced to a fundamental transformation:

AMERICA NOT-GREAT / THREATENED / WEAKENED

↓

TRUMP AS COMPETENT RESTORATIVE SUBJECT

↓

CONFRONTATION WITH OPPONENTS

↓

AMERICA GREAT / SECURE / STRONG / SOVEREIGN

This transformation constitutes the narrative realization of the axiological system reconstructed in the previous chapter. The values previously identified do not remain abstract or isolated components of Trump's political identity; rather, they are reorganized within a dynamic structure in which subjects, objects, opponents, and transformations acquire specific functions and become mutually dependent.

Trump's ethos of strength therefore becomes, at the semi-narrative level, a **narrative program of restoration**. Strength is no longer merely a positively valorized attribute of the leader, but the fundamental competence through which the promised transformation can be accomplished and the initial condition of loss or decline can be overcome.

The transition from values to narrative is crucial: strength acquires political meaning because it becomes the competence necessary to recover greatness. It defines not only who the leader is, but also why he appears narratively qualified to intervene in a political situation represented as requiring determination, resistance, and the capacity to prevail over obstacles.

Greatness becomes politically actionable because it is transformed into an **object of value** toward which the entire narrative program is oriented. What might otherwise remain an abstract and indeterminate ideal is thus incorporated into a trajectory of loss and recovery, making restoration intelligible as a concrete transformation from a negatively valorized present toward a positively valorized future.

Enemies become narratively relevant because they obstruct conjunction. Their function is therefore not limited to representing ideological or electoral opposition: within the narrative structure, they provide the obstacles against which the protagonist's competence can be tested, displayed, and ultimately confirmed. Antagonism consequently contributes to the internal coherence of the restorative program by making the intervention of the leader appear both necessary and consequential.

Supporters become part of the story because they simultaneously legitimate, assist, and benefit from the transformation; and political identity thus emerges not simply from what Trump represents, but from **what he is narratively constructed as capable of doing**.

In this configuration, leadership functions as the narrative mediation between a negatively valorized present and the desired recovery of a positively valorized national condition. The leader's centrality therefore derives not only from his position within the political discourse, but from his role as the indispensable operator of the transformation connecting crisis to restoration. This narrative dependency ultimately reinforces the personalization of the political project.

3.2. MILEI: THE DISRUPTIVE NARRATIVE PROGRAM

The axiological configuration identified in the previous chapter acquires a distinct narrative structure in the case of Javier Milei.

If Trump's political universe is predominantly organized around the recovery of a positively valorized condition represented as lost or weakened, Milei's communication constructs transformation through a different logic: the existing political and economic order is itself represented as the principal obstacle separating the collective subject from its objects of value. The narrative task is therefore not primarily to restore continuity, but to **interrupt it**.

At the center of the Mileian narrative lies a condition of crisis interpreted not as a temporary deviation but as the consequence of a structurally dysfunctional system. Inflation, economic stagnation, public expenditure, bureaucracy, political privilege, and state intervention are incorporated into a broader representation of Argentina as trapped within an order that continually reproduces the conditions of its own failure.

The initial narrative situation can consequently be represented as a condition of disjunction:

$$\text{ARGENTINE PEOPLE} \cup \text{FREEDOM / PROSPERITY / AUTONOMY}$$

The collective subject is separated from positively valorized objects whose attainment is prevented by the persistence of an antagonistic political and institutional system.

This structure differs significantly from Trump's restorative narrative. In the Trumpian configuration, the initial disjunction derives from the loss of a previously possessed condition: America must become great *again*. In Milei's case, the emphasis falls more strongly on the persistence of structures that prevent the realization of a different future.

The problem is therefore not simply that a valued object has been lost. The **mechanism producing disjunction remains active**.

This distinction determines the narrative program. If the system itself continually reproduces crisis, the protagonist cannot achieve conjunction simply by correcting isolated dysfunctions. He must transform or dismantle the structures responsible for maintaining the initial condition.

The basic transformation can therefore be formulated as:

CONSTRAINT / CRISIS / INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUITY

↓

RUPTURE

↓

FREEDOM / PROSPERITY / REFOUNDATION

Rupture is thus neither the final object of value nor an end in itself. It functions as the **necessary transformative operation** through which access to the positively valorized objects becomes possible.

This distinction is particularly important for interpreting **IMG 2a**, centered on the chainsaw. At the figurative level, the object immediately evokes cutting and material destruction. At the narrative level, however, the chainsaw functions as an **instrument of transformation**: it gives visible form to the operation that separates an unacceptable present from a desired future.

The object effectively compresses an extended political narrative into a simple physical action. To cut public expenditure, bureaucracy, political privilege, or state structures becomes figuratively representable through the act of cutting itself. The chainsaw therefore translates an abstract program into a concrete narrative gesture.

Its semiotic sequence can be represented as:

EXISTING SYSTEM

↓

CUTTING

↓

REMOVAL OF CONSTRAINT

↓

POSSIBILITY OF TRANSFORMATION

The spectacular force of the object derives partly from the immediacy of this sequence. The chainsaw does not merely symbolize Milei's political identity; it provides a material representation of the **doing** through which the political subject claims that transformation will occur.

In this sense, **IMG 2a** contributes to the construction of Milei not simply as an anti-establishment leader but as a **transformative subject**. From a Greimasian perspective, Milei occupies the position of the subject of doing whose narrative program consists in overcoming the forces responsible for the initial disjunction.

The objects of value are represented through concepts such as freedom, economic stabilization, prosperity, individual autonomy, and liberation from the political "caste".

The fundamental actantial distribution can therefore be reconstructed as:

MILEI → SUBJECT OF TRANSFORMATION

ARGENTINE PEOPLE / PRODUCTIVE SUBJECTS

↓

COLLECTIVE BENEFICIARY

FREEDOM / PROSPERITY / AUTONOMY

↓

OBJECTS OF VALUE

CASTA / BUREAUCRACY / DYSFUNCTIONAL STATE STRUCTURES

↓ OPPONENTS

LIBERTARIAN PROGRAM / SUPPORTERS / ECONOMIC KNOWLEDGE

↓

HELPERS OR RESOURCES OF COMPETENCE

As in Trump's case, these positions should not be interpreted as fixed empirical identities. They are narrative functions whose occupants can vary according to the specific text. What remains relatively stable is the relational structure through which political action becomes intelligible.

The role of the **opponent** is especially important in Milei's narrative because the antagonistic actor is not represented merely as preventing a particular policy from being implemented. The opponent can be constructed as the very cause of the crisis.

This is particularly evident in **IMG 2c**, centered on institutional rupture and opposition to the political "caste".

The category of the "casta" performs a powerful actantial condensation. Different political parties, politicians, bureaucratic actors, institutional practices, and forms of privilege can be brought together within a single antagonistic category. Their empirical heterogeneity is reduced at the narrative level by the common function assigned to them: they obstruct the transformation necessary to liberate the collective subject.

The opposition can therefore be represented as:

MILEI / PEOPLE / FREEDOM

versus

CASTA / SYSTEM / CONSTRAINT

Such a configuration produces a strongly moralized narrative field. The conflict is not merely between alternative policy proposals but between two incompatible systems of value.

The opponent is consequently constructed as an **anti-subject**: an actant pursuing or preserving a program incompatible with the protagonist's object of value.

Where Milei's program seeks freedom, the anti-subject reproduces constraint.

Where Milei promises transformation, the anti-subject defends continuity.

Where the protagonist claims to represent productive citizens, the “casta” is represented as extracting resources or benefits from them.

The antagonistic relationship therefore extends beyond political competition and becomes a struggle between two models of social order.

This structure is fundamental to the narrative necessity of rupture. If opponents were merely mistaken or inefficient, negotiation and incremental reform might remain narratively plausible. Once they are incorporated into a system represented as structurally responsible for decline, compromise becomes more difficult to reconcile with the protagonist’s mission.

The narrative tends toward an opposition between **transformation and reproduction**:

MILEI → TRANSFORMATION OF THE SYSTEM

CASTA → REPRODUCTION OF THE SYSTEM

This makes the rejection of continuity a component of the protagonist’s competence.

As in Trump’s case, competence is constructed through a combination of modalities. The Mileian subject must be represented as wanting, having to, knowing how, and being able to perform the promised transformation. The expressive forms through which these modalities are manifested differ significantly.

The intense bodily performance visible in **IMG 2b** contributes primarily to the construction of **wanting-to-do** and **having-to-do**. Gestural intensity, shouting, facial tension, confrontation, and expansive occupation of space make the political commitment of the subject perceptible.

The body communicates that transformation is not merely an abstract preference.

It is represented as an urgent necessity.

Anger therefore acquires a narrative function. It can indicate the degree of investment of the subject in the object of value and the perceived intolerability of the existing situation. The intensity of the body becomes a visible manifestation of the intensity of the political program.

This is where modal and passional structures begin to overlap.

The protagonist not only **wants** transformation; he appears affectively unable to accept the continuation of the existing order. Political action is consequently represented as both volitional and necessary.

The relation can be schematized as:

CRISIS → INDIGNATION → NECESSITY TO ACT → RUPTURE

IMG 2b thus contributes to a different form of competence from Trump's **IMG 1b**. Trump's dominance tends to construct the subject through control of the scene; Milei's bodily intensity constructs the subject through the visible impossibility of remaining indifferent to the crisis.

In one case, competence tends toward **mastery**. In the other, it tends toward **urgency**.

This does not mean that Milei's narrative lacks a claim to technical mastery. On the contrary, **IMG 2e**, centered on inflation charts, economic indicators, and their spectacularized presentation, performs precisely this complementary function.

If **IMG 2b** helps construct the leader as the subject who intensely **wants and must act**, **IMG 2e** contributes to constructing him as the subject who **knows how to act**.

The use of inflation charts and economic data introduces a different regime of political legitimacy. The leader does not rely exclusively on emotional intensity or anti-institutional transgression; he also claims epistemic competence.

Economic indicators allow the political narrative to construct a sequence of diagnosis:

DATA

↓

INTERPRETATION OF CRISIS

↓

IDENTIFICATION OF CAUSES → PROPOSED TRANSFORMATION

The chart consequently does more than represent economic information. Within the political performance, it can become an instrument through which the subject displays the capacity to interpret reality correctly. This is particularly important because the Mileian narrative depends on the claim that conventional political actors have misunderstood, concealed, or reproduced the causes of Argentina's economic crisis. Technical knowledge therefore becomes part of the distinction between protagonist and opponent.

The leader claims not only greater determination but **superior diagnosis**. The resulting modal configuration combines two apparently different dimensions:

- **IMG 2b** → PASSIONAL INTENSITY / WILLINGNESS TO ACT
- **IMG 2e** → EPISTEMIC COMPETENCE / KNOWING HOW TO ACT

These dimensions reinforce one another. Knowledge without determination could appear politically ineffective; determination without knowledge could appear arbitrary. The Mileian narrative seeks to construct a protagonist possessing both. The economist and the disruptive political performer consequently become two aspects of the same narrative subject.

This duality helps explain why the spectacularization of economic graphs in **IMG 2e** is particularly significant. Data are not left within the conventional visual regime of technical expertise. They enter political performance.

Graphs can be displayed, contrasted, simplified, dramatized, and incorporated into audiovisual communication. Technical knowledge itself becomes **spectacularized**.

The transformation can be represented as:

ECONOMIC DATA → DIAGNOSIS

↓

PERFORMANCE OF EXPERTISE

↓

POLITICAL LEGITIMATION

The epistemic subject becomes simultaneously a media performer.

This convergence complicates any interpretation of Milei based exclusively on emotional populism. His communicative identity combines the passion of the insurgent with the claimed rational competence of the economist.

A further narrative function is performed by **IMG 2d**, centered on "productive chaos".

At first sight, shouting, provocation, hyperbole, confrontation, and accelerated communication might appear to constitute noise surrounding the political program rather than part of the program itself. Within the narrative structure, however, these elements can undergo a process of resemanticization:

- disorder becomes evidence that something is happening.
- instability becomes evidence of transformation.
- conflict becomes evidence that resistance is being overcome.
- chaos can consequently acquire the status of a **narrative passage** between an old order and a new one.

This is why the concept of "productive chaos" must be handled carefully. The analysis does not claim that chaos is Milei's ultimate object of value.

The desired state is not permanent disorder. Rather, certain forms of disorder can be positively valorized insofar as they signify the destabilization of an order already defined as negative.

The structure is therefore:

NEGATIVE ORDER → DISRUPTIVE INSTABILITY

↓

TRANSFORMATION → NEW ORDER

This is a fundamental difference from a political narrative in which stability itself constitutes the principal positive value.

Milei's disruptive narrative can tolerate —and under certain conditions valorize— instability because the persistence of the previous order has already been negatively sanctioned.

IMG 2d therefore occupies a particularly important position within the corpus. It makes visible the **transformative interval:**

- **IMG 2c** identifies the system that must be overcome.
- **IMG 2a** materializes the act of cutting it.
- **IMG 2b** embodies the intensity required to confront it.
- **IMG 2e** supplies epistemic justification for the transformation.
- **IMG 2d** represents the unstable passage produced by the process itself.

The five images can therefore be assigned complementary narrative functions:

- **IMG 2a → INSTRUMENT / PERFORMANCE OF RUPTURE**
- **IMG 2b → PASSIONAL AND MODAL COMPETENCE**
- **IMG 2c → OPPONENT / ANTI-SUBJECT**
- **IMG 2d → DISRUPTIVE TRANSFORMATION / PRODUCTIVE CHAOS**
- **IMG 2e → DIAGNOSIS / EPISTEMIC COMPETENCE / LEGITIMATION**

Taken together, the corpus constructs a narrative architecture substantially more complex than a generic opposition between Milei and "the establishment".

The leader's political legitimacy depends upon a sequence connecting **diagnosis, antagonism, competence, rupture, and refoundation**.

The role of diagnosis is especially important. The narrative transformation can only appear necessary if the initial condition is first represented as intolerable and if its causes are made identifiable.

IMG 2e consequently participates in what might be described as a **cognitive qualification** of the protagonist. Milei claims competence not only because he proposes action but because he presents himself as capable of reading the economic reality that others have failed to understand or address.

The political subject is thus constructed through a double superiority:

HE UNDERSTANDS WHAT THE SYSTEM DOES NOT UNDERSTAND

and

HE IS WILLING TO DO WHAT THE SYSTEM WILL NOT DO

Knowledge and rupture converge.

This structure also helps explain the narrative role of **anti-formality**. Conventional political behavior can be associated with the antagonistic system, while deviation from conventional behavior can become evidence that the protagonist is genuinely exterior to its logic.

Transgression therefore contributes to the construction of the subject's qualification.

The very features that might ordinarily be interpreted as incompatibilities with institutional leadership—aggression, hyperbole, rejection of protocol, excessive gesturality—can be narratively reconfigured as signs that the protagonist has not been assimilated by the system he promises to transform.

The narrative produces a distinctive paradox:

TO BECOME THE LEGITIMATE INSTITUTIONAL LEADER,

THE SUBJECT MUST CONTINUE TO APPEAR ANTI-INSTITUTIONAL.

This tension becomes particularly significant once the outsider occupies institutional power.

The protagonist must govern without losing the semiotic exteriority upon which part of his original legitimacy depends. The narrative can resolve this tension by continually relocating the antagonist: the "system" remains present in bureaucracies, opposition parties, inherited structures, resistant institutions, or other actors represented as preventing transformation.

The political program can thus preserve its disruptive character after electoral victory.

This mechanism also affects the **sanction** phase of the narrative schema. In a conventional completed narrative, the subject performs the transformation and is subsequently evaluated according to whether the desired object has been obtained. In political communication, however, sanction is necessarily more unstable.

Economic indicators can become particularly important in this phase. If inflation falls, fiscal balances change, or other indicators are represented as improving, the same numerical language used to diagnose the initial crisis can be redeployed as evidence that the transformative program is working.

IMG 2e therefore possesses a potentially double narrative function:

- BEFORE TRANSFORMATION → EVIDENCE OF CRISIS
- AFTER TRANSFORMATION → POSSIBLE EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

The statistical visualization can move from diagnosis to sanction.

This is another reason why economic data assume such symbolic importance in Milei's communication. Numbers can become part of the narrative trajectory of the protagonist: they describe the world he inherited and can subsequently be mobilized to evaluate the world he claims to be producing.

The sanction does not depend exclusively on economic outcomes. Within a strongly antagonistic narrative, **resistance itself can become evidence of transformation**.

If established actors oppose the protagonist, their opposition can be interpreted as confirmation that entrenched interests are being threatened.

This produces a structure comparable, though not identical, to the Trumpian absorption of antagonism.

In Milei's narrative:

RESISTANCE FROM THE SYSTEM

↓

EVIDENCE THAT THE SYSTEM IS BEING CHALLENGED

The opponent therefore performs a paradoxical function. It obstructs the narrative program while simultaneously providing signs that the protagonist is genuinely pursuing it.

Conflict becomes self-confirming under certain interpretive conditions. The narrative can consequently convert obstacles into **secondary sanctions of authenticity**. If Milei is attacked by actors already categorized as members or defenders of the "casta", the attack can reinforce rather than weaken his anti-caste identity. The opponent confirms the distinction on which the protagonist's legitimacy depends.

This does not make the narrative immune to contradiction or political failure. It does, however, provide a semiotic mechanism through which certain forms of opposition can be incorporated without destabilizing the underlying identity.

The role of supporters must also be considered. As in Trump's case, the collective beneficiary can simultaneously function as a **helper**.

Supporters reproduce slogans, circulate clips, appropriate images, produce memes, defend interpretations, and participate in the digital expansion of the political persona. The particular characteristics of Milei's imagery make this participatory dimension especially visible through processes of memetic transformation.

The leader's highly recognizable appearance and expressive style facilitate visual replication. Hair, gestures, facial expressions, the chainsaw, shouting, and other recurrent features provide units that can be detached and recombined while preserving recognizability.

The public consequently participates not only in the dissemination of the narrative but also in its **semiotic transformation**.

This is especially important for the construction of a platformized political subject. The original enunciator does not retain complete control over the sign, circulation can strengthen the narrative identity when transformed representations remain compatible with its fundamental axiological structure.

A meme exaggerating Milei's disruptive qualities, for example, may potentially function as criticism or support. What matters for the present analysis is that both operations can contribute to the continued association between the leader and rupture.

The narrative identity thus acquires a certain degree of **circulatory resilience**.

The overall Mileian narrative sequence can be reconstructed as follows:

1. **INITIAL STATE**
   Argentina is represented as separated from prosperity, stability, freedom, and economic potential.

2. **DIAGNOSIS**
   The crisis is attributed to structural causes associated with the political "casta", state intervention, bureaucracy, previous economic management, and institutional continuity.

3. **MANDATE**
   Radical transformation becomes necessary because incremental correction is represented as insufficient.

4. **COMPETENCE**
   Milei is constructed as possessing economic knowledge, determination, emotional investment, and willingness to break with conventional political practice.

5. **CONFRONTATION**
   The protagonist encounters the "casta", institutional resistance, political opposition, and other obstacles to transformation.

6. **PERFORMANCE**
   Rupture is enacted symbolically and politically through cutting, dismantling, confrontation, acceleration, and institutional reform.

7. **TRANSFORMATIVE INTERVAL**
   Instability and conflict can be resemanticized as "productive chaos", signs that the previous order is actually being disrupted.

8. **SANCTION**
   Economic indicators, political victories, institutional changes, or resistance from opponents can be interpreted as evidence concerning the effectiveness or authenticity of the program.

9. **PROMISED CONJUNCTION**

   The collective subject is represented as capable of achieving freedom, prosperity, autonomy, and a refounded political-economic order.

This sequence corresponds broadly to the canonical narrative schema while introducing a specific feature: the unusually positive narrative function assigned to **discontinuity itself**. The Mileian program can therefore be understood not merely as a narrative of political opposition but as a **narrative of passage:**

- the collective subject must cross from one order to another;
- the protagonist is the operator who makes that crossing possible;
- the chainsaw is its material metaphor;
- anger supplies its passional energy;
- the "casta" provides its antagonist;
- productive chaos represents the instability of the transition;
- economic knowledge provides its epistemic justification.

The corpus thus reveals a strong convergence among the five images. They do not simply portray different aspects of Milei's political persona; they occupy distinct positions within a coherent transformative narrative.

At the deepest level, the program can be summarized as:

ARGENTINA CONSTRAINED / CRISIS-RIDDEN / IMMOBILIZED

↓

MILEI AS COMPETENT DISRUPTIVE SUBJECT

↓

CONFRONTATION AND DISMANTLING OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM

↓

TRANSITION / PRODUCTIVE INSTABILITY

↓

ARGENTINA FREE / PROSPEROUS / REFOUNDED

This transformation constitutes the narrative realization of the axiological system reconstructed in the previous chapter.

Milei's **ethos of rupture** therefore becomes, at the semi-narrative level, a **disruptive narrative program of refoundation**. Rupture acquires political meaning because it functions as the necessary operation for overcoming a negatively valorized continuity; freedom becomes narratively actionable because it is transformed into an object of value; the "casta" becomes narratively relevant because it obstructs the desired conjunction; and economic expertise contributes to the protagonist's competence by legitimating both the diagnosis of crisis and the proposed direction of transformation.

Political identity consequently emerges not simply from the values Milei declares but from the transformation he is narratively constructed as capable of performing. The leader is positioned between a present represented as structurally exhausted and a future whose realization requires the interruption of that present.

His centrality derives precisely from this mediating function. Milei becomes the subject through whom **crisis is converted into rupture and rupture into the possibility of refoundation**. The more continuity is represented as reproducing the causes of decline, the more radical agency can be concentrated in the protagonist who promises to interrupt it.

This narrative structure reinforces the personalization of the political project. The possibility of achieving freedom, prosperity, and institutional transformation becomes progressively connected to the leader's capacity to diagnose, confront, dismantle, and reconstruct. His personal performance consequently functions as a visible anticipation of the transformation promised to the collective subject.

Milei does not merely propose rupture as a political strategy: within the corpus, he is progressively constructed as the **embodied operator of rupture itself**.

3.3. COMPARATIVE NARRATIVE STRUCTURES

The comparison between the Trumpian and Mileian corpora reveals that both political identities are organized around a fundamental narrative structure of **disjunction, transformation,** and **promised conjunction**. In both cases, the collective subject is represented as separated from positively valorized objects, while the leader assumes the role of the competent subject capable of overcoming the forces responsible for that separation. At this general level, the two narrative programs display a significant structural similarity. Their deeper organization, however, differs substantially:

- Trump constructs a **restorative narrative**. The initial disjunction is presented as the consequence of a loss: America has been separated from a condition of greatness, security, prosperity, sovereignty, or international recognition that it previously possessed or is imagined to have possessed. The narrative transformation therefore seeks to recover a valued condition situated in an idealized past and projected into the future;

- Milei constructs a **disruptive narrative**. The initial disjunction is not primarily represented as the loss of a previously stable condition but as the continuing effect of a political and economic system considered structurally dysfunctional. Argentina remains separated from freedom, prosperity, and autonomy because the existing order continually reproduces the conditions of crisis. The narrative transformation must therefore interrupt this mechanism before a new conjunction can become possible.

The fundamental difference can be expressed as follows:

- TRUMP: LOSS → CONFRONTATION → RECOVERY

- MILEI: CRISIS → RUPTURE → REFOUNDATION

This distinction concerns not only the political objectives of the two leaders but the narrative logic through which those objectives acquire meaning.

In Trump's case, the desired object already possesses a recognizable symbolic form. "Greatness" is presented as something that America knows, remembers, or can imagine as belonging to its authentic identity. The future is therefore constructed through a retrospective movement: political transformation promises to recover what has been lost.

In Milei's case, the future is constructed more strongly through discontinuity. The desired political and economic condition cannot simply be recovered because the system inherited from the past is itself represented as the obstacle. The future must emerge from the interruption of continuity.

The two narrative programs consequently establish different relations with **time**.

Trump's temporality can be described as circular or restorative:

POSITIVE PAST → NEGATIVE PRESENT → RESTORED FUTURE

The future acquires value by reconnecting the collective subject with a previous condition.

Milei's temporality is predominantly directional and discontinuous:

NEGATIVE CONTINUITY → BREAK → DIFFERENT FUTURE

The future acquires value precisely because it must cease to reproduce the past.

These temporal structures are essential to the construction of the respective leaders. Trump becomes necessary as the subject capable of **returning** the nation to its legitimate trajectory. Milei becomes necessary as the subject capable of **interrupting** a trajectory represented as inherently destructive.

The difference can therefore be reformulated through the relationship between the protagonist and political continuity:

- TRUMP → RESTORE A BROKEN CONTINUITY
- MILEI → BREAK A DYSFUNCTIONAL CONTINUITY

This distinction also transforms the narrative function of the **opponent**.

In the Trumpian corpus, opponents are principally constructed as forces that have produced, accelerated, or benefited from national decline and that continue to obstruct restoration. Their narrative function is to stand between the authentic political community and the recovery of its objects of value. Political elites, adversaries, hostile media representations, immigration-related threats, and other antagonistic figures can occupy this position according to the specific text.

IMG 1e makes this mechanism particularly visible through the construction of immigration as threat. The antagonist is figurativized as an external or culturally differentiated presence capable of

disturbing the boundaries and security of the collective community. The political narrative consequently defines not only what must be recovered but also what must be contained or excluded for restoration to occur.

In the Mileian corpus, the opponent occupies an even more structurally internal position. **IMG 2c** constructs the political "caste" not simply as an adversary competing for power but as part of the mechanism responsible for producing and perpetuating crisis. The antagonist is embedded within the existing order.

The difference is analytically significant.

Trump's opponent predominantly **prevents restoration**.

Milei's opponent predominantly **reproduces the condition that makes rupture necessary**.

Consequently, the relationship between protagonist and antagonist also differs. Trump demonstrates competence by resisting, defeating, controlling, or overcoming threatening forces. Milei demonstrates competence by exposing, confronting, dismantling, or bypassing the structures identified with the old order.

This difference becomes particularly evident when comparing **IMG 1a** and **IMG 2a**.

Trump's raised fist following the Butler assassination attempt represents a subject who has undergone a test and remains standing. The dominant operation is **resistance**. The body is exposed to danger but subsequently reasserts its capacity to endure and confront it.

Milei's chainsaw represents a different operation. The subject is not primarily shown resisting an external action; he is symbolically equipped to perform an action upon the existing order. The dominant operation is **intervention**.

The contrast can therefore be expressed as:

- TRUMP / RAISED FIST → RESISTANCE
- MILEI / CHAINSAW → INTERVENTION

Both signs communicate strength, but they narrativize strength differently.

The raised fist says, in effect: **the subject cannot be defeated**.

The chainsaw says: **the subject will cut through what prevents transformation**.

The distinction illustrates a broader principle emerging from the comparative analysis: identical or closely related values may acquire different meanings depending on the narrative operations into which they are inserted.

Strength in the Trumpian narrative is primarily the capacity to withstand, dominate, defend, and restore.

Strength in the Mileian narrative is primarily the capacity to intervene, dismantle, accelerate, and transform.

A similar difference emerges from the comparison between **IMG 1b and IMG 2b**, both of which place the leader's body at the center of political signification.

IMG 1b constructs Trump through frontality, centrality, dominance, and visual control. The political subject appears to possess the scene. His body expresses an already established capacity to occupy a superior position.

IMG 2b constructs Milei through tension, expansive gestures, shouting, and bodily intensity. His body does not primarily stabilize the scene; it introduces or intensifies movement within it.

The narrative functions of the two bodies are therefore distinct:

- TRUMP'S BODY → CONTROL OF THE POLITICAL SPACE
- MILEI'S BODY → ACTIVATION OF THE POLITICAL SPACE

Trump's competence is displayed through mastery.

Milei's competence is displayed through intensity.

The first tends toward **stabilization**, the second toward **mobilization**.

These bodily configurations correspond directly to the different transformations promised by the two narratives. A restorative protagonist must appear capable of controlling disorder. A disruptive

protagonist must appear capable of producing sufficient energy to break an order represented as resistant to change.

The comparison between **IMG 1c** and **IMG 2e** reveals another important difference: the construction of **epistemic and practical competence**.

Trump's airplanes, luxury, wealth, and celebrity-business imagery provide a biographical demonstration of success. The leader's previous achievements are transformed into evidence of his capacity to act effectively in the political sphere.

The narrative reasoning can be summarized as:

HE HAS SUCCEEDED

↓

HE KNOWS HOW TO SUCCEED

↓

HE CAN MAKE THE NATION SUCCEED

Competence is therefore constructed through the visible results attributed to the protagonist's biography.

Milei's inflation charts and economic indicators operate differently. Competence is constructed through the capacity to interpret economic reality, identify causal mechanisms, formulate a diagnosis, and propose corrective action.

The corresponding sequence is:

HE UNDERSTANDS THE CRISIS

↓

HE KNOWS ITS CAUSES

↓

HE KNOWS WHAT MUST BE CHANGED

Trump's competence is thus strongly **performative and biographical**.

Milei's competence is strongly **diagnostic and epistemic**, although it is subsequently incorporated into an equally performative media identity.

This distinction is particularly important because it demonstrates that the two leaders do not derive political authority exclusively from charisma or emotional mobilization. Each constructs a specific narrative of competence capable of answering the fundamental question posed to any protagonist: **why is this subject qualified to perform the transformation?**

Trump answers through success, dominance, resilience, and victory.

Milei answers through diagnosis, expertise, determination, and willingness to rupture.

The same comparative logic applies to the construction of the **collective subject**.

In the Trumpian narrative, the people are predominantly configured as a community whose authentic identity must be defended and restored. The collective subject already possesses a symbolic coherence articulated around nation, patriotism, sovereignty, and belonging. **IMG 1d**, with the MAGA symbolic universe, provides a particularly clear materialization of this collective identity.

The red cap allows the narrative program to become wearable. The slogan allows it to become repeatable. The national colors allow it to become visually recognizable. The political community can therefore present itself as already constituted around a common object of value.

In the Mileian narrative, the collective subject is more frequently defined through its relation to **constraint**. Citizens, taxpayers, productive actors, or individuals are represented as burdened by inflation, bureaucracy, political privilege, or state intervention. Collective identity emerges partly from the shared experience of being subjected to a system represented as dysfunctional.

The two publics are therefore constructed according to different narrative predicates:

- TRUMP'S PEOPLE → A COMMUNITY THAT MUST RECOVER
- MILEI'S PEOPLE → SUBJECTS WHO MUST BE LIBERATED

The distinction is subtle but consequential.

Recovery presupposes belonging to something whose integrity has been damaged. Liberation presupposes separation from something that constrains action. The leader consequently establishes a different relationship with the collective subject.

Trump promises to **represent and restore** the authentic community.

Milei promises to **release and reactivate** subjects constrained by the existing system.

These narrative relations also influence the function of political participation.

Within the Trumpian universe, participation frequently takes the form of **identification and collective reaffirmation**. Wearing MAGA symbols, attending rallies, repeating slogans, displaying flags, or circulating iconic images contributes to the public performance of membership.

Within the Mileian universe, participation can assume a more visibly **interventionist and memetic** form. Supporters reproduce the language of rupture, circulate confrontational fragments, remix symbols such as the chainsaw, and participate in the construction of an anti-caste identity.

Both publics become active participants in the narrative, but they reproduce different dominant operations:

- TRUMPIAN PARTICIPATION → AFFIRMING BELONGING
- MILEIAN PARTICIPATION → AMPLIFYING RUPTURE

Again, this distinction concerns dominant tendencies rather than exclusive possibilities. MAGA communication can be highly confrontational, while Milei's supporters can construct strong forms of collective belonging. The comparative value lies in identifying the principal narrative orientations around which these practices become intelligible.

A further difference concerns the role of **disorder**.

In Trump's narrative, disorder tends predominantly to occupy the position of a negative condition. National decline, insecure borders, social conflict, institutional weakness, or external threat become signs that the legitimate order has been disturbed. The protagonist is required to contain disorder and restore stability.

In Milei's narrative, disorder is more ambivalent.

The crisis produced by the existing system is negatively valorized, but the instability generated by attempts to dismantle that system can be reinterpreted positively as evidence of transformation. **IMG 2d** is central to this configuration because "productive chaos" allows disruption to acquire a transitional narrative value.

This produces two distinct narrative grammars:

- TRUMP: DISORDER → INTERVENTION → ORDER
- MILEI: DYSFUNCTIONAL ORDER → DISRUPTION → NEW ORDER

This distinction helps clarify why the Mileian narrative should not be reduced to a simple celebration of chaos. Chaos acquires positive meaning only when inserted into a trajectory leading away from an already negatively valorized system.

It is therefore a **transitional value** rather than necessarily a final one.

The difference between the two programs can also be understood through their respective forms of **narrative sanction**.

Trump's protagonist is sanctioned positively when he demonstrates strength, resistance, victory, dominance, or the capacity to protect the community. **IMG 1a** provides an especially powerful example because physical danger is followed almost immediately by a gesture capable of being interpreted as resistance. The event can therefore be incorporated into the narrative as confirmation of an already established competence.

Milei's protagonist can be sanctioned through different signs: economic results, political victories, institutional reforms, successful confrontation with opponents, or even resistance from the system when such resistance is interpreted as evidence that entrenched structures are genuinely being challenged.

The difference can be summarized as:

- TRUMP → SANCTION THROUGH DEMONSTRATED STRENGTH
- MILEI → SANCTION THROUGH DEMONSTRATED TRANSFORMATION

The two narrative systems nevertheless share an important mechanism: **antagonism can become productive evidence of legitimacy**.

An attack on Trump can reinforce the narrative of the persecuted but resilient leader. Opposition to Milei can reinforce the narrative of a protagonist threatening entrenched interests.

In both cases, therefore, the opponent does more than obstruct the subject. Under certain interpretive conditions, the opponent can unintentionally contribute to the protagonist's positive sanction.

This produces a particularly resilient narrative structure.

The stronger the opposition, the more the protagonist may appear consequential.

The more consequential the protagonist appears, the more his centrality within the narrative can be reinforced.

Political conflict consequently becomes not merely an external circumstance but a **mechanism of narrative reproduction**.

This point also illuminates a major similarity between the two leaders: both narratives depend upon the persistence of antagonism.

Trump requires obstacles because restoration must continually be defended against forces threatening to prevent or reverse it.

Milei requires obstacles because disruption must continually encounter structures whose resistance demonstrates the necessity of transformation.

Complete resolution would therefore create a narrative problem for both political identities.

If America were definitively restored, the restorative subject would lose part of the condition that makes his mission necessary.

If the "casta" and the dysfunctional system were definitively dismantled, the disruptive subject would lose the principal object against which rupture is performed.

Both programs consequently possess a tendency toward **seriality and incompletion**.

The narrative can always generate another test, another obstacle, another threat, another institutional resistance, or another stage of transformation.

This feature is particularly compatible with the temporal structure of digital platforms, where political communication operates through continuous updating rather than definitive narrative closure.

The social media environment favors recurrent episodes. A speech becomes a clip. A confrontation becomes a post. A gesture becomes an image. An image becomes a meme. A meme becomes a new occasion for political conflict.

The narrative program is therefore continually fragmented and reactivated through smaller textual units capable of circulating independently while remaining connected to the broader identity of the protagonist.

This process also explains why the objects contained in the corpus acquire such importance.

The **raised fist**, **airplane**, **MAGA cap**, **anti-immigration image**, **chainsaw**, and **inflation chart** are not merely illustrations accompanying political discourse. Each can condense part of a larger narrative into a highly recognizable visual form.

The raised fist condenses resistance. The airplane condenses success. The MAGA cap condenses restoration and belonging. The anti-immigration image condenses threat. The chainsaw condenses rupture. The inflation chart condenses diagnosis and economic competence.

Similarly, the bodily and visual configurations represented by **IMG 1b**, **IMG 2b**, and **IMG 2d** translate abstract narrative properties into perceptible forms: dominance, intensity, and destabilization become visible.

The corpus therefore demonstrates a process of **narrative condensation**. Complex political programs are translated into signs that can communicate an entire relational structure with minimal explanatory effort.

This compression is especially effective within digital environments characterized by rapid circulation and fragmented attention. A recognizable object or gesture can activate a much broader narrative without requiring that the entire political argument be restated.

The chainsaw can evoke the anti-caste program. The MAGA cap can evoke the restorative national project. The raised fist can evoke resistance and strength. The inflation chart can evoke economic crisis and technical competence.

In this sense, visual political communication does not eliminate narrative complexity. It **compresses narrative complexity into reproducible signs**.

The comparison also reveals two different forms of **heroization**:

- Trump's protagonist tends toward the figure of the **restorative hero**. He confronts threats, survives attacks, defeats opponents, demonstrates competence, and promises to return the community to a valued condition;
- Milei tends toward the figure of the **disruptive hero**. He diagnoses a corrupted order, rejects its conventions, confronts its representatives, accepts instability as a cost of transformation, and promises to establish a radically different condition.

Both are therefore constructed as exceptional subjects, but their exceptionality follows different narrative logics:

- Trump is exceptional because he can **restore what others have allowed to be lost**.
- Milei is exceptional because he can **break what others are incapable or unwilling to break**.

The comparison may consequently be summarized through two narrative trajectories:

TRUMP

DECLINE

↓

THREAT / LOSS

↓

COMPETENT LEADER

↓

CONFRONTATION

↓

RESISTANCE / VICTORY

↓

RESTORATION

MILEI

SYSTEMIC CRISIS

↓

DIAGNOSIS

↓

COMPETENT DISRUPTOR

↓

CONFRONTATION / DISMANTLING

↓

PRODUCTIVE INSTABILITY

↓

REFOUNDATION

At the most abstract level, both structures share the same fundamental movement:

DISJUNCTION

↓

COMPETENT SUBJECT

↓

TRANSFORMATION

↓

CONJUNCTION

What changes is the semantic investment of each position.

For Trump, disjunction signifies **loss**, competence signifies **strength**, transformation signifies **restoration**, and conjunction signifies the recovery of **greatness**.

For Milei, disjunction signifies **systemic constraint**, competence combines **economic knowledge and disruptive determination**, transformation signifies **rupture**, and conjunction signifies **freedom and refoundation**.

This comparison makes it possible to refine the distinction introduced in the previous chapter between restorative and disruptive populist leadership. The difference does not concern merely two communication styles or two rhetorical strategies. It operates at the level of the **narrative grammar through which political reality is organized**.

Trump constructs a world in which something valuable has been lost and must be recovered.

Milei constructs a world in which something dysfunctional persists and must be interrupted.

Trump's protagonist derives legitimacy from the promise to **reconnect** the collective subject with its proper condition.

Milei's protagonist derives legitimacy from the promise to **disconnect** the collective subject from the structures that prevent a different condition from emerging.

The opposition between the two narrative programs can therefore be expressed through an even more fundamental pair:

RECONNECTION / DISCONNECTION

These operations ultimately pursue analogous political effects. Both seek to construct the leader as the indispensable mediator between an unacceptable present and a positively valorized future. Both reduce the complexity of political transformation by concentrating agency in an individualized protagonist. Both construct antagonists whose presence explains the persistence of the initial crisis. Both transform supporters from passive audiences into participants in the reproduction of the narrative. And both derive significant communicative energy from the continuation of conflict.

The difference lies in the direction of the transformation:

- Trump seeks legitimacy by narratively repairing a **broken relation between the nation and its greatness**;
- Milei seeks legitimacy by narratively breaking a **persistent relation between society and a dysfunctional system**.

This inversion constitutes one of the central findings of the comparative analysis.

It also demonstrates why the semi-narrative level is indispensable for understanding contemporary political communication.

Values such as strength, freedom, order, success, anger, or patriotism do not possess political meaning in isolation.

Their meaning emerges from the transformations in which they participate, the subjects to whom they are attributed, the opponents against whom they are mobilized, and the objects of value toward which they are directed.

The political leader consequently becomes intelligible as a **narrative operator**:

- Trump is constructed as the operator capable of transforming **loss into recovery**.
- Milei is constructed as the operator capable of transforming **constraint into rupture and rupture into refoundation**.

The two models thus converge in their radical personalization of political agency while diverging in the temporal, axiological, and transformational structures through which that agency is made meaningful.

At the semi-narrative level, contemporary populist leadership emerges not simply as the capacity to represent a collective identity, but as the capacity to embody the transformation through which that identity is promised a different political condition.

In this sense, the leader becomes simultaneously **subject, instrument, and visible guarantee of the narrative program**. His body, objects, gestures, biography, antagonists, and performances are integrated into a coherent trajectory that makes political change imaginable through the figure of an individual protagonist. The resulting personalization does not eliminate the collective subject; rather, it reorganizes the collective around the transformative competence attributed to the leader.

The comparison between Trump and Milei therefore reveals two distinct but structurally related forms of narrative personalization: **one makes the leader necessary because the nation must be restored; the other makes the leader necessary because the existing order must be broken**. In both cases, the political future is narratively made dependent upon the exceptional capacity of the protagonist to perform a transformation that conventional political actors are represented as unable, unwilling, or structurally incapable of achieving.

IV. PATHOS AND INTERACTION

4.1. EMOTIONAL CONFIGURATIONS

The comparative analysis of the corpus reveals that the political identities of Donald Trump and Javier Milei are not organized exclusively through values, narratives, and symbolic objects.

They are also structured through **distinct emotional configurations** that make the political world affectively intelligible.

Fear, pride, anger, indignation, confidence, enthusiasm, resentment, and hope do not appear as secondary psychological reactions to an already formed political message. They participate directly in the construction of the message itself.

From a semiotic perspective, passions are not treated as inaccessible internal states but as **discursively and visually organized positions**.

The analysis therefore does not seek to determine what Trump, Milei, or their audiences "really feel". Instead, it examines how particular texts construct situations in which certain emotions become plausible, legitimate, and narratively functional.

This distinction is fundamental. Political communication can construct fear without proving that every viewer is afraid; it can organize anger without demonstrating that every supporter experiences indignation; it can offer pride as an interpretive position without assuming a homogeneous emotional response.

The relevant question is how the text **configures a world in which particular passions make sense**.

In the Trumpian corpus, the dominant emotional structure is organized around a movement from **threat toward reassurance through strength**.

The political world is repeatedly represented as endangered, weakened, attacked, or destabilized, this negative emotional state does not remain unresolved. It is redirected toward the figure of a leader capable of transforming vulnerability into confidence and fear into collective affirmation.

The resulting sequence can be described as:

THREAT

↓

FEAR / INSECURITY

↓

LEADER'S RESISTANCE

↓

CONFIDENCE

↓

PATRIOTIC REAFFIRMATION

This structure is particularly visible in **IMG 1a**, centered on Trump's raised fist following the assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania.

The event itself introduces an extreme condition of vulnerability. The political body becomes physically exposed to danger, and the visual field is initially marked by uncertainty, threat, and bodily risk. The raised-fist gesture reorganizes the affective meaning of the scene. Vulnerability is not allowed to remain the dominant interpretation. It is transformed into resilience.

The emotional trajectory of **IMG 1a** therefore moves rapidly from fear toward strength.

The image can initially activate anxiety because the leader has been attacked. The gesture that follows provides an immediate counter-sign: the subject remains present, upright, visible, and capable of performing resistance. The body becomes the medium through which emotional disorder is converted into renewed confidence.

The resulting pathos does not eliminate fear, it **contains and redirects it**.

Fear becomes politically productive because it demonstrates the existence of a real or perceived threat, while the leader's response demonstrates the capacity to withstand that threat. The emotion thus acquires a narrative function: danger makes strength necessary.

This produces a characteristic Trumpian affective structure:

THE WORLD IS DANGEROUS, BUT THE LEADER IS STRONG ENOUGH TO MASTER IT.

The same configuration can be identified in **IMG 1b**, although through a different visual regime.

Here the emotional effect is less dependent on a dramatic event and more strongly connected to **control, dominance, and visual authority**. Frontality, centrality, low-angle framing, and spatial command contribute to the construction of a subject who appears emotionally contained and politically stable.

The spectator is not primarily invited to experience the leader's emotional intensity. Instead, the image offers the leader as the solution to intensity.

Trump's body performs **control over affect**.

This distinction is important because it demonstrates that political pathos does not always require visibly emotional bodies. Emotional effects can also be produced through the representation of **emotional mastery**.

The controlled body implies that the leader can contain uncertainty, conflict, and danger.

The emotional value of **IMG 1b** can therefore be expressed as:

EXTERNAL INSTABILITY / INTERNAL CONTROL

This opposition reinforces the broader ethos of strength reconstructed in the previous chapters.

Trump's pathos is thus not merely passionate in the conventional sense. It frequently depends on the ability to stage a leader who appears **less destabilized than the world around him**.

In **IMG 1c**, the emotional configuration changes again. Airplanes, wealth, luxury, and gilded interiors are associated primarily with **aspiration, admiration, success, and symbolic participation in victory**.

The political leader is not represented here through danger or confrontation but through an aesthetic of achieved success. The affective position offered to the viewer can move from distance to identification: material success is spectacularly displayed, but it is incorporated into a political narrative in which supporters are invited to interpret the leader's success as a promise of collective success.

The emotional sequence becomes:

VISIBLE SUCCESS

↓

ADMIRATION

↓

CONFIDENCE IN COMPETENCE

↓

HOPE OF COLLECTIVE SUCCESS

The relationship between wealth and affect is therefore more complex than simple ostentation.

Within the Trumpian value system, luxury can become emotionally reassuring because it functions as visible evidence that the subject knows how to win. The spectator is invited to transfer confidence from the leader's personal trajectory to the political future he promises.

This is one of the mechanisms through which Trump's celebrity-business identity intersects with populist communication. The leader can remain materially distant from ordinary supporters while simultaneously offering them **symbolic proximity to success**.

The emotional promise is not necessarily "you are like me", but rather "my victory can become your victory".

This is a different form of identification from egalitarian similarity.

It is an identification through **aspirational participation**.

The Trumpian emotional universe also relies heavily on **patriotic pride**, especially in **IMG 1d**, centered on the MAGA symbolic universe.

The red cap, slogan, national colors, flags, and repeated visual references to American identity create a highly recognizable emotional environment in which political support is linked to belonging.

Here, pathos operates through ritual repetition.

The same signs return again and again, producing familiarity, recognition, and collective continuity. The emotional effect derives not from surprise but from the opposite: **the reassuring repetition of a shared code**.

MAGA imagery therefore organizes pride through visibility.

The supporter sees the signs of belonging, recognizes them, and can reproduce them.

The political identity becomes emotionally inhabitable because it is materialized through objects, colors, slogans, and ritual forms that make the community perceptible.

IMG 1d consequently produces a different affective sequence:

RECOGNITION → BELONGING → PRIDE → COLLECTIVE REAFFIRMATION

The emotional force of patriotic imagery depends partly on its capacity to transform abstract national identity into a perceptible environment.

The nation can be worn. It can be displayed. It can be repeated. It can be staged collectively. This allows political passion to move from individual feeling to **ritualized collective emotion**.

The crowd, the cap, the slogan, and the flag become devices through which belonging is continuously performed rather than merely declared.

IMG 1e introduces a markedly different emotional regime. The anti-immigration fake imagery depicting immigrants allegedly “eating cats” constructs alterity through shock, fear, disgust, and moral transgression. The emotional effectiveness of such imagery depends on the reduction of a complex political issue to an immediate and culturally disturbing scene.

The represented behavior is not merely illegal or economically problematic. It is constructed as **abnormal and boundary-violating**. This allows the image to mobilize several emotions simultaneously:

- **FEAR** because an out-group is represented as threatening;
- **DISGUST** because the alleged act violates familiar cultural norms;
- **ANGER** because the situation can be attributed to political failure;
- **RESENTMENT** because previous authorities can be blamed for permitting it;
- **PROTECTIVE IDENTIFICATION** because the threatened community becomes more clearly defined in opposition to the represented outsider.

The emotional function of **IMG 1e** therefore extends beyond immigration policy.

The image helps construct a **moralized boundary** between the legitimate community and the threatening other.

The affective logic can be represented as:

THREATENING OTHER

↓

FEAR / DISGUST

↓

POLITICAL BLAME

↓

NEED FOR PROTECTION

The leader's role is implicit within this sequence. If the world is made emotionally threatening, the protective function attributed to the strong leader becomes more compelling. This reveals one of the central characteristics of Trumpian pathos: negative passions are often **redirected toward a promise of control**.

Fear produces the desire for security. Anger produces the desire for decisive leadership. Humiliation produces the desire for restored greatness. Perceived national decline produces the desire for pride. The emotional system therefore does not simply amplify crisis. It transforms crisis into a demand for **stabilizing agency**.

Trump's political pathos can thus be summarized through a recurring movement:

NEGATIVE PASSION → STRONG LEADER → POSITIVE REORIENTATION

This is what distinguishes Trump's emotional configuration from Milei's.

In the Mileian corpus, negative passions are not primarily contained by a stabilizing protagonist. They are more frequently **intensified, legitimized, and transformed into energy for rupture**.

The dominant affective structure is therefore not fear followed by mastery, but **frustration followed by anger, mobilization, and disruptive enthusiasm**.

The basic sequence can be represented as:

CRISIS

↓

INDIGNATION

↓

ANGER

↓

INTENSIFICATION

↓

RUPTURE

↓

LIBERATORY EXPECTATION

The initial emotional condition derives from the representation of Argentina as trapped within prolonged economic and institutional crisis.

Inflation, political privilege, bureaucracy, state intervention, and the "casta" are not merely policy issues; they become objects around which dissatisfaction can be narratively and emotionally organized.

The political world is made affectively intelligible through **indignation**. Indignation differs from fear because it already contains a moral judgment. The subject does not merely experience danger. The subject experiences something represented as **unjust**.

This distinction is essential to Milei's political pathos. The crisis is not simply unfortunate. It is attributed. Someone is responsible. The political system has failed. The "casta" benefits. Citizens bear the consequences.

Anger therefore emerges from the conversion of economic or institutional frustration into a moralized narrative of responsibility.

This structure is especially visible in **IMG 2c**, centered on opposition to the political "caste".

The emotional function of the image depends on polarization. The political field is divided between those represented as productive or victimized and those represented as benefiting from a dysfunctional system. The resulting emotional configuration can combine resentment, indignation, hostility, and the desire for punishment or removal.

The sequence becomes:

PERCEIVED INJUSTICE

↓

IDENTIFICATION OF RESPONSIBLE ACTOR

↓

ANGER

↓

DEMAND FOR RUPTURE

This makes the antagonist emotionally indispensable. The “casta” provides anger with an object.

Without the construction of responsibility, economic dissatisfaction could remain diffuse. By concentrating causal attribution in a recognizable opponent, the political narrative converts social frustration into directed passion.

Milei’s anger therefore functions as a **structured political emotion**.

It is not merely an uncontrolled outburst.

Within the relevant semiotic system, it can signify that the leader correctly perceives the intolerability of the situation and refuses to normalize it.

This is particularly evident in **IMG 2b**, where bodily performance becomes central.

Shouting, intense facial expression, expansive gestures, bodily tension, and confrontational movement make anger visible as part of the leader’s identity.

The body does not distance itself from the passion. **It displays and amplifies it**.

The emotional relation between leader and audience therefore differs from the Trumpian model.

Trump often positions himself as the figure capable of mastering a threatening environment.

Milei often positions himself as the figure who **feels the intolerability of the environment with exceptional intensity**.

This allows the leader’s anger to become a sign of proximity to the public’s presumed frustration.

The implicit emotional claim becomes:

I AM ANGRY BECAUSE THE SITUATION IS INTOLERABLE

(AND MY ANGER PROVES THAT I HAVE NOT ACCEPTED IT).

Anger is thus transformed into authenticity.

The leader appears credible because he does not perform institutional neutrality toward a condition constructed as morally unacceptable.

The excess of the body can therefore function as evidence that the political subject is not detached from the crisis. This produces a semiotic reversal. What might ordinarily be interpreted as emotional instability can be positively resemanticized as **ethical intensity**.

The resulting structure is:

EXCESS → PASSIONAL INVESTMENT → SINCERITY → AUTHENTICITY

This does not mean that excess will always be interpreted positively. Opponents may read the same bodily performance as instability, aggression, or lack of institutional competence. The semiotic point is that the Mileian discourse makes an alternative reading available in which the excess itself proves commitment.

The conflict between these interpretations is part of the political struggle over meaning.

IMG 2a, centered on the chainsaw, provides a different but closely related emotional configuration. The chainsaw is not only an ideological symbol of cuts and dismantling. It also possesses an affective intensity generated by its material properties. It is loud. It is dangerous. It cuts. It evokes force. It transforms abstract policy into violent physical imagery.

The object therefore contributes to an emotional aesthetic of **decisiveness and irreversible action**.

For supporters, the chainsaw can produce enthusiasm precisely because it dramatizes the possibility of finally doing what conventional political actors are represented as unwilling to do. The affective sequence can be represented as:

FRUSTRATION WITH INACTION

↓

SPECTACLE OF DECISIVE ACTION

↓

ENTHUSIASM

↓

EXPECTATION OF RUPTURE

The object gives material form to the emotional desire for interruption.

This reveals another difference between the Trumpian and Mileian systems:

- Trump's central symbolic object in **IMG 1d** —the MAGA cap— primarily organizes **belonging;**
- Milei's chainsaw primarily organizes **activation**.

One produces a community that can be visibly inhabited.

The other produces an action that can be imaginatively performed.

The emotional distinction is therefore:

MAGA → PRIDE / BELONGING

CHAINSAW → EXCITEMENT / RELEASE / DISRUPTIVE ANTICIPATION

This difference reinforces the broader distinction between restorative and disruptive leadership.

In **IMG 2d**, the emotional logic reaches perhaps its most distinctive form through "productive chaos".

Shouting, provocation, accelerated rhythm, visual saturation, confrontation, and apparent disorder generate a high-intensity perceptual environment. The viewer is not invited into a calm and ordered political scene.

The scene itself is **tensive**.

This tension can acquire positive value because it signifies that the political system is no longer static.

Chaos becomes affectively meaningful as evidence of movement.

The image can therefore convert anxiety into excitement. Instability can become anticipation. Conflict can become vitality. Disorder can become the emotional sign of a transformation already underway.

The sequence can be represented as:

DISORDER

↓

INTENSITY

↓

PERCEPTION OF MOVEMENT

↓

EXPECTATION OF CHANGE

This is what makes the notion of "productive chaos" particularly important.

The affective value does not derive from chaos as a final political condition. It derives from the fact that chaos can be interpreted as the visible disturbance of a negatively valorized order.

The disorder becomes **teleological**. It points toward something else. This differentiates transformative instability from meaningless disorder.

The political emotion generated by **IMG 2d** is therefore not simply anxiety. It can include **exhilaration**, especially when disruption is interpreted as proof that the old system is actually being challenged.

This helps explain why political communication based on rupture may sustain unusually high levels of emotional intensity over time. Intensity does not have to be resolved immediately because it can itself function as evidence of political movement.

The Mileian system is therefore more willing than the Trumpian one to **maintain tension as tension**. Trump's dominant emotional grammar tends to contain threat by directing it toward confidence in the strong leader.

Milei's dominant emotional grammar tends to maintain and intensify dissatisfaction until it becomes sufficient energy for transformation.

This difference can be formulated as:

- TRUMP → PASSION IS CHANNELED TOWARD CONTROL;
- MILEI → PASSION IS AMPLIFIED TOWARD RUPTURE.

IMG 2e, centered on inflation charts and economic indicators, adds another layer to the Mileian emotional system.

At first glance, statistical visualization might appear to belong exclusively to the cognitive dimension. The theatricalized use of economic data also has a clear passional function.

Inflation is not experienced merely as a numerical phenomenon. It is connected to loss of purchasing power, frustration, uncertainty, anger toward previous governments, and a sense of collective exhaustion.

The chart can therefore act as a device of **passional objectification**. It gives visible form to suffering that might otherwise remain diffuse. A rising or falling curve can become the visual condensation of an entire political judgment.

The sequence may be represented as:

ECONOMIC EXPERIENCE

↓

NUMERICAL VISUALIZATION

↓

CAUSAL INTERPRETATION

↓

EMOTIONAL CONFIRMATION

The chart appears to prove that the anger has an objective foundation. This is particularly important because it creates a bridge between **pathos and logos**.

The emotional narrative does not remain separate from technical discourse. Statistical representation can legitimize emotion, while emotion can intensify the political significance of statistical representation.

The leader therefore combines two complementary claims:

THE DATA SHOW THAT THE CRISIS IS REAL

and

THE ANGER SHOWS THAT THE CRISIS IS INTOLERABLE.

The conjunction of these two claims strengthens the narrative of necessary rupture. The Mileian emotional system is consequently more complex than a simple politics of rage. Anger is central, but it is connected to frustration, indignation, excitement, hope, and the expectation of liberation. The final positive passion is not calm stability but **anticipatory enthusiasm for transformation**. This is one of the most significant differences between the two leaders.

Trump's positive emotional horizon is predominantly **reassurance through restored greatness**.

Milei's positive emotional horizon is predominantly **liberation through successful rupture**.

The two systems can therefore be compared through their principal affective trajectories.

TRUMP

THREAT

↓

FEAR / INSECURITY

↓

STRONG LEADER

↓

RESISTANCE / CONTROL

↓

CONFIDENCE

↓

PATRIOTIC PRIDE / RESTORATIVE HOPE

MILEI

CRISIS / INJUSTICE

↓

FRUSTRATION / INDIGNATION

↓

ANGER

↓

DISRUPTIVE LEADER

↓

INTENSIFICATION / RUPTURE

↓

ENTHUSIASM / LIBERATORY EXPECTATION

The difference between fear and anger is especially important. Fear tends to construct a subject in need of protection. Anger tends to construct a subject in need of action.

Trump's political pathos therefore often reinforces the leader's function as **protector**.

Milei's political pathos more often reinforces the leader's function as **activator or disruptor**.

This distinction is not absolute. Trump frequently mobilizes anger, and Milei can mobilize fear of economic collapse. The analytical claim concerns the dominant organization of the passions and the transformations toward which they are directed.

The two systems also share important features. Both transform negative emotions into **politically oriented passions**. Neither leaves dissatisfaction without an object. Both identify responsible actors. Both construct a protagonist capable of responding. Both connect individual affect to collective identity. Both transform emotional intensity into a source of political credibility. And both rely on the circulation of emotionally condensed signs that can remain recognizable outside their original contexts.

The digital platform environment is particularly compatible with this form of affective condensation.

A long policy argument requires time and contextual attention.

A raised fist, a chainsaw, an angry expression, a red cap, or an emotionally disturbing image can communicate a political relation almost instantaneously.

This does not mean that images are inherently more emotional than verbal discourse. It means that highly condensed visual signs can make **passional positions rapidly perceptible**.

They can indicate who is threatened. Who is angry. Who is strong. Who belongs. Who is responsible. Who is capable of acting.

The emotional effectiveness of platformized political communication therefore depends partly on its ability to transform complex political diagnoses into signs with a low threshold of immediate recognition.

The corpus demonstrates this process with particular clarity:

- **IMG 1a** condenses danger and resistance;
- **IMG 1b** condenses control;
- **IMG 1c** condenses aspirational success;
- **IMG 1d** condenses patriotic belonging;
- **IMG 1e** condenses threat and alterity;
- **IMG 2a** condenses decisive rupture;
- **IMG 2b** condenses anger and authenticity;
- **IMG 2c** condenses indignation toward the “caste”;
- **IMG 2d** condenses transformative intensity;
- **IMG 2e** condenses crisis, diagnosis, and the affective legitimacy of economic transformation.

The images consequently function as **passional condensers**.

Their emotional force derives not simply from visible facial expressions or dramatic events but from the relationships among values, narratives, bodies, objects, and anticipated transformations.

A flag can produce pride because it participates in a national isotopy.

A chainsaw can produce enthusiasm because it participates in a narrative of rupture.

A graph can produce anger because it participates in a diagnosis of systemic failure.

A fist can produce confidence because it participates in a narrative of resistance.

Passion is therefore relational. This also explains why the same image can produce opposite emotional responses in different interpretive communities.

The Trump raised fist can generate admiration or alarm. Milei's chainsaw can generate enthusiasm or fear. MAGA imagery can evoke belonging or exclusion.

The emotional meaning of the sign depends partly on the broader axiological and ideological position from which it is interpreted.

The analysis must therefore distinguish between **passional organization and empirical emotional reception**.

The corpus offers certain emotional positions. Audiences may accept, negotiate, invert, or reject them. What matters for the present research is that the political texts repeatedly organize the conditions under which some emotions become more coherent than others.

This process is central to the construction of credibility. A leader appears authentic when his emotional performance corresponds to the emotional structure of the political world he has helped construct.

Trump's controlled strength appears credible if the world is represented as dangerous and requiring protection.

Milei's anger appears credible if the world is represented as intolerably corrupt and requiring rupture.

The emotion and the diagnosis validate one another. This produces a semiotic relationship of **affective coherence**. The political world explains the leader's emotion. The leader's emotion confirms the political world.

In Trump:

THERE IS A THREAT

↓

STRENGTH IS NECESSARY

↓

THE STRONG LEADER CONFIRMS THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE THREAT.

In Milei:

THE SYSTEM IS INTOLERABLE

↓

ANGER IS JUSTIFIED

↓

THE ANGRY LEADER CONFIRMS THE INTOLERABILITY OF THE SYSTEM.

This circularity reinforces the internal coherence of both leadership models.

The comparative analysis therefore shows that contemporary populist communication does not simply "use emotions". It constructs **specific economies of passion** in which negative affects are selected, directed, intensified, and transformed into politically productive states.

Trump's economy of passion is predominantly **restorative**: threat, fear, and humiliation are redirected toward control, confidence, belonging, and national pride.

Milei's economy of passion is predominantly **disruptive**: frustration, indignation, and anger are intensified into mobilization, confrontation, and the expectation of liberation through rupture.

The distinction corresponds closely to the narrative structures reconstructed in the previous chapter.

The restorative narrative requires an emotional movement from instability toward reassurance.

The disruptive narrative requires an emotional movement from dissatisfaction toward transformative energy.

Pathos therefore does not constitute an autonomous layer added to narrative structure. It supplies the **affective force through which the narrative becomes experientially compelling**.

Trump's restoration must not merely be understood; it must be desired as relief from threat and recovery of pride.

Milei's rupture must not merely be understood; it must be desired as release from frustration and recovery of agency.

The leader's emotional identity thus becomes one of the principal mediating mechanisms between political diagnosis and political action:

- Trump transforms threat into confidence;
- Milei transforms indignation into rupture.

In both cases, the political subject becomes credible partly because he embodies the passion that his own narrative has constructed as the appropriate response to the world.

The comparative perspective suggests that the emotional effectiveness of these leadership models depends on the alignment between passion, narrative, and political action. In Trump's case, affective intensity is reorganized around protection, resilience, and the recovery of confidence; in Milei's case, it is directed toward confrontation, acceleration, and the legitimization of radical change.

This difference also shapes the temporal experience offered to the public: Trump's pathos tends to promise the stabilization of an endangered order, whereas Milei's tends to prolong tension until rupture itself becomes meaningful as a passage toward a new political condition. In both configurations, emotion becomes a mechanism of recognition through which audiences can locate themselves within the political scene, identify allies and opponents, and interpret the leader's conduct as coherent with the crisis being represented. The political body operates as a junction between affect and narrative, transforming emotion into a visible sign of competence, belonging and legitimacy. Pathos thus becomes a structural condition through which leadership is made intelligible, memorable, and reproducible.

4.2. INTERACTIONAL REGIMES AND AFFECTIVE RELATIONS

The emotional configurations identified in the previous section do not operate in isolation. They acquire political effectiveness through relations established among the leader, supporters, opponents, media actors, and broader audiences. Political pathos is therefore not only a property of individual images or performances; it is also an **interactional phenomenon**, produced and transformed through the reciprocal positioning of subjects within the communicative scene.

From this perspective, the leader does not simply express emotions before an audience. His performance constructs a relationship with that audience and simultaneously proposes a specific way of interpreting the surrounding political world. Gestures, postures, slogans, objects, confrontations, and visual compositions contribute to defining who speaks, who is addressed, who belongs, who threatens, and how the spectator is invited to participate.

The corpus consequently reveals two different interactional orientations. Trump tends to organize interaction around **recognition, identification, protection, and collective confirmation**, whereas Milei tends to organize it around **activation, confrontation, contagion, and disruptive participation**. These tendencies are not mutually exclusive, but they identify the dominant relational logic through which the two leadership models become politically meaningful.

In the Trumpian corpus, the relationship between leader and public is strongly structured by the construction of a recognizable collective identity. The leader presents himself as the privileged representative of a community whose values, fears, aspirations, and grievances he claims to embody. The interactional relation is therefore based on a continuous movement between individuality and collectivity.

Trump occupies the center of the scene, his centrality is justified through the claim to speak for a larger subject.

The relationship can be represented as:

LEADER → PEOPLE

but simultaneously:

PEOPLE → LEGITIMATION OF LEADER.

This reciprocal structure is fundamental. Trump's political identity depends upon his capacity to present himself as the exceptional individual capable of representing an allegedly authentic collective subject, while the visible presence of supporters confirms that representational claim.

The crowd therefore performs more than a decorative function.

At rallies, supporters constitute a visible **interactional environment** surrounding the leader. Their applause, signs, clothing, gestures, chants, and reactions contribute to the production of political meaning. The audience becomes part of the performance through which leadership itself is made perceptible.

This mechanism is particularly relevant to **IMG 1d** and the MAGA symbolic universe.

The red cap creates a material continuity between leader and supporter. A political sign initially associated with a campaign becomes reproducible across thousands or millions of individual bodies. Through repetition, the distinction between political message and audience response becomes partially blurred.

The supporter does not merely receive the sign. The supporter **wears the sign**. By wearing it, the individual becomes a secondary enunciator of the political message and simultaneously makes his or her belonging visible to others.

Interaction consequently extends beyond the direct relation between Trump and his supporters. MAGA symbolism also organizes relations **among supporters themselves**. Recognition becomes horizontal.

One subject recognizes another as belonging to the same symbolic community.

The interactional structure therefore operates along two axes:

VERTICAL AXIS:

LEADER ↔ SUPPORTERS

HORIZONTAL AXIS:

SUPPORTER ↔ SUPPORTER

This double relation contributes to the construction of collective identity. The leader remains the central symbolic reference, but the political community can reproduce itself through interactions that no longer require his immediate physical presence.

Digital platforms intensify this process. A slogan can be reposted. An image can be shared. A gesture can be imitated. A cap can appear in a profile photograph. A fragment of a rally can be detached from its original context and inserted into new communicative situations.

The interactional field therefore expands from the physical rally to the platform environment, where supporters continuously participate in the reproduction of political identity.

The resulting community is simultaneously **assembled and distributed**.

It is assembled symbolically around common signs while being distributed across geographically and technologically dispersed networks.

This process helps explain the persistence of recognizable political identities within fragmented digital environments. The same symbolic units circulate through multiple contexts while maintaining sufficient stability to activate a shared interpretive framework.

The Trumpian interactional regime also depends strongly on the relation between **protection and identification**.

As reconstructed in the previous section, threat plays a central role in the emotional organization of the corpus. Threat becomes politically productive only when the audience is positioned in relation to a subject capable of responding to it.

The leader therefore establishes an implicit interactional contract:

YOU ARE THREATENED → I RECOGNIZE THE THREAT → I CAN PROTECT YOU

The effectiveness of this relation depends on the construction of shared perception. Leader and supporters must appear to see the same world.

This is why antagonists are interactionally important.

The political enemy does not merely oppose the leader; it helps establish the boundary connecting leader and supporters. The identification of an external or internal threat produces a shared object toward which attention and emotion can be directed.

IMG 1e illustrates this mechanism particularly clearly.

Anti-immigration imagery does not simply construct an out-group. It simultaneously constructs an implied in-group.

To define someone as threatening is also to define **who must be protected**.

Alterity therefore generates identity relationally.

The communicative structure becomes:

THREATENING OTHER

versus

COMMUNITY TO BE PROTECTED

with the leader occupying the mediating position of:

PROTECTOR / INTERPRETER OF THREAT

The interactional function of the leader is consequently double. He identifies the danger and offers himself as the subject capable of managing it.

This can strengthen the relation of dependence already identified at the narrative level. The more effectively the political world is represented as threatening, the more necessary the protective leader may appear.

IMG 1a introduces a significant transformation of this relationship because the protector himself becomes the object of threat:

- the assassination attempt temporarily reverses the usual direction of vulnerability;
- the leader who promises to protect the community is physically endangered.

The raised fist allows this reversal to be reintegrated into the existing interactional structure. Trump's gesture addresses the surrounding audience and, through media circulation, a much larger mediated public. The body that has just been exposed to danger immediately resumes its communicative function.

The interactional sequence becomes:

LEADER IS ATTACKED

↓

LEADER DISPLAYS RESISTANCE

↓

SUPPORTERS RECOGNIZE STRENGTH

↓

COLLECTIVE IDENTIFICATION INTENSIFIES

The gesture therefore does not operate only as an individual expression of resilience. It is relational.

A raised fist requires an audience capable of interpreting it. Its political meaning emerges from the connection between bodily performance and collective recognition.

The image becomes especially powerful because the distinction between leader and community can momentarily contract. An attack directed at the individual leader may be interpreted by supporters as an attack upon the political community he represents.

The leader's resistance can consequently become **collective resistance by symbolic delegation**.

This mechanism contributes to the heroization already identified at the narrative level.

The protagonist does not merely survive for himself.

Within the political interpretation of the event, he can be represented as surviving **for the community**.

In **IMG 1b**, interaction is organized differently.

Trump's frontal and dominant posture constructs a greater degree of hierarchical distance.

Rather than producing proximity through vulnerability, the image establishes authority through spatial superiority.

This reveals an important tension within Trumpian interaction.

The leader must simultaneously be:

ONE OF US

and

ABOVE US.

He must belong to the community while remaining sufficiently exceptional to lead it.

Populist identification therefore does not necessarily eliminate hierarchy. On the contrary, the corpus suggests that identification and hierarchy can reinforce one another.

Trump can represent the "people" precisely because he is constructed as possessing exceptional qualities unavailable to ordinary political actors.

The interactional relation combines **proximity of values with distance of competence**.

The supporter recognizes shared patriotism, enemies, grievances, and aspirations while simultaneously recognizing the leader as stronger, more successful, more visible, or more capable of acting.

IMG 1c makes this apparent paradox especially visible.

Trump's wealth and luxury create enormous socioeconomic distance from ordinary supporters. Within the relevant political narrative, this distance can be reinterpreted positively as evidence of success.

Material inequality does not necessarily prevent symbolic identification because identification is organized around values rather than social similarity.

The interactional proposition is not:

I AM LIKE YOU IN EVERY RESPECT

but rather:

I REPRESENT WHAT YOU VALUE AND CAN ACHIEVE WHAT YOU DESIRE.

This is a distinctive form of charismatic mediation.

The leader's difference from the public becomes part of the reason the public can invest confidence in him.

The Trumpian interactional system can consequently combine **horizontal belonging, vertical leadership, symbolic proximity, and material distance** without necessarily experiencing these relations as contradictory.

Milei's corpus constructs a different interactional configuration.

Here the relationship between leader and public is less strongly centered on protection and more strongly oriented toward **shared rejection and activation**.

The fundamental interactional proposition can be represented as:

YOU ARE ANGRY

↓

I AM ANGRY

↓

WE IDENTIFY THE SAME CAUSE

↓

THE SYSTEM MUST BE CHANGED

The leader does not primarily offer emotional containment. He offers emotional correspondence.

This is particularly visible in **IMG 2b**.

Milei's bodily intensity makes his emotional investment publicly perceptible. Shouting, gestures, facial tension, and confrontational posture reduce the distance between internal passion and external expression.

The political body appears permeable to conflict. Instead of demonstrating that the leader remains unaffected by crisis, the performance communicates that the crisis affects him intensely.

This produces an interactional relation based on **affective mirroring**. The audience's presumed frustration can recognize itself in the leader's anger.

The leader's anger, in turn, validates the audience's frustration by presenting it as worthy of public and political expression.

The relationship becomes circular:

PUBLIC FRUSTRATION

↓

LEADER'S ANGER

↓

LEGITIMATION OF FRUSTRATION

↓

INTENSIFIED IDENTIFICATION

The leader therefore does not simply speak *to* anger. He performs anger as a shared political position.

This can reduce the symbolic distance associated with conventional institutional communication. Formal restraint, moderation, and bureaucratic language may be interpreted as signs of detachment from the lived experience of crisis, while expressive excess can be resemanticized as proximity.

The apparent lack of emotional distance becomes a form of **interactional authenticity**.

This mechanism is reinforced by **IMG 2c**, where the "casta" provides a common antagonist.

As in the Trumpian case, the construction of an opponent contributes to the construction of the community. The relational logic differs.

Trumpian antagonism frequently reinforces the distinction between a community that must be protected and forces threatening it.

Mileian antagonism more strongly organizes a relation between subjects represented as constrained and a system represented as benefiting at their expense.

The implied interactional structure is:

LEADER + PRODUCTIVE / BETRAYED SUBJECTS

versus

CASTA / SYSTEM

The plus sign is important conceptually because Milei's political persona seeks to position the leader on the same side of the antagonistic division as those suffering from the system.

The leader becomes the most visible voice of a pre-existing dissatisfaction.

This does not eliminate asymmetry between leader and followers, but it constructs that asymmetry differently. Milei's exceptionality derives partly from his capacity to **say, perform, and intensify what others are presumed already to feel**.

His leadership is therefore based not only on representation but on amplification. The leader functions as an **affective amplifier**. He converts diffuse frustration into explicit indignation. He converts indignation into antagonism. He converts antagonism into a demand for rupture.

This process is particularly compatible with platform communication because emotionally intense fragments can circulate independently of the longer argument from which they originate.

A shout, a gesture, a confrontation, a phrase, a reaction, a chainsaw: each can become a self-contained unit of interaction capable of generating further responses.

This brings **IMG 2a** into the interactional analysis.

The chainsaw is not simply displayed as an object. Its meaning depends upon an audience capable of recognizing the action it symbolizes and responding to the spectacle of rupture.

The object establishes a form of **participatory imagination**.

Supporters do not literally perform the cuts represented by the chainsaw, but they can symbolically participate in the action through applause, repetition, memes, slogans, and circulation.

The leader performs the cut. The audience ratifies it. Digital communities reproduce it. The symbolic action thus expands beyond its original scene.

The chainsaw becomes an interactional interface connecting leader, political program, and supporters. This is one reason why material objects can be so effective within populist communication. They make political action **visible, repeatable, and socially recognizable**.

Complex economic programs may be difficult to reproduce in everyday interaction. An object can condense them.

The interactional sequence becomes:

OBJECT → RECOGNITION → RESPONSE → REPRODUCTION

The political symbol survives because it can be repeatedly activated in new contexts.

IMG 2d extends this logic from the individual symbol to the entire communicative environment.

“Productive chaos” generates an interactional space characterized by acceleration, collision, provocation, and continuous response. Communication becomes less linear and more recursive.

One statement generates outrage. Outrage generates reactions. Reactions generate new interventions. Those interventions produce further circulation. The political scene consequently operates according to a logic of **interactional escalation**.

This is particularly compatible with platform metrics and visibility mechanisms. Content that provokes response can acquire greater circulation; greater circulation generates further responses; and the resulting conflict can become part of the political identity of the original enunciator.

The relationship can be expressed as:

PROVOCATION

↓

REACTION

↓

VISIBILITY

↓

COUNTER-REACTION

↓

FURTHER VISIBILITY

Within such a structure, conflict is not simply communicated.

Conflict becomes a **mode of circulation**. This distinguishes Milei's interactional regime from forms of political communication seeking to minimize communicative instability.

The disruptive leader can benefit symbolically from controversy because controversy confirms his capacity to disturb established communicative conventions.

Criticism may therefore be incorporated into the performance. Opponents participate in the visibility of the leader even when attempting to delegitimize him.

This creates an interactional paradox similar to the narrative mechanism examined in the previous chapter: the opponent can simultaneously **contest and reproduce** the protagonist's political centrality.

The same phenomenon can occur in Trumpian communication, particularly through conflict with media actors, but the semiotic investment differs.

Trump often transforms criticism into evidence of persecution, hostility, or establishment opposition. Milei can transform criticism into evidence of disruption.

The interactional logic can therefore be contrasted as:

- TRUMP → THEY ATTACK ME BECAUSE I REPRESENT YOU;
- MILEI → THEY REACT BECAUSE I AM BREAKING THEIR SYSTEM.

Both configurations convert opposition into relational confirmation. The antagonist becomes part of the mechanism through which the leader's identity is stabilized.

IMG 2e introduces a further interactional dimension because economic charts and indicators construct not only epistemic authority but also a particular relationship between expert knowledge and public participation.

Technical information is translated into visual and performative forms capable of circulating beyond specialist environments. The chart becomes something that can be shown, pointed at, compared, clipped, reposted, and debated. Economic expertise is therefore transformed into an **interactional resource**.

The leader does not merely claim to know. He publicly displays signs of knowing. The audience is invited to recognize the evidence, accept the diagnosis, contest it, or circulate it.

This performative use of data reduces the distance between technical discourse and political spectacle without necessarily eliminating the distinction between them.

The chart acquires two simultaneous functions:

EPISTEMIC → *THIS EXPLAINS REALITY*

and

INTERACTIONAL → *LOOK AT THIS AND RECOGNIZE WHAT I AM SHOWING YOU*

The act of showing becomes politically important.

The leader positions himself as the subject who makes reality visible to an audience allegedly misled or failed by previous political actors.

This introduces another form of asymmetry.

While Milei's emotional performance can reduce distance through affective mirroring, his economic performance can reintroduce hierarchy through claimed expertise.

As in Trump's case, therefore, proximity and distance coexist.

Milei is close to the public because he shares and amplifies its anger.

He is exceptional because he claims to understand the economic mechanisms producing the crisis.

The interactional relation combines:

AFFECTIVE PROXIMITY + EPISTEMIC ASYMMETRY

Trump's corresponding structure can be formulated as:

IDENTITARIAN PROXIMITY + PERFORMATIVE / SYMBOLIC ASYMMETRY

Both leaders therefore construct forms of identification that do not eliminate hierarchy.

Instead, hierarchy is made compatible with identification by assigning the leader a competence that serves the collective subject.

The comparison reveals another significant difference in the role assigned to the audience.

In the Trumpian configuration, the supporter is frequently invited to **recognize and reaffirm** an already strongly codified symbolic universe.

MAGA provides a stable slogan. The national colors provide a stable chromatic code. The flag provides a stable national signifier. Trump himself provides a highly recognizable central figure. Interaction therefore frequently operates through **ritual repetition**.

In the Mileian configuration, interaction appears comparatively more open to **amplification, remix, exaggeration,** and **memetic transformation**.

The chainsaw can be recontextualized. The leader's bodily excess can be exaggerated. Fragments of confrontations can become memes. The "casta" can function as a flexible antagonistic label.

The political identity remains recognizable while circulating through a more visibly unstable expressive environment.

This difference corresponds to the larger contrast between stabilization and disruption:

Trump's interactional universe tends to transform repetition into strength. Milei's tends to transform acceleration into strength.

Trump gains recognizability through the **recurrence of stable signs**. Milei gains recognizability through the **recurrence of disruptive operations**.

This does not mean that Trumpian communication lacks memes or that Mileian communication lacks stable symbols. The corpus instead suggests different dominant principles governing their interactional organization.

These principles become particularly important when considered in relation to the contemporary digital public.

The platform user is not merely a spectator. The user can react. Share. Comment. Remix. Quote. Contest. Support. Mock. Reframe. Each of these operations potentially extends the life of the political text.

Interaction therefore becomes part of the process through which political meaning is produced.

The leader's communication enters an environment in which reception can itself become new enunciation.

A supporter reposting **IMG 1a** with a message about strength does not simply consume Trump's political image; the supporter **re-enunciates** it.

A user transforming Milei's chainsaw into a meme does not merely observe the symbol; the user produces a new textual occurrence of the disruptive narrative.

The distinction between producer and audience consequently becomes increasingly porous.

This does not imply an equal distribution of communicative power. Trump and Milei retain enormous advantages in visibility, institutional authority, access to media, and capacity to establish the initial symbolic frame. Platform circulation allows audiences to participate in the **secondary production of political signs**.

The political text becomes distributed across a network of re-enunciations.

This process has important consequences for credibility. Credibility is no longer produced solely through the original statement of the leader. It can also emerge through **social confirmation**.

Repeated circulation creates familiarity. Familiarity can produce recognizability. Recognizability can contribute to perceived coherence. Coherence can reinforce political identity.

The process may be represented as:

SIGN → CIRCULATION → RECOGNITION → REPETITION → IDENTITY CONSOLIDATION.

This mechanism helps explain why political communication in platform environments can become highly repetitive without necessarily losing effectiveness.

Repetition itself performs identity.

The audience knows what a MAGA cap signifies because it has encountered the sign repeatedly.

The chainsaw becomes inseparable from Milei because circulation continually reconnects object and leader.

The raised fist becomes iconic because repetition progressively detaches the gesture from the contingency of the original moment and stabilizes a broader meaning of resistance.

Interaction therefore contributes directly to **iconicization**.

The same process also allows hostile audiences to participate unintentionally in the consolidation of political identity.

A critic who repeatedly circulates the chainsaw as evidence of Milei's extremism still reinforces the association:

MILEI = CHAINSAW = RUPTURE

A critic circulating Trump's raised fist to discuss political polarization may still reinforce:

TRUMP = FIST = RESISTANCE / STRENGTH

The evaluative meaning changes, but the associative structure can remain stable.

This distinction between **semantic evaluation and symbolic recognition** is fundamental.

Political actors do not need every circulation of their image to be positive in order to benefit from recognizability. Under certain conditions, negative circulation can strengthen the coherence of an already established persona.

Interaction thus produces a political environment in which visibility, controversy, repetition, and identity become deeply interconnected.

The comparison between Trump and Milei can consequently be summarized through two dominant interactional trajectories:

TRUMP

THREAT / LOSS

↓

LEADER IDENTIFIES WITH COMMUNITY

↓

LEADER PERFORMS STRENGTH AND PROTECTION

↓

SUPPORTERS RECOGNIZE AND REAFFIRM THE LEADER

↓

SYMBOLIC COMMUNITY IS CONSOLIDATED

MILEI

CRISIS / INJUSTICE

↓

LEADER SHARES AND AMPLIFIES INDIGNATION

↓

LEADER PERFORMS RUPTURE

↓

SUPPORTERS RESPOND, CIRCULATE, AND INTENSIFY THE PERFORMANCE

↓

DISRUPTIVE COMMUNITY IS MOBILIZED

The difference is therefore not simply between two emotional styles. It concerns two ways of constructing the relationship between political subject and public.

Trump's interactional model tends toward **recognition and confirmation**: the leader gives visible form to a collective identity and supporters reciprocally confirm his position as its representative and protector.

Milei's model tends toward **activation and amplification**: the leader gives spectacular form to dissatisfaction and supporters participate in extending the disruptive energy of the performance.

Both models nevertheless depend upon reciprocal processes.

The leader needs the audience to confirm his representational claim. The audience needs the leader to condense dispersed experiences into recognizable political forms.

The interaction therefore produces a circular relation:

LEADER CONSTRUCTS PUBLIC

↓

PUBLIC CONFIRMS LEADER

↓

LEADER REASSERTS PUBLIC IDENTITY

This circularity is one of the defining characteristics of mediatized populist communication.

The "people" are not simply present before communication begins. They are continuously **represented, addressed, visualized, mobilized, and reproduced through communication itself**.

The corpus demonstrates that this process occurs through bodies and objects as much as through explicit political propositions.

Trump's fist asks for recognition. The MAGA cap allows recognition to become wearable.

The threatening image constructs the boundary of the community.

Milei's anger invites affective correspondence.

The chainsaw converts correspondence into imagined action. The “casta” supplies the shared antagonist. The inflation chart provides a visible justification for indignation.

Productive chaos transforms interaction itself into evidence that political disruption is occurring.

Political communication therefore becomes an **interactional ecology** in which leader, supporters, opponents, media, platforms, symbols, and emotions continually act upon one another.

Within this ecology, credibility is not simply declared by the leader and subsequently accepted or rejected by passive spectators. It is progressively produced through repeated encounters among signs, performances, reactions, conflicts, and forms of collective recognition.

Trump and Milei differ in the dominant relational structures through which this process occurs, but both demonstrate the increasing importance of **interaction as a mechanism of political signification**.

The political leader is credible not only because of what he says or represents, but because audiences can recognize a stable relation between his performances, the world he describes, the emotions he activates, the enemies he identifies, and the transformations he promises.

Interaction thus connects the individual political body with a distributed collective body.

In Trump’s case, this connection predominantly transforms **recognition into belonging and belonging into confirmation of leadership**. In Milei’s case, it predominantly transforms **shared dissatisfaction into affective alignment and affective alignment into disruptive mobilization**.

In both cases, however, the public becomes part of the semiotic machinery of leadership itself: it receives the political performance, interprets it, reproduces it, and through that reproduction contributes to stabilizing the identity of the leader who initially addressed it.

In this perspective, political interaction does not merely circulate pre-existing identities, but becomes one of the principal semiotic processes through which leaders and publics reciprocally construct, recognize, and continuously renegotiate their political identities within the digital environment.

4.3. KINESIC-PROXEMIC CONFIGURATIONS

A further fundamental dimension of the corpus concerns the **kinesic and proxemic organization of political presence**, namely the ways in which bodily movement, posture, gesture, orientation, distance, and occupation of space participate in the production of meaning. The political body does not simply occupy a pre-existing communicative environment. Through its position and movement, it actively contributes to structuring that environment, establishing relations of hierarchy, proximity, confrontation, inclusion, and exclusion.

From a semiotic perspective, the body can therefore be understood as a **surface of inscription of political values**. Strength, vulnerability, authority, anger, resistance, confidence, urgency, and authenticity become perceptible because they are translated into visible bodily configurations. Political identity is not only stated verbally; it is performed through ways of standing, moving, looking, pointing, occupying the center, confronting an interlocutor, or interacting with a crowd. This dimension is particularly significant in the comparison between Trump and Milei because their bodies construct two markedly different relationships with political space.

In the Trumpian corpus, the dominant configuration is characterized by **centrality, frontality, verticality, controlled gesture, and spatial command**. Trump's body tends to organize the visual field around itself. The surrounding space becomes meaningful in relation to the leader's position, producing an effect of hierarchy in which political authority is spatially materialized.

In the Mileian corpus, by contrast, the dominant configuration is more strongly characterized by **movement, tension, expansion, collision, and instability**. Milei's body does not merely occupy space; it appears to act upon it. Gesture extends beyond the stable limits of the body, creating a visual environment marked by intensity and confrontation.

The fundamental opposition can therefore initially be expressed as:

- TRUMP → OCCUPATION AND CONTROL OF SPACE
- MILEI → ACTIVATION AND DISRUPTION OF SPACE

This distinction does not imply that Trump is physically static or that Milei lacks moments of spatial control. Rather, it identifies the dominant semiotic functions attributed to their bodily performances within the corpus.

In **IMG 1a**, Trump's raised fist provides one of the clearest examples of the political productivity of gesture.

The significance of the image derives partly from the contrast between the condition of the body and the action performed by that body. The assassination attempt introduces physical vulnerability: the leader has been exposed to violence and bodily danger.

The gesture immediately redirects the visual meaning of that vulnerability: the arm rises, the fist closes, the body remains visible, the gesture therefore produces an upward vector that opposes the potentially downward trajectory associated with injury, collapse, or defeat.

At the level of visual organization, this creates a fundamental opposition:

VULNERABILITY / DOWNWARDNESS

versus

RESISTANCE / UPWARDNESS

The raised fist is thus not merely an emblematic gesture added to the event. It **reorganizes the event semiotically**.

The body that could have become the image of victimhood becomes the image of resistance. This transformation is especially significant because kinesic meaning depends on temporality. The gesture occurs after danger. Its force derives from the sequence connecting attack and response.

The political body therefore narrates through movement:

ATTACK → BODILY EXPOSURE → RECOMPOSITION → RAISED FIST

The gesture becomes a minimal narrative. It contains an initial test and a response to that test.

This helps explain the subsequent iconicization of **IMG 1a**. The visual sign condenses a larger narrative trajectory into a single bodily configuration capable of circulating independently of the original temporal sequence.

Trump's body becomes the visible site where **vulnerability is converted into competence**.

The fist also establishes a relation with the surrounding audience. A gesture is inherently directional: it is performed within a field of possible observers. The raised arm projects the body beyond itself and transforms personal resistance into a publicly readable sign.

The gesture consequently occupies an intermediate position between individual embodiment and collective symbolism.

It belongs to Trump's body, but its political meaning exceeds that body.

This transition from individual gesture to collective sign is fundamental to the construction of charismatic leadership.

In **IMG 1b**, bodily authority is constructed through a different kinesic-proxemic configuration. Frontality, centrality, controlled posture, and low-angle framing contribute to the production of a leader who appears to dominate the visual field:

- frontality establishes a direct relation between political body and spectator;
- centrality organizes surrounding elements around the leader;
- vertical posture produces stability;
- low-angle framing can increase apparent stature and symbolic superiority.

These elements converge in the construction of a body that does not need to demonstrate authority through continuous movement because **its position already signifies authority**.

The body becomes monumental. Monumentality should not be understood here merely as physical size. It results from the relation among scale, framing, position, orientation, and symbolic centrality.

A monumentalized political body appears to exceed the contingency of the immediate communicative situation. It is not simply one participant among others. It becomes the **organizing principle of the scene**.

The proxemic relation between leader and spectator consequently acquires a hierarchical character.

Trump may appear visually close because the image offers direct access to his body and face, this optical proximity coexists with symbolic distance.

The spectator sees the leader closely while being positioned beneath or before him.

This produces an important semiotic combination:

VISUAL PROXIMITY + HIERARCHICAL DISTANCE

Such a configuration is highly compatible with charismatic political communication. The leader must be visible and recognizable enough to sustain identification while remaining sufficiently elevated to embody exceptional competence.

The same tension emerges in rally imagery. The crowd physically surrounds the political event, but the organization of attention remains highly centralized. Trump occupies the privileged point toward which gazes, cameras, signs, and collective responses converge.

The crowd therefore performs a double proxemic function. It brings the leader into contact with the collective body while simultaneously confirming his separation from it. He is among supporters but not simply one supporter among others. He is the **center around which the collective body is spatially organized**.

This distinction reinforces the interactional structure reconstructed in the previous section. Verticality does not eliminate identification. It provides identification with a focal point.

The political community recognizes itself through the central figure that represents it. In this sense, Trumpian proxemics can be described as **centripetal**: symbolic and perceptual attention tends to move toward the leader.

The visual field concentrates. The leader stabilizes it. The political body functions as a center of gravity. This spatial organization is consistent with the restorative narrative analyzed in Chapter III. A subject whose political function is to restore order must himself appear capable of producing order.

The organization of the image consequently anticipates the organization promised by the political program:

ORDER OF BODY → ORDER OF IMAGE → PROMISE OF POLITICAL ORDER

The correspondence between visual structure and political value is especially significant.

Trump does not need to state “I control the situation” for the image to construct control. Spatial organization can perform that proposition visually. The leader’s body becomes a **model of the order it promises to produce**.

The Mileian corpus develops an almost inverse spatial grammar.

In **IMG 2b**, the body is characterized by visible tension, expansive gestures, facial intensity, shouting, and a more unstable relation to surrounding space.

The body does not simply occupy a defined position. It continually seems to **exceed that position**: arms extend, ands point, the face contracts, the torso participates in the expression.

Movement projects political intensity outward. The boundary between body and environment becomes more permeable because gesture continually connects the subject to what surrounds him.

Milei’s kinesic configuration can therefore be described as **centrifugal**.

Where Trumpian space tends to concentrate attention toward a stable center, Mileian gesture tends to project energy outward from the political body.

The contrast can be represented as:

TRUMP → CENTRIPETAL BODY

MILEI → CENTRIFUGAL BODY

This distinction has important political consequences.

Trump’s body says: **the scene converges upon me**.

Milei’s body says: **energy moves from me into the scene**.

The first produces sovereignty through centrality.

The second produces disruption through expansion.

The pointing gesture is particularly important within this configuration. Pointing is inherently relational because it connects the body to an object, interlocutor, or direction outside itself. It establishes a vector of attention and can transform abstract antagonism into visible confrontation.

When Milei points toward an opponent, institution, or symbolic target, the gesture performs an act of **spatial accusation**.

The antagonist is given a place. Responsibility is directionally assigned. The political conflict becomes visible as a relation between positions.

The gesture can therefore materialize the narrative opposition reconstructed in **IMG 2c**:

SUBJECT → AGAINST → ANTI-SUBJECT

The body becomes a diagram of antagonism. This is particularly significant within an anti-caste discourse. The opposition between Milei and the political system is not only verbally articulated; it can be enacted through physical orientation.

The leader's body continually places itself **against** something. Opposition becomes posture.

The same principle applies to shouting. Although shouting is primarily vocal, it also possesses a strong kinesic dimension. It alters facial expression, bodily tension, breathing, and posture. The voice appears to mobilize the entire body.

This contributes to the construction of an embodied political subject whose communication seems to originate not merely from strategic speech but from **somatic investment**.

The body appears fully committed to the enunciation. This reinforces the authenticity mechanism identified in the previous sections.

Restraint can suggest institutional distance. Bodily excess can suggest that the subject is unable — or unwilling— to separate himself from the intensity of the political conflict.

The leader's body therefore becomes evidence of involvement.

In Trump's case, authenticity frequently derives from the ability to remain recognizably Trump across different scenes: the controlled gestures, characteristic posture, visual centrality, and recurring bodily signs contribute to a stable persona.

In Milei's case, authenticity is more strongly constructed through the impression that the body is **genuinely traversed by the conflict it communicates**.

The contrast can therefore be formulated as:

- TRUMP → AUTHENTICITY THROUGH BODILY CONSISTENCY
- MILEI → AUTHENTICITY THROUGH BODILY INTENSITY

Again, these are dominant tendencies rather than absolute oppositions. The distinction becomes particularly clear when the chainsaw in **IMG 2a** is introduced into the kinesic analysis.

The chainsaw is a material object, but its semiotic function depends heavily on the bodily action it presupposes.

A chainsaw is not a contemplative object. It is designed to be grasped, activated, directed, and moved through resistant material. Its political symbolism therefore contains an implicit **motor program**. The object constructs the body as capable of cutting.

The relation can be represented as:

BODY + CHAINSAW → CAPACITY FOR MATERIAL INTERVENTION

This gives the political metaphor an unusually corporeal character.

Fiscal reduction and institutional dismantling are abstract processes. The chainsaw translates them into an action that can be physically imagined.

The political subject acquires an instrument. The instrument implies movement. Movement implies transformation. The body therefore becomes the operator connecting symbolic object and political program.

This makes **IMG 2a** especially powerful from a kinesic perspective. Milei is not simply associated with rupture at the level of discourse; rupture is **encoded as a potential bodily action**.

The subject can be imagined cutting through the system. The political program becomes gestural.

The relationship between body and object also reinforces the construction of agency. The chainsaw requires an operator. Its meaning depends on the subject who controls it.

Milei consequently appears not merely as the spokesperson of disruption but as the one who will **perform disruption**.

This corresponds directly to the semi-narrative structure identified in Chapter III.

The chainsaw transforms political agency into a visibly embodied competence.

IMG 2d, centered on productive chaos, expands this kinesic logic from the individual body to the entire visual environment.

Here movement is no longer localized exclusively in Milei's gestures. The scene itself acquires a dynamic quality.

Visual density, rapid changes, conflictual exchanges, expressive bodies, and accelerated media circulation contribute to an environment in which stability is continually interrupted.

The relation between body and space becomes reciprocal.

Milei activates the space, but the activated space also reinforces the meaning of Milei's body.

This produces a feedback structure:

INTENSE BODY

↓

DISRUPTED SPACE

↓

GREATER PERCEPTION OF INTENSITY

↓

REINFORCED DISRUPTIVE BODY

The leader and the environment mutually signify one another.

This differs from the Trumpian monumental structure, where the body tends to organize the surrounding space around a stable center.

In Milei's case, the surrounding space can itself appear unstable, producing an effect of **distributed tension**.

The political scene becomes an environment of collision. This helps clarify the semiotic meaning of productive chaos.

Chaos is not simply represented through verbal references to disorder. It can be **spatially and kinetically performed**:

- bodies move;
- voices collide;
- attention shifts;
- frames accelerate;
- interactions become confrontational.

The resulting instability makes disruption perceptible before it is conceptually interpreted.

This relationship between perception and political meaning is crucial. The spectator does not only understand that Milei represents rupture.

The visual organization can make the spectator **experience a form of rupture at the level of perception**.

The comparison between the two corpora therefore reveals two distinct modes of spatializing leadership.

Trumpian leadership tends toward **territorialization**.

The leader establishes a center, organizes the scene, occupies symbolic territory, and defines boundaries between the protected community and its antagonists.

Mileian leadership tends toward **deterritorialization and reconfiguration**.

The leader destabilizes established positions, traverses boundaries, confronts institutional spatial conventions, and seeks to reorganize the field through disruptive movement.

These spatial logics correspond closely to the two narrative programs.

The restorative leader must construct a space that can be reclaimed and controlled.

The disruptive leader must construct a space that can be traversed, broken, and reorganized.

The relationship can therefore be expressed as:

- TRUMP → SPACE AS TERRITORY TO CONTROL
- MILEI → SPACE AS STRUCTURE TO TRANSFORM

This distinction is also visible in the relation between the leaders and institutional settings.

Political institutions conventionally regulate bodily behavior through protocols of posture, speech, distance, dress, movement, and turn-taking. Institutional authority is partly produced through the controlled choreography of bodies.

Milei's anti-formality becomes semiotically significant because his bodily performance can violate or strain these expectations.

The excess of gesture, vocal intensity, confrontational orientation, and rejection of conventional restraint can therefore function as signs of **distance from institutional habitus**.

The body communicates exteriority. Even when physically located inside an institutional space, the political subject can continue to perform symbolic non-belonging to the conventions associated with that space.

This creates an important paradox. Institutional power ordinarily tends to normalize the body.

The disruptive leader must resist complete normalization if his legitimacy depends partly on appearing exterior to the system.

Kinesic continuity therefore becomes politically important. The body must continue to signify rupture even after the subject enters the institutions he previously contested.

Trump faces a related but different problem. His political identity depends partly on anti-establishment positioning, his bodily performance frequently appropriates the signs of institutional and executive authority rather than rejecting them.

The spatial strategy is therefore less strongly based on bodily transgression. Trump tends instead to **occupy institutional space as if it confirmed his pre-existing centrality**.

The presidency, rally stage, luxury environment, airplane, or media frame can all become extensions of the same dominant persona.

Different spaces are integrated into the leader's visual identity. Rather than being transformed by the setting, the setting appears to become **Trumpianized**.

This is particularly evident when the logic of **IMG 1c** is considered alongside **IMG 1b**.

Political stage and luxury environment differ functionally, but both can be organized around centrality, success, authority, and symbolic superiority.

The body creates continuity across heterogeneous spaces. This spatial adaptability reinforces the construction of a stable political persona.

Milei's body creates continuity differently. What remains stable is not a fixed spatial order but a **recurrent mode of disruption**.

Different environments can become Mileian when they are reorganized through intensity, confrontation, gesture, acceleration, or symbolic rupture.

Thus, the two leaders achieve recognizability through opposite spatial operations:

- TRUMP STABILIZES DIFFERENT SPACES AROUND THE SAME CENTER;
- MILEI ACTIVATES DIFFERENT SPACES THROUGH THE SAME DISRUPTIVE ENERGY.

This distinction also affects the spectator's position.

Trumpian images frequently construct a spectator who observes the leader as a focalized figure. The gaze is drawn toward centrality and invited to recognize authority.

The spectator occupies a position of **directed attention**.

Mileian images more frequently expose the spectator to competing vectors of movement, intensity, confrontation, and expressive excess.

The spectator occupies a position of **activated attention**.

The difference can be summarized as:

- TRUMP → LOOK AT THE LEADER
- MILEI → ENTER THE CONFLICT

This does not mean that Trumpian communication is passive or that Mileian communication eliminates contemplation. Rather, the visual grammars offer different dominant modes of engagement:

- Trumpian monumentalization tends to produce **recognition through visual concentration**;
- Mileian disruption tends to produce **engagement through perceptual intensification**.

The proxemic relation with supporters follows the same distinction.

Trump's political community is frequently organized through collective orientation toward the central leader. The crowd confirms leadership by directing attention toward him.

Milei's political community can be organized through the circulation of the disruptive energy associated with the leader. Supporters reproduce gestures, slogans, symbols, and antagonistic positions, extending the original performance outward.

The two models can therefore be represented as:

- TRUMP: CROWD → CENTER
- MILEI: CENTER → CIRCULATION

Both structures remain reciprocal.

Trump requires the crowd to validate the center.

Milei requires circulation to confirm the effectiveness of disruption.

The political body and collective body are therefore mutually dependent in both cases.

A further important element concerns **distance from the antagonist**.

In Trumpian communication, antagonists can often be represented as external threats to a bounded political community. The spatial imagination is consequently compatible with borders, territorial defense, exclusion, and protection.

IMG 1e is particularly significant in this respect because immigration itself concerns the crossing of boundaries.

The political problem is spatialized. There is an inside. There is an outside. There is a boundary. There is a subject whose movement across that boundary is represented as threatening.

The leader's protective function therefore possesses an intrinsically proxemic dimension: political authority is constructed as the capacity to **regulate access to collective space**.

Milei's principal antagonist, by contrast, is often represented as already occupying the institutional interior.

The "casta" is not primarily a foreign body crossing an external border. It is a political structure embedded within the state.

The spatial problem is therefore different. The task is not principally to prevent entry but to **remove**, **dismantle**, or **displace an already internalized obstacle**.

This produces two distinct spatial antagonisms:

TRUMP → DEFENSE OF THE INSIDE AGAINST THREATENING INCURSION

MILEI → DISMANTLING OF AN INTERNAL STRUCTURE THAT OCCUPIES THE SYSTEM

The bodily configurations of the two leaders correspond to these political spatialities.

Trump's verticality, centrality, and control are compatible with guardianship.

Milei's movement, pointing, cutting, and confrontation are compatible with expulsion and dismantling.

The body thus gives perceptible form to the underlying topology of political conflict. At the comparative level, the corpus reveals that kinesic and proxemic configurations are not decorative supplements to ideological content. They constitute a **political grammar of embodiment**.

Through bodily organization, abstract values become spatial relations. Strength becomes verticality. Authority becomes centrality. Resistance becomes an upward gesture. Anger becomes bodily tension. Rupture becomes expansive movement. Antagonism becomes directional confrontation. Protection becomes control of boundaries. Disruption becomes collision with established positions.

The political body therefore functions as a translation mechanism between abstract ideology and perceptible form.

This translation is especially important within digital visual culture, where isolated gestures can circulate more rapidly than complete political arguments.

A raised fist can be detached from the event. A pointing finger can be detached from the speech. A chainsaw can be detached from the economic program. A dominant posture can be detached from the rally.

Once detached, these bodily signs retain sufficient semiotic density to reactivate the broader political identity with which they have become associated.

Kinesic configurations consequently contribute to the **portability of leadership** across platforms and contexts.

The body becomes recognizable even when the original discourse is absent. This is one of the mechanisms through which political figures become iconographic.

Their identity is no longer dependent exclusively on propositions. It can be activated through silhouette, posture, gesture, facial expression, or object-body relations.

Trump and Milei both demonstrate this process, but through different bodily signatures:

- Trump’s signature is predominantly one of **vertical control, centrality, resistance, and monumental presence**.
- Milei’s signature is predominantly one of **tension, expansion, confrontation, and disruptive movement**.

These configurations reinforce the respective regimes of credibility.

Trump's authenticity is supported by a body that appears coherent with the promise of strength and restoration. The leader who promises control must himself appear controlled, capable of resisting destabilization and occupying the center of the political field.

Milei's authenticity is supported by a body that appears coherent with the promise of rupture. The leader who declares the existing order intolerable must himself appear unwilling to inhabit that order passively or conform to its communicative conventions.

The credibility of both leaders therefore emerges partly from **somatic coherence**: the correspondence between what the political narrative demands and what the body visibly performs.

The body becomes evidence:

- Trump's body says that resistance is possible because it performs resistance;
- Milei's body says that rupture is necessary because it performs intolerance toward continuity.

The comparison thus reveals two different forms of embodied political authority. Trump constructs authority through the **capacity to remain central and stable under conditions of threat**; Milei constructs authority through the **capacity to generate and sustain transformative intensity under conditions of systemic crisis**.

At the kinesic-proxemic level, the opposition between restorative and disruptive leadership therefore becomes materially visible. Trump's body tends to **stabilize the political scene by organizing space around itself**. Milei's body tends to **destabilize the political scene by projecting movement into it**.

In both cases, embodiment functions as a central semiotic device through which leadership becomes immediately recognizable, emotionally legible, and compatible with digital circulation.

The political body does not simply represent an ideological position: it makes that position perceptible as posture, gesture, distance, movement, and spatial relation.

Through this process, the abstract distinction between restoration and rupture is translated into two different ways of physically inhabiting the political world.

4.4. THE CANONICAL PASSIONAL SCHEMA

The emotional configurations identified in the corpus can be further systematized through the **canonical passional schema**, which makes it possible to examine passion not as an isolated emotional state but as a process characterized by successive transformations. From this perspective, political emotions acquire meaning because they emerge from particular conditions, develop through recognizable forms of intensification, become embodied and perceptible, and are ultimately evaluated within a specific axiological system.

This approach is particularly productive for the present research because the emotions associated with Trump and Milei do not appear as static properties of their political identities. Fear, anger, pride, indignation, confidence, and enthusiasm are continuously produced, redirected, intensified, and politically sanctioned.

The corpus therefore suggests that political passion can be understood as a **trajectory**.

The leader does not simply communicate an emotion. The political text constructs the conditions under which an emotion becomes possible, gives that emotion an object, provides it with expressive forms, and finally assigns it a political meaning.

At the most general level, the passional trajectory can be represented as:

CONDITION

↓

PASSIONAL DISPOSITION

↓

INTENSIFICATION

↓

EMOTIONAL MANIFESTATION

↓

EVALUATION

The specific semantic investment of these stages differs substantially between Trump and Milei.

In the Trumpian corpus, the passional trajectory begins predominantly with the construction of a **condition of national vulnerability**. America is represented as threatened, weakened, disrespected, endangered, or separated from its proper greatness. Immigration, hostile political actors, cultural conflict, institutional decline, and the perception of diminished national power can all contribute to the construction of this initial condition.

The political subject is therefore placed within an environment in which something valuable appears endangered or lost. This initial configuration does not constitute a fully developed passion. It establishes the **conditions of possibility for passion**.

If the nation is threatened, fear becomes intelligible. If greatness has been lost, frustration and humiliation become intelligible. If enemies are responsible, anger becomes intelligible. If the community remains capable of resisting, pride becomes possible.

The emotional field is therefore already structured by the axiological opposition reconstructed in the previous chapters.

The Trumpian passional sequence can initially be formulated as:

DECLINE / THREAT

↓

INSECURITY / FEAR / FRUSTRATION

↓

MOBILIZATION AROUND STRENGTH

↓

RESISTANCE / CONFIDENCE

↓

PATRIOTIC PRIDE / RESTORATIVE HOPE

This sequence reveals that negative passions are not the final objective of the communication.

Fear matters because it creates the conditions under which protection becomes valuable. Frustration matters because it makes restoration desirable. Humiliation matters because it makes renewed greatness emotionally meaningful. Threat matters because it makes strength necessary.

The Trumpian emotional system therefore depends on a transformation from **passional deficiency to passional recovery**.

The initial subject lacks not only a political object but also an affective condition. The political community is represented as having lost confidence, security, pride, or recognition.

The leader consequently promises a transformation that is simultaneously political and emotional.

To restore America is also to restore the **emotional state appropriate to a great nation**.

This point is particularly visible in the relationship between **IMG 1e and IMG 1d**.

IMG 1e participates in the construction of threat. Anti-immigration imagery creates an affective environment in which boundaries appear vulnerable and alterity can be represented as dangerous.

IMG 1d, by contrast, materializes belonging and patriotic affirmation through the MAGA symbolic universe.

Placed within the same passional architecture, the two images occupy complementary positions.

IMG 1e asks:

WHAT THREATENS US?

IMG 1d answers:

WHO ARE WE?

The construction of fear and the construction of belonging are therefore relationally connected.

The more clearly the threatening other is defined, the more clearly the political community can be represented as a bounded collective subject.

The passional system moves from **anxiety about boundaries to reaffirmation of identity**.

This process demonstrates why negative emotions in populist communication should not be analyzed independently from positive ones. Fear and pride can belong to the same semiotic trajectory.

The former defines what is at risk. The latter defines what is worth defending.

Trump's political communication consequently constructs a passional economy in which **threat and pride mutually reinforce one another**.

The perception of danger increases the value of belonging, while the value attributed to belonging increases the emotional seriousness of perceived danger.

The resulting structure is circular:

VALUED COMMUNITY → PERCEIVED THREAT

↑ ↓

REAFFIRMED COMMUNITY ← DEFENSIVE MOBILIZATION ← FEAR

Within this structure, the leader occupies the decisive transformational position. He is the subject through whom negative passion can be converted into positive passion.

The leader recognizes fear but does not remain within fear. He acknowledges decline but promises greatness. He identifies vulnerability but performs strength. He names enemies but promises victory.

The passional competence of the Trumpian leader therefore consists partly in his capacity to **transform collective affect**.

This transformation becomes especially visible in **IMG 1a**.

The Butler assassination attempt produces an unusually concentrated passional sequence because several stages occur within an extremely compressed temporal interval.

The initial condition is danger.

The immediate disposition is fear or shock. The body is visibly marked by the event. The raised fist then transforms the scene. Resistance becomes perceptible. The image is subsequently available for collective evaluation.

The sequence can be reconstructed as:

ATTACK

↓

VULNERABILITY

↓

BODILY RECOMPOSITION

↓

RAISED FIST

↓

RESISTANCE

↓

HEROIC / POLITICAL SANCTION

The significance of the image derives precisely from this rapid conversion. The political body does not remain the passive object of an event. It becomes the active subject of a response.

At the passional level, the movement is from **being affected to demonstrating mastery over the effects of being affected**. This is crucial for Trump's ethos.

The image allows vulnerability to exist without destabilizing the broader identity of strength because vulnerability becomes the condition against which strength can be demonstrated.

Without the initial danger, the gesture would not possess the same emotional intensity.

The negative condition therefore produces the possibility of a stronger positive sanction.

This mechanism can be described as **passional reversal**.

A potentially disqualifying condition is incorporated into a sequence that ultimately reinforces the existing political identity.

Vulnerability becomes resistance. Danger becomes courage. Attack becomes proof of resilience.

The political body is consequently evaluated not according to whether it can avoid all vulnerability, but according to how it responds when vulnerability occurs.

IMG 1b provides a less dramatic but equally important form of passional competence.

Here the leader's body is characterized by control, frontality, centrality, and visual command. The relevant passion is not expressed through spectacular emotional intensity but through the apparent containment of affect.

The subject appears capable of remaining stable. This produces a distinction between the passions attributed to the political world and the passions displayed by the leader.

The surrounding political environment may be represented as unstable, threatening, or conflictual. The leader remains controlled.

The passional relation can therefore be expressed as:

WORLD → INSTABILITY

LEADER → STABILITY

The asymmetry is politically productive.

The leader does not merely share the emotional state of the community. He offers an alternative affective condition toward which the community can move.

Trump's passional leadership therefore contains a significant **regulatory dimension**.

The leader can intensify fear or anger discursively while simultaneously presenting his own body as capable of controlling the situation that generates those passions. This apparent contradiction is actually central to the structure.

The communication may amplify the problem precisely in order to increase the value of the subject who appears capable of resolving it.

In **IMG 1c**, the passional trajectory moves toward aspiration and confidence through the representation of success.

The luxurious environment, airplane, wealth, and gilded aesthetic contribute to the construction of a subject who has already achieved a positively valorized condition.

The image therefore operates as a form of **anticipated sanction**.

Before the political transformation has been completed, the protagonist's biography is presented as evidence of the kind of success he promises to extend to the collective subject.

The emotional sequence becomes:

PERCEPTION OF SUCCESS

↓

ADMIRATION / ASPIRATION

↓

ATTRIBUTION OF COMPETENCE

↓

CONFIDENCE

↓

HOPE OF COLLECTIVE SUCCESS

The important point is that confidence does not emerge from an abstract argument alone. It is materially staged. The leader's environment functions as evidence of an already accomplished personal narrative.

Trump's wealth consequently contributes to the passional schema by providing a visible model of **successful conjunction with valued objects**.

The leader possesses what the political narrative promises the nation can recover: success, recognition, power, and superiority.

The personal trajectory thus anticipates the collective trajectory. This creates a relation between biography and political promise:

THE LEADER'S ACHIEVED SUCCESS → THE NATION'S PROMISED SUCCESS

Trump's passional schema therefore converges with the narrative program reconstructed in Chapter III. The protagonist can mediate between a negatively valorized present and a desired future because his own image already contains signs associated with the destination.

The political subject embodies not only the competence necessary for transformation but also a **preview of the emotional reward** attached to that transformation.

The final sanction of the Trumpian passional schema is consequently strongly connected to **pride**.

Pride constitutes a particularly important endpoint because it reverses the initial configuration of decline and vulnerability.

If the initial subject is humiliated, weakened, threatened, or disrespected, the restored subject must become proud, strong, secure, and recognized.

The transformation is therefore:

HUMILIATION → PRIDE

FEAR → CONFIDENCE

WEAKNESS → STRENGTH

DECLINE → GREATNESS

The emotional and axiological transformations coincide.

This is why the slogan "Make America Great Again" possesses such strong passional potential. Its temporal structure contains an implicit emotional narrative: the present is insufficient, the past provides a valued reference, and the future promises recovery.

The slogan therefore does not merely designate a political program. It organizes **nostalgia, dissatisfaction, hope,** and **anticipated pride** within a compact temporal formula.

The Mileian passional schema develops according to a substantially different trajectory. Here the initial condition is not predominantly constructed as national vulnerability requiring protection but as **systemic dysfunction requiring interruption**.

Economic crisis, inflation, political privilege, bureaucracy, state inefficiency, and the "casta" establish a world in which the collective subject is represented as constrained by structures that continually reproduce frustration.

The initial affective condition is therefore less strongly centered on fear than on **exasperation**.

The Mileian sequence can be represented as:

SYSTEMIC CRISIS

↓

FRUSTRATION / EXASPERATION

↓

INDIGNATION

↓

ANGER

↓

DISRUPTIVE MOBILIZATION

↓

RUPTURE

↓

LIBERATORY EXPECTATION

The movement from frustration to indignation is crucial. Frustration can remain impersonal. A subject can be frustrated by circumstances without identifying anyone as morally responsible.

Indignation requires a different structure. It presupposes the evaluation that the negative condition is not merely unfortunate but **unjust, illegitimate,** or **intolerable**.

The transition from frustration to indignation therefore depends on causal and moral attribution. This is where **IMG 2c** becomes central.

The construction of the "casta" provides the crisis with a responsible actor. Economic dysfunction is no longer merely a technical problem. It becomes the result of a political system whose beneficiaries are opposed to the interests of ordinary or productive subjects.

The passional sequence consequently acquires an antagonist:

SUFFERING → ATTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY → INDIGNATION

Once responsibility has been assigned, anger becomes politically directional.

The subject knows not only that something is wrong but **against whom the emotion should be oriented**. This transition is essential to the transformation of private dissatisfaction into collective political passion.

The "casta" therefore performs an affective function comparable to its narrative function. Narratively, it operates as anti-subject. Passionally, it operates as **the object of indignation**. The different analytical levels converge.

The Mileian discourse thus constructs a political environment in which anger appears not only understandable but potentially appropriate. This normative dimension is important.

A passion becomes politically powerful when the text does not merely represent it but **legitimizes the right to experience it**.

Milei's bodily performance in **IMG 2b** contributes precisely to this legitimization. The leader does not suppress anger. He gives it maximum visibility.

Shouting, facial tension, gestural expansion, and confrontational posture transform anger into a publicly embodied political position.

The body performs the transition from disposition to manifestation. Anger ceases to be latent. It becomes spectacle.

The passional sequence is therefore:

INDIGNATION

↓

SOMATIC INTENSIFICATION

↓

VISIBLE ANGER

The body serves as the medium through which political evaluation becomes affectively perceptible.

Milei's corporeality is especially important because it can transform the leader into a **model of permissible emotional expression**.

The supporter who experiences frustration encounters a political figure who does not demand emotional moderation as a prerequisite for political legitimacy.

On the contrary, intensity itself can be represented as proof that the crisis has been correctly understood.

The implicit proposition becomes:

IF THE SITUATION IS EXTREME,

AN EXTREME EMOTIONAL RESPONSE MAY BE APPROPRIATE.

This is one of the mechanisms through which excess can be resemanticized. The emotional norm changes according to the political diagnosis. What would appear excessive in a normal situation can appear proportionate if the situation itself is constructed as exceptional.

The Mileian discourse therefore establishes a relation of **proportionality between crisis and passion**. The more intolerable the system appears, the more intense the legitimate response can become.

This creates an escalating structure:

GREATER CRISIS

↓

GREATER INDIGNATION

↓

GREATER INTENSITY

↓

GREATER JUSTIFICATION FOR RUPTURE

The political diagnosis and the emotional performance mutually reinforce one another.

IMG 2a, centered on the chainsaw, introduces the transition from passion to action.

Anger alone does not complete the passional trajectory. For the emotion to become politically productive, it must be converted into a disposition toward transformation.

The chainsaw materializes this conversion. It transforms the energy of indignation into the imaginary of cutting. The object therefore occupies a crucial position between **passion and performance**.

The sequence becomes:

ANGER → WILL TO INTERRUPT → INSTRUMENT OF RUPTURE → ACTION

The chainsaw is affectively effective because it gives anger a direction. It does not merely communicate dissatisfaction. It suggests what dissatisfaction wants to do to the object that has produced it.

The political emotion thus acquires a **motor dimension**. The chainsaw is the figurative continuation of anger by other semiotic means. This relationship demonstrates how objects can participate in passional structures. An object does not possess emotions, but it can provide a perceptible form to the action toward which an emotion tends.

The chainsaw converts:

"THIS SYSTEM IS INTOLERABLE"

into

"THIS SYSTEM MUST BE CUT".

Passional tension becomes transformative intention.

IMG 2d represents the next stage particularly effectively because productive chaos can be interpreted as the perceptible result of disruptive action.

Once the established order is challenged, instability emerges.

This instability could potentially reactivate fear and undermine the political program.

The passional system must therefore assign it a meaning compatible with the desired transformation.

The crucial operation is **revaluation**. Instability is reinterpreted as evidence that the old order is losing its capacity to reproduce itself.

Conflict becomes movement. Tension becomes transition. Disorientation becomes the cost —or even the sign— of transformation.

The passional schema therefore performs another reversal:

INSTABILITY → NOT FAILURE, BUT TRANSITION

This allows anxiety to coexist with hope. The political subject can experience uncertainty while interpreting that uncertainty positively because it is inserted within a teleological narrative.

The present is unstable **because the future is being produced**. This temporal orientation is fundamental to the Mileian passional configuration.

Where Trump promises relief through the recovery of a recognizable order, Milei can ask the political subject to tolerate instability because stability itself has been associated with the reproduction of dysfunction.

The two leaders therefore construct different relations to **affective endurance**.

Trump offers the promise that threat can be mastered. Milei offers the promise that disruption can be endured.

The first asks the public to trust the leader's capacity to restore stability. The second asks the public to interpret instability as part of the necessary passage toward transformation.

IMG 2e becomes particularly important in this phase because economic indicators can contribute to the eventual sanction of the passional trajectory.

If disruptive transformation produces uncertainty, the political discourse requires signs capable of demonstrating that the sacrifice is meaningful.

Economic data can perform this function. Inflation charts, fiscal indicators, and statistical comparisons may be used to convert an abstract promise into visible evidence of movement.

The same chart that initially supported indignation can later support confidence.

The passional trajectory of data can therefore be represented as:

DATA OF CRISIS → JUSTIFIED ANGER

followed potentially by:

DATA OF CHANGE → JUSTIFIED HOPE

This is a particularly sophisticated mechanism because the same visual language can connect the beginning and end of the political narrative.

Numbers diagnose suffering. Numbers can subsequently sanction transformation.

The statistical text therefore participates in the regulation of political emotion across time. It tells the audience not only **what to think about the economy**, but potentially **how the current emotional condition should be evaluated**.

If indicators are represented as improving, sacrifice can be reinterpreted as meaningful.

If change is slow, continued resistance from the old system can be invoked to explain delay.

If conflict persists, it can be represented as evidence that transformation remains incomplete.

The passional schema is consequently capable of extending itself.

This is particularly important because political narratives rarely achieve definitive closure.

The final sanction remains provisional.

The desired future is continually approaching but not necessarily fully realized.

Passion therefore becomes sustainable through **anticipation**.

In Trump's case, anticipation takes the form of restorative hope.

In Milei's case, it takes the form of transformative or liberatory expectation.

Both political systems depend on the capacity to keep the positive endpoint emotionally present even when it has not been achieved.

The comparison can therefore be summarized through two passional trajectories:

TRUMP

NATIONAL DECLINE / THREAT

↓

FEAR / INSECURITY / HUMILIATION

↓

MOBILIZATION AROUND STRENGTH

↓

RESISTANCE / PROTECTION / CONTROL

↓

CONFIDENCE

↓

PRIDE / RESTORATIVE HOPE

MILEI

SYSTEMIC CRISIS / CONSTRAINT

↓

FRUSTRATION / EXASPERATION

↓

ATTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

↓

INDIGNATION / ANGER

↓

DISRUPTIVE ACTION

↓

PRODUCTIVE INSTABILITY

↓

LIBERATORY EXPECTATION / HOPE OF REFOUNDATION

The difference between these trajectories is significant because it demonstrates that the two leadership models do not merely mobilize different emotions. They organize **different transformations of emotion**.

Trump's passional program converts vulnerability into reassurance. Milei's converts frustration into activation.

Trump seeks to move the political subject from fear toward confidence. Milei seeks to move the political subject from indignation toward rupture.

The positive endpoint also differs:

- Trumpian pride is strongly connected to the recovery of collective identity. It is the emotional form assumed by restored national greatness;
- Mileian hope is more strongly connected to liberation from constraint. It is the emotional form assumed by the possibility of a different political and economic order.

The comparison therefore confirms the close correspondence among **axiological, narrative, passional, and bodily structures**.

Trump's values of strength, greatness, sovereignty, and belonging become narratively organized as restoration, passionally organized as movement from threat to pride, and bodily organized through resistance, verticality, and control.

Milei's values of freedom, rupture, anti-caste politics, and transformation become narratively organized as refoundation, passionally organized as movement from frustration to disruptive expectation, and bodily organized through tension, expansion, confrontation, and movement.

The different analytical levels do not simply coexist.

They **translate one another**.

This translational relation is one of the central findings of the analysis. The political body gives visible form to passion. Passion gives experiential intensity to narrative. Narrative organizes values into transformations. Values provide the criteria through which transformations are evaluated.

The entire system can therefore be represented as:

VALUES

↓

NARRATIVE

↓

PASSION

↓

EMBODIMENT

↓

POLITICAL SANCTION

The relation is not exclusively linear. Embodiment can reinforce passion. Passion can alter the interpretation of values. Narrative events can transform the meaning of bodily gestures. Collective sanction can retrospectively redefine an image. The semiotic system is therefore recursive.

IMG 1a provides perhaps the clearest example: an event produces a gesture; the gesture is interpreted through an existing ethos of strength; circulation reinforces that ethos; and the strengthened ethos subsequently affects how the original event itself is remembered.

A comparable process occurs with Milei's chainsaw.

The object is initially connected to a political proposal; repeated performance transforms it into a sign of rupture; circulation stabilizes the association; and the stabilized association subsequently allows new appearances of the object to reactivate the entire political identity almost instantaneously.

Passional meaning is therefore also a product of **memory and repetition**. The canonical passional schema does not unfold only within a single text. In platformized political communication, it can unfold **across texts**.

One image constructs threat. Another constructs strength. A rally produces collective pride. A later post reactivates the same emotional trajectory. A confrontation constructs anger. A meme amplifies it. A chart supplies justification. A subsequent political result provides provisional sanction.

The corpus can consequently be understood as a distributed passional architecture in which different texts perform different stages of the same broader emotional transformation.

This observation is particularly important for understanding contemporary digital populism.

The political subject is rarely exposed to a complete narrative in a single communicative event. Instead, fragments circulate across platforms and moments, recurrent emotional structures allow these fragments to remain mutually intelligible.

The raised fist, MAGA cap, chainsaw, angry gesture, anti-caste discourse, and economic chart belong to different textual forms, but they can be integrated into coherent **passional worlds**.

Trump's world repeatedly asks the audience to move from danger toward strength and from loss toward pride.

Milei's repeatedly asks the audience to move from frustration toward anger and from anger toward transformative agency.

The political effectiveness of these structures depends precisely on their capacity to make emotion appear **appropriate to the world being represented**.

Fear appears reasonable if the community is threatened. Pride appears reasonable if the community is being restored. Anger appears reasonable if the system is unjust.

Disruptive enthusiasm appears reasonable if rupture is the necessary condition of liberation.

Passion therefore participates directly in veridiction: an emotionally coherent response can contribute to the impression that the political diagnosis producing that response is itself credible.

The leader's emotional performance consequently becomes a form of evidence.

Trump's resistance says: **the threat is real, but it can be overcome**.

Milei's anger says: **the crisis is real, and accepting it would be intolerable**.

In both cases, the leader does more than describe political reality. He provides the audience with an **affective model for inhabiting it**.

This is the deeper significance of the canonical passional schema within the corpus.

It reveals that populist leadership is constructed not merely by telling audiences what the political world is, but by organizing how that world can be emotionally experienced over time.

Trump transforms the experience of threat into the expectation of restoration.

Milei transforms the experience of crisis into the expectation of rupture and refoundation.

Their political differences are therefore inscribed not only in programs, values, or visual styles, but in two distinct **temporal grammars of passion**:

- one promises that the endangered subject can recover a valued condition;
- the other promises that the constrained subject can become free only by passing through the instability of radical transformation.

V. ENUNCIATION

5.1. ENUNCIATOR AND ENUNCIATEE

The analysis of enunciation makes it possible to move from the internal organization of values, narratives, and passions toward the **relational structure through which political discourse constructs positions of speaking, seeing, and interpreting**. Political communication does not simply transmit content from a leader to a pre-existing audience. It also produces an implicit image of the subject who speaks and of the subject who is expected to receive, understand, recognize, and validate the message.

The distinction between empirical author and textual enunciator is particularly important in the present corpus. Donald Trump and Javier Milei are, of course, real political actors, but semiotic analysis does not reduce the enunciating instance to their biographical identities. Each image, slogan, performance, or visual composition constructs a particular **enunciative position** from which the political world is presented as intelligible.

The same applies to the audience. The empirical public is heterogeneous, fragmented, and politically differentiated. It cannot be inferred directly from the text. What can be reconstructed, however, is an **enunciatee**: an implied interpretive position toward which the text is oriented and whose competence is presupposed by the communicative act.

The enunciatee is therefore not equivalent to "the voter" in a sociological sense. It is the subject position that the political text makes available.

The analysis consequently asks:

- ***Who speaks?***
- ***From what position?***
- ***To whom?***
- ***What knowledge is presupposed?***
- ***What values must the receiver recognize?***

- ***What emotional response is made plausible?***
- ***Which political world must be accepted for the message to appear coherent?***

These questions reveal that enunciation is central to the construction of political credibility.

A leader appears credible when the position from which he speaks is compatible with the world he describes and when the audience is successfully positioned as someone capable of recognizing that compatibility.

In the Trumpian corpus, the enunciator is predominantly constructed as a **patriotic restorer, protective leader, successful subject, and embattled representative of the authentic nation**.

These dimensions do not appear independently.

They converge in the production of a voice that claims to speak from inside the collective identity while simultaneously occupying a position of exceptional competence.

The Trumpian enunciator can therefore be described through a double structure:

I AM ONE OF YOU

and

I AM THE ONE WHO CAN ACT FOR YOU

This apparent tension is fundamental to the construction of charismatic populist leadership. The enunciator must be sufficiently close to the collective subject to claim authentic representation, but sufficiently exceptional to justify political centrality.

The text therefore produces a relation of **identitarian proximity and functional asymmetry**:

- Trump shares the people’s values;
- Trump recognizes the people’s threats;
- Trump names the people’s enemies;
- Trump promises to restore the people’s greatness.

Trump is also constructed as possessing the strength, success, resources, visibility, and competence necessary to accomplish what ordinary members of the collective subject cannot accomplish individually.

The enunciatee is correspondingly constructed as a **patriotic subject who recognizes national decline and desires restoration**.

The Trumpian text presupposes a receiver capable of accepting several fundamental premises:

- America possesses an authentic identity;
- that identity has been weakened or threatened;
- the present condition is inferior to a positively valorized past or ideal;
- certain actors are responsible for decline;
- strong leadership is necessary;
- restoration is both possible and desirable.

The text does not need to restate all these propositions every time. They function as part of an **enunciative competence** presupposed in the receiver.

A MAGA cap can therefore communicate extensively with very little explicit verbal information because the enunciatee is expected to reconstruct the larger narrative:

- the slogan activates an already available world;
- the receiver must know what “America” refers to;
- must recognize “greatness” as positive;
- must understand “again” as implying loss;
- must identify the political movement associated with the phrase;
- must locate Trump as the subject capable of performing restoration.

In **IMG 1d**, the enunciative efficiency of the MAGA symbolic universe is particularly evident.

The red cap does not merely represent a political message. It presupposes a community capable of **reading itself in the object**.

The enunciatee is invited not simply to understand the sign but to identify with it. This shifts the communicative relation from interpretation toward participation.

The implied receiver is not:

ONE WHO SEES MAGA

but potentially:

ONE WHO BELONGS TO MAGA

The distance between message and receiver is reduced. The political sign seeks incorporation. The supporter can wear the object and thereby move from enunciatee to secondary enunciator.

This transformation is crucial in platformized political communication because the initial communicative structure can be replicated by the audience.

The receiver becomes sender. The interpreted sign becomes circulated sign. The political identity becomes socially distributed.

Trumpian enunciation therefore possesses a strong capacity for **delegation**. The leader produces an initial identity statement. Supporters reproduce it through clothing, reposting, slogans, comments, images, memes, and participation in rallies.

The political voice becomes multiplied while remaining organized around a highly centralized symbolic figure. This creates a distinctive relation between centralization and diffusion.

The enunciator is strongly personalized. The enunciation is widely distributed. The paradox is resolved because distributed voices continually refer back to the same leader, slogan, and symbolic universe.

In **IMG 1a**, the enunciative structure becomes particularly intense because the body itself temporarily replaces extended discourse.

The raised fist functions as an utterance without requiring a complete verbal proposition.

The gesture says through the body what a longer political statement might otherwise articulate. The enunciator is therefore not merely the speaking subject. It is an **embodied enunciating instance**.

The gesture constructs a position from which the leader appears capable of addressing the audience even at a moment of physical vulnerability. This is especially important because the Butler image introduces a direct relation between visible body and implied spectator.

The viewer is placed before a body that has undergone danger and immediately performs resistance. The enunciatee is invited to recognize the gesture according to an already available code of heroic endurance.

The communicative relation becomes:

I HAVE BEEN ATTACKED → I REMAIN STANDING → YOU CAN READ THIS AS STRENGTH

The interpretation is not neutral. The image proposes a specific reading of the event. It directs attention away from helplessness and toward agency.

The enunciator consequently appears as someone capable of **controlling the meaning of his own vulnerability**. This capacity is central to Trumpian veridiction and will become even more important in the following sections.

IMG 1b produces a different enunciative relation. Here Trump's frontal positioning and visual dominance construct an enunciator whose authority derives from **presence and command**.

The image does not primarily invite intimacy. It invites recognition of hierarchy. The implied enunciatee is positioned before a leader who occupies the scene with confidence.

The relation can be described as:

I OCCUPY THE CENTER → YOU RECOGNIZE MY CENTRALITY

This form of enunciation relies strongly on visual organization. The political proposition is encoded spatially. Authority becomes visible before it is verbalized. The spectator is assigned a position from which the leader's dominance becomes perceptible.

This demonstrates that enunciation is not limited to pronouns or explicit forms of address.

An image can establish enunciative relations through **orientation, gaze, scale, centrality, framing, and distance**.

The visual field itself can define the relation between speaking subject and implied receiver.

IMG 1c, centered on airplanes, wealth, luxury, and the celebrity-business aesthetic, constructs another enunciative position.

Here the leader addresses the public from the position of **already achieved success**.

The political enunciator effectively says:

LOOK AT WHAT I HAVE ACHIEVED

and implicitly:

THIS SUCCESS DEMONSTRATES WHAT I AM CAPABLE OF DOING

The enunciatee is invited to interpret material wealth not simply as private privilege but as evidence of competence.

This requires a particular value system. The receiver must accept, or at least recognize, the association between wealth and success, success and capability, capability and political leadership.

The image therefore presupposes an enunciatee capable of converting economic signs into political meaning.

The enunciative relation is aspirational rather than egalitarian.

The leader does not erase difference from the public. He displays it. That difference is made meaningful as a resource.

The enunciatee is invited to admire rather than reject the distance. This produces a form of **vertical identification**.

The receiver identifies not through similarity but through investment in the leader's exceptional competence.

The political relation becomes:

YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE WHAT I AM

but

YOU NEED TO BELIEVE THAT WHAT I AM CAN WORK FOR YOU

This enunciative structure is central to Trump's celebrity-populist identity.

Material distinction and populist representation are not necessarily contradictory because they operate on different levels.

Economic distance can coexist with symbolic proximity. The leader may be socially exceptional while claiming to represent ordinary citizens politically.

IMG 1e introduces a further enunciative mechanism: the construction of a receiver who is invited to **see danger**.

The anti-immigration fake imagery functions through a specific act of showing.

The text does not merely say that immigration is problematic. It presents an image that claims to make the problem visible. This visual operation is extremely important.

The enunciator effectively positions himself as:

THE ONE WHO SHOWS WHAT OTHERS IGNORE, DENY, OR CONCEAL

The enunciatee is correspondingly positioned as:

THE ONE WHO IS NOW ABLE TO SEE

This creates an epistemic asymmetry between the political subject and competing institutions.

The leader can claim privileged access to reality. The receiver is invited to distrust alternative representations.

The communicative structure becomes:

THEY DO NOT TELL YOU THE TRUTH

↓

I SHOW YOU WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING

↓

YOU CAN NOW RECOGNIZE THE THREAT

The fact that the image is fabricated makes this enunciative structure especially significant in the context of post-truth.

The political effectiveness of the image depends not only on what it depicts but on the position from which the act of depiction is presented.

The image claims evidentiary status. It offers itself as something seen. The visual form can therefore simulate immediacy even when its referential basis is unreliable. This creates a tension between visual evidence and factual verification.

The enunciator may benefit from the culturally powerful association between seeing and believing. The enunciatee is encouraged to treat visibility itself as evidence.

The image thus performs an enunciative operation of **revelation**.

The leader or political discourse appears to disclose what established mediators allegedly fail to disclose.

This mechanism contributes to the construction of an anti-media or anti-establishment regime of credibility.

The Trumpian enunciator therefore oscillates among several positions:

- THE PROTECTOR
- THE WINNER
- THE RESTORER
- THE VICTIM WHO RESISTS

- THE ONE WHO REVEALS
- THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE AUTHENTIC NATION

These positions are not contradictory because they are integrated by the same broader narrative.

The leader can be attacked precisely because he threatens the establishment. He can be wealthy precisely because he is competent. He can dominate because the nation requires strength. He can reveal hidden threats because conventional institutions are represented as unreliable.

The different enunciative positions reinforce one another. The resulting enunciatee is equally complex.

The Trumpian text constructs a receiver who is invited to be:

- PATRIOTIC
- DISSATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT
- SUSPICIOUS OF ESTABLISHED MEDIATORS
- RECEPTIVE TO STRONG LEADERSHIP
- CAPABLE OF RECOGNIZING SYMBOLIC THREATS
- WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN COLLECTIVE RESTORATION

This receiver is not an empirical description of all Trump voters. It is a textual position.

The distinction remains essential because actual audiences may occupy it fully, partially, ironically, or not at all.

Milei's corpus constructs a significantly different enunciative relation.

The Mileian enunciator is predominantly organized around the figures of the **anti-caste disruptor, economist-revealer, angry witness, and agent of radical transformation**.

If Trump's enunciator frequently says, in effect, "I can restore what has been lost", Milei's says:

I CAN SEE WHY THE SYSTEM FAILS, AND I AM WILLING TO BREAK IT.

The relationship with the public is therefore structured less strongly around protection and more strongly around **shared diagnosis, indignation, and activation**.

The Mileian enunciatee is constructed as someone who already experiences, or is invited to recognize, the consequences of economic and institutional dysfunction.

The text presupposes a receiver capable of accepting that:

- the existing system has failed;
- the crisis is structural rather than accidental;
- the political “caste” benefits from or reproduces that system;
- conventional political solutions are insufficient;
- radical change is necessary;
- freedom requires the dismantling of constraints.

This receiver is not primarily asked to recover a stable identity.

The receiver is asked to recognize an **intolerable condition and the necessity of rupture**.

The enunciative relation can initially be represented as:

YOU EXPERIENCE THE CRISIS

↓

I NAME ITS CAUSES

↓

WE RECOGNIZE THE SAME OPPONENT

↓

I PROPOSE THE RUPTURE

The leader consequently positions himself as a subject who converts diffuse experience into explicit interpretation. This is particularly visible in **IMG 2e**.

Inflation charts and economic indicators construct an enunciator possessing **epistemic competence**. The political subject appears as someone capable of reading the economic situation, interpreting data, identifying causal relations, and translating technical knowledge into political judgment.

The enunciatee is correspondingly positioned as someone who is invited to **see the crisis through the leader's explanatory framework**.

The chart does not simply present information. It organizes a pedagogical relationship. The leader shows. The audience is shown. The leader interprets. The audience is invited to recognize the interpretation as valid.

The enunciative structure therefore contains a degree of epistemic asymmetry:

I KNOW HOW TO READ THIS

↓

I SHOW IT TO YOU

↓

YOU CAN NOW SEE WHAT THE SYSTEM HAS PRODUCED

This creates the figure of the **economist-enunciator**.

The political effectiveness of **IMG 2e** derives precisely from the fact that technical discourse is not left within a neutral academic register. It is theatricalized. The chart enters spectacle. Technical authority enters political confrontation. Data become part of a broader struggle over legitimacy.

The enunciator therefore combines two positions:

EXPERT

and

ANTI-SYSTEM AGITATOR

This combination is one of the most distinctive features of Milei's communicative persona.

The expert claims knowledge. The agitator claims courage.

Knowledge identifies what must be changed. Courage legitimizes the willingness to change it.

The enunciatee is invited to accept both dimensions simultaneously.

The relation can be represented as:

I UNDERSTAND THE SYSTEM BETTER THAN ITS DEFENDERS

and

I AM WILLING TO ACT MORE RADICALLY THAN THEY ARE

This dual claim contributes to the personalization of the political solution.

IMG 2c, centered on opposition to the "casta", develops the antagonistic side of this enunciative structure.

The term constructs a clear distinction among positions of speaking:

- there is a **we** implicitly composed of those who suffer, work, pay, produce, or desire freedom;
- there is a **they** composed of those represented as benefiting from or perpetuating the political system.

The enunciative opposition is therefore:

WE / THEY

The leader occupies a particularly important position within the "we".

Milei claims to speak from the side of the constrained subject while simultaneously possessing the competence necessary to lead the confrontation.

As in Trump's case, proximity and hierarchy coexist.

The Mileian enunciator says:

I AM AGAINST WHAT YOU ARE AGAINST

but also:

I CAN DO WHAT IS NECESSARY TO DEFEAT IT

The enunciatee is invited to recognize himself or herself in the first proposition and delegate transformative agency through the second.

This creates an enunciative contract based on **shared antagonism**.

The common enemy becomes a communicative bridge between leader and public.

The leader does not need to establish complete similarity with supporters because the shared opposition itself produces relational proximity.

IMG 2b, centered on bodily anger and confrontation, further reduces enunciative distance through the performance of affect.

Milei's body appears to say:

I FEEL THE CRISIS

not merely:

I ANALYZE THE CRISIS

The difference is significant. The political subject demonstrates that knowledge and passion coexist.

The enunciatee is invited to interpret bodily intensity as evidence that the leader is not emotionally detached from the conditions being denounced.

The relation becomes:

YOU ARE ANGRY → I AM ANGRY → OUR ANGER HAS THE SAME OBJECT

This creates an effect of **affective co-enunciation**.

Leader and receiver appear to occupy the same emotional position. The leader gives public form to a passion presumed to exist within the collective subject.

This mechanism is particularly important because it challenges conventional political enunciation, in which institutional authority often depends on maintaining emotional distance.

Milei's communicative persona reverses this expectation;

- distance can suggest complicity;
- restraint can suggest artificiality;
- intensity can suggest sincerity.

The enunciator therefore derives authenticity from appearing insufficiently separated from the passion he communicates.

The receiver is invited to interpret excess as correspondence between inner conviction and external expression.

This does not prove sincerity. It produces an **effect of sincerity**. The distinction is essential.

Semiotic analysis concerns the signifying mechanism through which sincerity becomes perceptible, not access to the leader's internal psychological state.

IMG 2a, centered on the chainsaw, constructs an even more performative enunciative relation.

The object turns the political proposition into a visible action.

The enunciator no longer merely says:

THE STATE MUST BE CUT

or

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE MUST BE REDUCED

The body-object relation performs the proposition figuratively. The chainsaw therefore converts enunciation into **demonstration**.

The leader shows what he proposes to do by staging an object whose function already contains the relevant action.

The enunciatee is invited to complete the metaphor.

The interpretive sequence is extremely economical:

CHAINSAW → CUTTING → REDUCTION → DISMANTLING → POLITICAL RUPTURE

The receiver supplies the semantic connections because the political context makes them available.

This produces a highly efficient relation between enunciator and enunciatee;

- the enunciator does not explain everything;
- the enunciatee is expected to cooperate.

This interpretive cooperation is one of the reasons symbolic objects can function so effectively in political communication. Their meaning is neither completely explicit nor completely open. They provide a recognizable structure that the receiver must activate.

The enunciatee therefore becomes an active participant in the production of meaning.

IMG 2d, centered on productive chaos, complicates the enunciative relation further because the communicative environment itself appears unstable.

Here the enunciator does not necessarily construct meaning through a single controlled proposition.

Meaning emerges through confrontation, provocation, acceleration, hyperbole, interaction, and media recirculation.

The political voice becomes recognizable through its **mode of intervention** rather than only through individual statements.

This is significant because the Mileian enunciator can remain coherent even when individual utterances appear excessive, fragmented, or conflictual.

The coherence lies at a higher level. What remains stable is the position of the subject who continuously disrupts.

The enunciator therefore becomes recognizable through an enunciative style:

- **ATTACK**
- **INTENSIFY**
- **PROVOKE**
- **BREAK PROTOCOL**
- **FORCE RESPONSE**
- **REASSERT DIFFERENCE**

The receiver learns not merely what Milei says but **how Milei speaks and acts**. This stylistic recognizability becomes part of political identity.

The enunciatee is correspondingly constructed as someone capable of interpreting communicative excess not simply as disorder but as a sign of anti-system consistency.

The reception contract becomes demanding. The receiver must reinterpret departures from conventional political communication according to a code in which transgression has positive value.

What one interpretive community reads as instability, another can read as authenticity. What one reads as aggression, another reads as courage. What one reads as chaos, another reads as evidence of transformation.

The enunciative structure therefore becomes a site of **interpretive struggle**.

This is true of Trump as well. No political image contains a single unavoidable interpretation.

IMG 1a can be read as heroic resistance or as evidence of political spectacularization.

IMG 1c can be read as success or elitism.

IMG 1e can be interpreted according to radically different political and factual frameworks.

The analytical point is not that the preferred reading is guaranteed.

It is that the text constructs an **enunciative invitation** toward particular interpretations.

The distinction between enunciatee and empirical audience becomes especially important here.

The enunciatee accepts, or at least understands, the codes required by the text.

The empirical viewer may reject them.

Semiotic analysis must therefore reconstruct the preferred interpretive position without transforming it into a claim about actual reception.

The comparison between Trump and Milei reveals two distinct dominant enunciative contracts.

The Trumpian contract can be summarized as:

- RECOGNIZE THE THREAT
- RECOGNIZE YOURSELF AS PART OF THE AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY
- RECOGNIZE THE LEADER'S STRENGTH
- TRUST HIS CAPACITY TO RESTORE

The Mileian contract can be summarized as:

- RECOGNIZE THE CRISIS
- IDENTIFY THE SYSTEM RESPONSIBLE
- RECOGNIZE THE LEADER'S DIAGNOSIS AND INTENSITY
- ACCEPT RUPTURE AS NECESSARY

Both contracts depend on the construction of a shared world between leader and receiver: credibility requires the enunciatee to inhabit that world.

Trump's world is organized around decline, threat, authentic belonging, and restorative strength.

Milei's is organized around systemic crisis, constraint, anti-caste antagonism, and disruptive transformation.

The leader becomes credible when his enunciative identity appears coherent with the world he has constructed. This relationship can be described as **enunciative circularity**.

Trump's world requires a strong restorer. Trump's performance provides the strong restorer. The presence of the strong restorer reinforces the perception that the world requires one.

Milei's world requires a radical disruptor. Milei's performance provides the radical disruptor. The presence of the disruptor reinforces the perception that the existing order is sufficiently intolerable to require disruption.

The subject and the world therefore validate one another. This is one of the central mechanisms through which political credibility is semiotically produced.

The comparison also reveals different relations to **mediation**.

Trump's enunciative style repeatedly seeks to reduce the perceived legitimacy of traditional intermediaries by constructing direct relations with supporters. The leader speaks over, around, or against journalists, institutions, and political elites.

Milei similarly constructs directness, but his anti-mediational stance is more strongly connected to the rejection of established political and institutional codes.

In both cases, the promise of direct communication contributes to an effect of authenticity. The leader appears to speak without filters.

This apparent immediacy is itself highly mediated:

- images are selected;cCamera angles are chosen;
- platforms rank content;
- clips are edited;
- posts are captioned;
- memes transform the original message;
- journalistic coverage recirculates performances.

The paradox of contemporary political enunciation is therefore that **the effect of unmediated authenticity is produced through intensely mediated environments**.

Trump and Milei do not escape mediation. They construct a form of mediation that represents itself as directness. This distinction is crucial to the analysis of platformized leadership.

The political subject can appear "closer" to the public because digital interfaces reduce certain visible signs of institutional mediation, even though technological and algorithmic mediation remains extensive.

The enunciatee experiences direct address while inhabiting an environment structured by platforms. The resulting relation is one of **mediated immediacy**.

This mechanism is particularly compatible with highly personalized leadership because the platform interface allows the leader's name, image, voice, and body to become the apparent origin of the message.

Institutional organizations recede behind the recognizable individual. Political enunciation becomes increasingly person-centered.

The corpus demonstrates this process visually.

- Trump's body organizes **IMG 1a** and **IMG 1b**.
- Trump's lifestyle organizes **IMG 1c**.
- Trump's movement organizes **IMG 1d**.
- Trump's political world structures **IMG 1e**.
- Milei's body organizes **IMG 2b**.
- His symbolic instrument structures **IMG 2a**.
- His antagonism structures **IMG 2c**.
- His style structures **IMG 2d**.
- His epistemic performance structures **IMG 2e**.

The political leader consequently functions as the **principal enunciative attractor** through which heterogeneous texts are unified. The texts differ. The enunciative persona stabilizes them.

This is one of the reasons why strong personalization is so compatible with fragmented platform communication.

Different content can circulate while remaining recognizable as part of the same political world because the leader provides a stable enunciative reference.

Trumpian enunciation is recognizable through restoration, dominance, success, patriotism, and resistance.

Mileian enunciation is recognizable through rupture, anger, anti-caste antagonism, economic diagnosis, and disruptive intensity.

The enunciative identity therefore functions as a **principle of coherence across textual heterogeneity**.

At the comparative level, the two leaders can be described through two dominant enunciative formulas.

TRUMP

- I SEE THE THREAT;
- I REPRESENT THE AUTHENTIC NATION;
- I HAVE THE STRENGTH TO PROTECT IT;
- FOLLOW ME TOWARD RESTORATION.

MILEI

- I SEE THE SYSTEMIC FAILURE;
- I NAME THOSE RESPONSIBLE;
- I POSSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND WILL TO BREAK THE SYSTEM;
- FOLLOW ME TOWARD REFOUNDATION.

These formulas are not literal quotations. They reconstruct the deeper enunciative positions distributed across the corpus. The difference between the two structures is substantial.

Trump predominantly constructs the enunciatee as a **member of a threatened but authentic community requiring protection and restoration**.

Milei predominantly constructs the enunciatee as a **constrained and betrayed subject requiring liberation through disruptive transformation**.

The Trumpian receiver is invited to say:

THIS IS MY NATION

The Mileian receiver is invited to say:

THIS SYSTEM ACTS AGAINST ME

The first begins from belonging. The second begins from antagonistic constraint. Both nevertheless culminate in the personalization of political agency.

The Trumpian enunciatee is invited to accept that Trump can restore the collective object.

The Mileian enunciatee is invited to accept that Milei can break the structures preventing access to the desired object.

Enunciation therefore reproduces at the relational level the fundamental distinction identified throughout the previous chapters.

Restorative populist leadership constructs a relation based primarily on **recognition, protection, identification, and recovery**.

Disruptive populist leadership constructs a relation based primarily on **diagnosis, indignation, activation, and rupture**.

Both depend on an analogous underlying mechanism: the leader constructs an image of the public, addresses that imagined public as if it already existed, and through repeated communication contributes to making that collective identity more recognizable.

The enunciatee is therefore not merely discovered.

It is **produced by the discourse that addresses it**.

The “patriotic American” and the “betrayed productive citizen” are not neutral demographic categories. They are semiotic subject positions through which complex populations are invited to interpret themselves.

This is one of the most important political functions of enunciation.

Communication tells subjects not only **what to think**, but also **from which position they should understand themselves as political subjects**.

Trump offers the position of the patriotic subject participating in restoration.

Milei offers the position of the constrained subject participating in liberation from the old order.

The political leader consequently constructs credibility by simultaneously constructing the subject capable of recognizing that credibility.

The relation is reciprocal and recursive.

The leader requires an enunciatee who understands the signs.

The signs help produce the enunciatee capable of understanding them.

Repeated circulation stabilizes the interpretive competence.

The stabilized competence makes subsequent messages easier to recognize.

Political identity thus becomes increasingly self-reinforcing.

At this level, platformization becomes especially important. The continuous circulation of slogans, gestures, images, objects, and confrontations allows the enunciative contract to be rehearsed repeatedly.

Each repetition teaches the audience how to read the next occurrence.

The MAGA cap becomes immediately legible because previous texts have established its code.

The chainsaw becomes immediately legible because previous performances have stabilized its association with rupture.

The raised fist becomes integrated into Trump's ethos because the broader political identity already values resistance.

The inflation chart becomes integrated into Milei's ethos because the broader discourse already attributes epistemic authority to economic diagnosis.

The enunciative system therefore possesses a form of **cumulative memory**.

Political signs become easier to interpret as the repertoire grows.

The corpus does not merely contain ten independent images.

It contains ten texts whose enunciative meanings depend partly on prior and subsequent texts belonging to the same political universe.

The enunciator and enunciatee are consequently constructed across a **serial communicative process**.

This seriality is one of the defining characteristics of contemporary platformized leadership.

The political relationship is not established once.

It is continually re-enacted.

Trump repeatedly addresses the public as a community requiring restoration.

Milei repeatedly addresses the public as a subject requiring liberation from a dysfunctional order.

Through repetition, those positions become familiar.

Familiarity becomes recognition.

Recognition contributes to credibility.

Enunciation therefore represents one of the central mechanisms through which the two political worlds sustain themselves over time: each message simultaneously speaks about politics and silently reconstructs the relation between the leader who claims the right to speak and the public whose recognition makes that claim politically effective.

5.2. ENUNCIATIVE STRATEGIES: ENUNCIATION, ENUNCIVE, EFFECTS OF PRESENCE

The distinction between enunciator and enunciatee examined in the previous section can be further developed by considering the concrete strategies through which the act of enunciation becomes perceptible within the political text. Images, gestures, slogans, objects, camera positions, bodily orientations, and forms of address do not merely represent political content: they can also preserve traces of the communicative act itself, producing different degrees of proximity between the represented world, the leader, and the spectator.

This distinction is particularly relevant to contemporary political communication because the corpus constantly oscillates between two tendencies. On the one hand, the images construct political worlds that appear to exist independently of the communicative act: national decline, economic crisis, immigration, political antagonism, wealth, collective identity. On the other hand, the leader repeatedly emerges as the subject who **shows, interprets, embodies, or directly intervenes within those worlds**.

The political image therefore does not simply say:

THIS IS REALITY.

It frequently implies:

THIS IS REALITY AS I SHOW IT TO YOU.

The difference is fundamental.

In the second formulation, the political leader becomes visible as the mediating instance through which reality acquires intelligibility. The represented world and the act of representing it become increasingly intertwined.

This mechanism is central to both Trump and Milei, although it operates according to different logics.

Trumpian communication tends to construct a strong **effect of presence** around the leader. His body, face, gestures, slogans, name, and recognizable visual repertoire repeatedly function as organizing elements of the communicative scene. Even when the political topic concerns the nation,

immigration, opponents, or economic success, Trump's persona tends to remain the principal interpretive center.

Mileian communication similarly personalizes enunciation, but the effect of presence is more strongly connected to **intervention, intensity, and performative disruption**. Milei does not simply occupy the scene; he frequently appears to transform it through speech, gesture, confrontation, or symbolic action.

The comparison can therefore initially be expressed as:

TRUMP → PRESENCE AS CENTRALITY

MILEI → PRESENCE AS INTERVENTION

This opposition corresponds closely to the kinesic-proxemic structures reconstructed in the previous chapter, but the question is now specifically enunciative: how does the political subject make himself perceptible as the origin, guarantor, or operator of the message?

In the Trumpian corpus, **IMG 1a** provides an especially significant example.

The raised-fist image originates in an event that was not initially organized as a conventional campaign performance. The assassination attempt introduces contingency, danger, and unpredictability. The subsequent gesture transforms the situation into a powerful communicative act.

Trump does not merely remain visible after the attack.

He **reasserts himself as enunciating subject**.

The raised fist effectively interrupts the possibility that the event might define him exclusively as a passive object of violence.

The structure changes from:

SOMETHING HAPPENS TO TRUMP

to:

TRUMP RESPONDS TO WHAT HAS HAPPENED

This transition is enunciatively decisive. The subject moves from the position of object within an event to the position of agent capable of producing a sign about that event.

The body becomes an enunciative instrument. The fist is not simply represented. It performs an act of meaning.

The distinction can be formulated as:

BODY AS OBJECT OF THE EVENT → BODY AS SUBJECT OF ENUNCIATION

This transformation contributes strongly to the subsequent iconicization of the image. The gesture appears to reclaim interpretive control over the situation.

Rather than allowing vulnerability to remain the dominant meaning, the body introduces resistance as a competing and ultimately highly recognizable reading.

The event is therefore subjected to a process of **enunciative reappropriation**. Trump becomes the subject who participates in determining how his own exposure to danger should be read.

The spectator is correspondingly repositioned. The viewer does not simply witness the aftermath of an attack. The viewer becomes the addressee of a gesture.

This produces a shift from observation toward interaction:

I SEE WHAT HAPPENED

becomes

I AM BEING SHOWN HOW THIS EVENT SHOULD BE INTERPRETED

The effect of presence derives precisely from this transition. The leader does not disappear behind the represented event. He re-emerges as its principal interpretive operator.

In **IMG 1b**, the effect of presence is produced differently.

Frontality, centrality, visual dominance, and low-angle framing contribute to an enunciative structure in which Trump appears to confront the spectator directly.

The image reduces the apparent distance between the represented political body and the act of address. Frontality can function as a visual equivalent of direct discourse.

The body faces outward. The political subject appears available for recognition. The spectator is implicitly positioned before him.

The relation can therefore be represented as:

LEADER ↔ SPECTATOR

rather than simply:

SPECTATOR → REPRESENTED LEADER

The bidirectional formulation is important because the image constructs the impression that the leader is not merely being observed but is also **addressing the field from which he is observed**.

This does not require literal eye contact in every individual image. The broader organization of frontality can already establish an enunciative relation of confrontation or direct presence.

Trump's visual centrality consequently performs two operations simultaneously. It establishes hierarchy. It establishes address.

The leader is above or dominant within the visual hierarchy, he remains oriented toward the spectator.

The result is a characteristic combination of:

DISTANCE + DIRECTNESS

The political figure is exceptional but accessible. Hierarchical but immediately recognizable. Monumental but communicatively present.

This configuration contributes to the construction of charismatic leadership because charisma requires both distinction and relation. A completely inaccessible figure cannot easily sustain the effect of direct identification, while a completely ordinary figure may lose the exceptional status necessary for charismatic authority.

Trumpian visual enunciation repeatedly negotiates this tension.

The leader is made close enough to be recognized and distant enough to remain exceptional.

IMG 1c introduces a different strategy because the political subject is connected to objects and environments associated with wealth, airplanes, luxury, and success.

Here enunciation operates partly through **ostension**: the political identity is constructed by showing material signs whose interpretation is expected to be relatively immediate.

The communicative logic can be summarized as:

LOOK AT THIS

↓

RECOGNIZE SUCCESS

↓

ATTRIBUTE SUCCESS TO THE SUBJECT

↓

CONVERT SUCCESS INTO POLITICAL COMPETENCE

The act of showing therefore performs an argumentative function without requiring an explicit syllogism. Luxury becomes evidence because it is presented as visible.

The enunciative strategy relies on the cultural competence of the receiver, who is expected to recognize the gilded environment, private aircraft, or other signs of wealth as markers of economic achievement.

The political argument is partially delegated to the object.

Trump does not need to state continuously:

I AM SUCCESSFUL.

The environment can say it for him. This mechanism can be understood as a form of **delegated enunciation**. Objects become secondary carriers of the leader's political identity.

The airplane communicates mobility, wealth, independence, and exceptional status. Gold communicates luxury and abundance.

The name associated with buildings, aircraft, or branded environments reinforces personalization. Material culture becomes part of the enunciative apparatus.

This is especially significant in Trump's case because the political persona inherits a pre-existing celebrity-business identity.

Political enunciation can therefore draw upon signs already stabilized within another communicative domain.

The transition from businessman to political leader does not require the abandonment of the previous symbolic repertoire. Instead, the repertoire is **resemanticized politically**.

The enunciative effect can be expressed as:

THIS IS WHO I HAVE BEEN

↓

THIS PROVES WHAT I CAN DO

↓

THIS IS WHY YOU SHOULD TRUST ME POLITICALLY

Personal biography becomes an enunciative resource for political credibility.

In **IMG 1d**, the relation between enunciation and object becomes even more complex.

The MAGA cap contains a verbal slogan, but its political effectiveness exceeds the linguistic content of the phrase. The object becomes a materialized act of enunciation.

To wear the cap is not simply to display a text. It is to perform affiliation. The object therefore allows the communicative act to migrate from the original political enunciator to the supporter.

The sequence becomes:

TRUMP / CAMPAIGN → SLOGAN

↓

SLOGAN → OBJECT

↓

OBJECT → SUPPORTER

↓

SUPPORTER → PUBLIC DISPLAY OF BELONGING

The enunciation is distributed across bodies.

This process is especially important because it transforms political communication from something the supporter receives into something the supporter can **perform**.

The cap functions as a portable enunciative device.

Its wearer effectively states:

I RECOGNIZE THIS POLITICAL WORLD

I PARTICIPATE IN IT

I MAKE MY BELONGING VISIBLE

The supporter consequently occupies a hybrid position.

He or she remains an enunciatee of Trumpian discourse while simultaneously becoming an enunciator of MAGA identity. This reversibility between reception and production is one of the defining features of platformized and participatory political communication.

The same process occurs digitally. A repost can become an act of affiliation. A profile image can become an enunciative marker. A hashtag can become a condensed declaration of belonging. A meme can transform reception into secondary production. The political discourse therefore circulates through **chains of re-enunciation**.

The original enunciator remains symbolically central, but the message becomes capable of speaking through multiple subjects.

This process contributes to the construction of a distributed political collective.

In **IMG 1e**, enunciation assumes a particularly problematic but analytically significant form because fake anti-immigration imagery exploits the evidentiary force culturally attributed to the visual.

An image can appear to say:

THIS HAPPENED.

Its apparent indexicality can reduce the perceptual distance between representation and event.

The spectator may encounter the visual content before encountering contextual information about its production, manipulation, or factual reliability.

This produces an **effect of referential immediacy**. The represented scene appears to present itself directly. The apparent disappearance of mediation is itself an enunciative effect.

The image has been produced, selected, circulated, captioned, contextualized, reinterpreted, possibly manipulated or generated.

The absence of visible mediation does not mean that mediation is absent. It means that mediation has become **less perceptible than the reality effect it produces**.

This distinction is central to the semiotics of post-truth. The credibility of a visual text may depend less on transparent evidence concerning its production than on its capacity to appear immediately compatible with an already established political narrative.

The image is believed because it looks like the kind of thing that could happen in the world already constructed by the discourse.

The enunciative mechanism can therefore be represented as:

PRE-EXISTING NARRATIVE OF THREAT

↓

IMAGE APPEARS TO CONFIRM THREAT

↓

VISUALITY PRODUCES EFFECT OF EVIDENCE

↓

NARRATIVE APPEARS FURTHER CONFIRMED

This creates a circular relationship between discourse and apparent evidence.

The political narrative prepares the interpretation of the image. The image then appears to validate the political narrative. The enunciator can consequently construct credibility without relying exclusively on external factual verification.

Credibility is produced through **semiotic coherence**. The image “fits”. The receiver recognizes the fit. The fit itself can become persuasive.

This mechanism will be central when the analysis turns more directly to veridiction and post-truth.

The Mileian corpus develops comparable effects of presence and immediacy, but through a different enunciative style.

In **IMG 2a**, the chainsaw produces an especially strong form of performative enunciation.

The political proposition is transformed into action through the relation between body and object.

Rather than simply saying that public expenditure or bureaucracy should be reduced, the political subject performs a figurative version of reduction.

The enunciative strategy can be expressed as:

SAYING → SHOWING → PERFORMING

This progression increases perceptual immediacy. An abstract economic proposition becomes a visible act. The receiver no longer needs to imagine reduction exclusively through technical language.

The chainsaw provides a material schema.

- something exists;
- something must be cut;
- someone possesses the instrument;
- the leader appears ready to perform the action;
- the metaphor therefore becomes **enunciatively embodied**;
- the political message is not merely contained in words.

It exists in the conjunction:

MILEI + BODY + CHAINSAW + GESTURE

The political subject becomes inseparable from the instrument through which the proposed transformation is represented.

This is why the chainsaw acquires such strong symbolic autonomy while remaining connected to Milei's persona. It can circulate independently, its political interpretation continues to reactivate the leader.

The object effectively becomes a **metonymic enunciator** of Mileism. The chainsaw can "speak Milei" even when Milei is not physically present.

This is comparable to the MAGA cap in terms of recognizability, but the enunciative function differs.

The MAGA cap primarily says:

BELONG.

The chainsaw primarily says:

ACT / CUT / BREAK.

The first materializes identity. The second materializes transformation.

This distinction reproduces the broader opposition between restorative and disruptive leadership.

IMG 2b makes the enunciating body itself particularly visible.

Shouting, expansive gesture, facial intensity, and bodily tension expose the material production of the utterance.

The political message appears to emerge from the entire body rather than from a controlled verbal channel alone.

The voice becomes corporeal. This produces an effect of **enunciative saturation**.

The leader does not merely communicate through words. Face, hands, posture, voice, movement, rhythm, and intensity all converge toward the same communicative act.

The distinction between content and performance becomes difficult to maintain because performance itself contributes decisively to content.

The enunciation says:

THIS MATTERS SO MUCH THAT MY ENTIRE BODY IS INVOLVED IN SAYING IT.

The resulting effect of authenticity depends on the perceived correspondence between internal conviction and external manifestation.

Again, semiotic analysis cannot establish whether the emotion is psychologically sincere.

It can establish that the text produces signs conventionally interpretable as **lack of emotional concealment**.

The body appears transparent to passion. This creates a specific form of enunciative credibility.

The leader seems credible because the utterance appears costly to the body. Intensity suggests investment. Investment suggests conviction. Conviction can be interpreted as sincerity.

The inferential sequence becomes:

BODILY INTENSITY → INVOLVEMENT → CONVICTION → AUTHENTICITY EFFECT

The relation is culturally constructed rather than logically necessary. A calm speaker may be equally sincere, and an intense speaker may perform intensity strategically.

What matters semiotically is that the political text makes this inferential chain available.

IMG 2c organizes enunciation through antagonistic deixis.

The construction of the "casta" establishes positions comparable to:

HERE / THERE

US / THEM

INSIDE / OUTSIDE

VICTIM / RESPONSIBLE ACTOR

Political antagonism therefore functions as a form of symbolic spatialization.

The enunciator positions himself and the implied public on one side of the divide and assigns opponents to the other.

The term "casta" is especially effective because it does not simply identify an institutional category. It evaluates while it designates. To name an actor as part of the "casta" is already to position that actor within a negative axiological field.

Naming becomes sanction. The enunciative act therefore performs political classification.

The structure can be represented as:

I NAME YOU → I POSITION YOU → I ATTRIBUTE VALUE TO YOUR POSITION

The Mileian enunciator thus claims a form of **classificatory authority**. He does not merely describe the political field. He redraws it.

Traditional distinctions among parties, institutions, and ideological positions can be reorganized around a more radical opposition:

CASTA / NON-CASTA

The enunciatee is simultaneously invited to locate himself within this new map. The act of political enunciation therefore becomes an act of **subject positioning**.

The receiver must decide:

WHERE AM I IN THIS OPPOSITION?

If the enunciatee accepts the discourse, the expected answer is outside the "casta" and on the side of those constrained by it.

This process illustrates how enunciation contributes to the production of collective identity.

The discourse does not merely address an existing group. It supplies the categories through which a group can recognize itself.

IMG 2d, centered on productive chaos, develops an enunciative strategy based on continuous intervention.

The political subject becomes recognizable through his capacity to interrupt ordinary communicative rhythms.

Provocation, hyperbole, confrontation, acceleration, and spectacular conflict generate a style in which enunciation itself becomes an event.

Milei does not simply contribute another statement to the political conversation.

The performance seeks to **alter the intensity of the communicative situation**. This can be described as an enunciation of rupture.

The act of speaking reproduces the political program at the level of form. A discourse advocating disruption is itself disruptive. A discourse attacking institutional convention violates conventional expectations. A discourse presenting politics as conflict becomes conflictual in its mode of expression.

The relation between expression and content therefore becomes strongly homologous:

DISRUPTIVE CONTENT ↔ DISRUPTIVE ENUNCIATION

This correspondence contributes to the effect of coherence.

Milei does not merely say that the system must change. His communicative style performs non-conformity with the system's expected modes of political speech.

The form of enunciation thus becomes evidence for the content of enunciation.

This produces another recursive structure:

I SAY THE SYSTEM MUST BE BROKEN

↓

I BREAK COMMUNICATIVE CONVENTIONS WHILE SAYING IT

↓

MY PERFORMANCE APPEARS TO CONFIRM MY ANTI-SYSTEM IDENTITY

The political persona becomes credible through consistency between **message and mode of saying**.

This consistency is one of the strongest mechanisms of performative authenticity in the Mileian corpus.

In **IMG 2e**, the enunciative configuration changes again.

Economic graphs introduce an apparent shift from passionate performance toward technical demonstration.

The leader becomes the subject who **shows evidence**.

The chart creates a visual object positioned between enunciator and enunciatee:

ENUNCIATOR → DATA → ENUNCIATEE

This triadic structure is important because the leader appears not simply to demand belief but to provide an external object that can justify belief.

The chart says, in effect:

DO NOT BELIEVE ME ONLY BECAUSE I SAY IT; LOOK AT THE DATA.

This produces an effect of objectivity. The political judgment appears anchored in something external to the speaker.

The data do not interpret themselves. Selection, scale, comparison, framing, explanation, and contextualization remain enunciative operations.

The apparent externality of the evidence therefore coexists with its incorporation into a political discourse.

The chart becomes a device of **objectivized enunciation**.

The speaker can temporarily recede behind the numbers while remaining the subject who selects, interprets, and presents them.

This is particularly significant for Milei because it allows two apparently contrasting enunciative regimes to coexist.

On one side:

PASSIONATE ENUNCIATION

(shouting, gesture, confrontation, bodily excess);

on the other:

EPISTEMIC ENUNCIATION

(data, graphs, economic explanation, technical vocabulary);

Rather than cancelling one another, these two modes can reinforce the same political identity.

Passion demonstrates commitment. Data demonstrate competence.

The combination produces:

I FEEL THE CRISIS

and

I UNDERSTAND THE CRISIS

The enunciatee is therefore invited to recognize Milei simultaneously as an emotionally involved political subject and as an epistemically competent interpreter.

This dual structure distinguishes Milei's disruptive leadership from a model based exclusively on anti-intellectual emotional mobilization.

The corpus shows that technical knowledge can itself become spectacularized and incorporated into populist performance.

The chart does not necessarily neutralize emotion.

It can intensify it by giving visible form to the object of indignation.

The comparison between Trump and Milei consequently reveals several recurrent enunciative operations:

- both leaders rely on **personalization**;
- both construct effects of **directness**;
- both seek to reduce the perceived legitimacy of traditional mediation;
- both use bodies and objects as enunciative devices;
- both transform visibility into a resource for credibility;
- both construct the audience as a participant rather than a merely passive receiver.

The dominant modes remain different:

- Trump's enunciation tends to stabilize the leader as the **central reference point of a political world**.
- Milei's enunciation tends to stabilize the leader as the **transformative force acting upon a political world**.

The distinction can be represented as:

TRUMP

WORLD OF THREAT / DECLINE

↓

CENTRAL LEADER

↓

SHOWING / PROTECTING / REPRESENTING

↓

RESTORATIVE ADDRESS

MILEI

WORLD OF CRISIS / CONSTRAINT

↓

DISRUPTIVE LEADER

↓

DENOUNCING / CUTTING / CONFRONTING / EXPLAINING

↓

TRANSFORMATIVE ADDRESS

The effect of presence therefore assumes different forms.

Trumpian presence tends toward **iconic centrality**. The leader occupies the scene as a recognizable and increasingly monumental political figure.

Mileian presence tends toward **performative intensity**. The leader becomes recognizable through the force with which he intervenes in the scene.

This distinction also affects the relationship between enunciation and temporality.

Trumpian enunciation frequently connects the present to a lost or endangered value that must be recovered.

The act of speaking therefore tends to point backward and forward simultaneously:

THE PAST WAS GREAT

↓

THE PRESENT HAS LOST GREATNESS

↓

I SPEAK FROM THE PRESENT TO PROMISE ITS RECOVERY

The enunciative present becomes a bridge between memory and restoration.

Mileian enunciation is more strongly organized around interruption:

THE PRESENT SYSTEM IS INTOLERABLE

↓

CONTINUITY MUST BE BROKEN

↓

I SPEAK FROM WITHIN THE CRISIS TO PRODUCE A DIFFERENT FUTURE

The enunciative present becomes a threshold between the old order and the promised new one.

This produces two different temporal positions for the political voice:

- Trump speaks as the subject who can **reconnect present and valued past;**
- Milei speaks as the subject who can **disconnect present and rejected past**.

The opposition is therefore:

TRUMP → RECONNECTION

MILEI → DISCONNECTION

This distinction will become especially important when the analysis turns to aspectuality and temporal organization.

At the enunciative level, however, it already demonstrates that political speech does not emerge from a neutral present.

The present is itself politically constructed:

- for Trump, it is a moment of loss requiring restoration;
- for Milei, it is a moment of exhaustion requiring rupture.

The act of enunciation acquires urgency because it occurs at a **decisive temporal threshold**.

Both leaders consequently construct a form of exceptional present.

Something must happen now. The current condition cannot simply continue.

Political enunciation therefore becomes performative because it seeks not only to describe reality but to participate in its transformation.

The slogan, gesture, chainsaw, chart, rally performance, and viral image all participate in this transformation by making particular interpretations immediately perceptible and reproducible.

This reveals a deeper characteristic shared by the two corpora: the progressive weakening of the distinction between **representing politics and performing politics**.

Trump's raised fist represents resistance while simultaneously performing it.

The MAGA cap represents belonging while wearing it performs belonging.

Milei's chainsaw represents cuts while its display performs the promise of cutting.

His anger represents dissatisfaction while bodily intensity performs dissatisfaction.

The inflation chart represents economic reality while its theatrical presentation performs epistemic competence.

Political representation therefore becomes increasingly **performative, s**igns do not merely refer.

They act. They classify. They mobilize. They position. They invite identification. They establish enemies. They materialize values. They construct expectations.

The political text consequently functions as an **enunciative event** capable of modifying the symbolic relations among leader, public, antagonist, and political reality.

Digital platforms intensify this performative dimension because the original act of enunciation can be continuously detached, recirculated, reframed, and reproduced.

A gesture performed once can become visible millions of times. A slogan uttered in one context can become a persistent hashtag. A symbolic object can generate innumerable derivative images. A confrontation can be fragmented into clips. A graph can become a screenshot.

The temporal limits of the original enunciation are therefore exceeded by its **digital iterability**.

The political utterance remains available for renewed acts of interpretation.

Each circulation can become a new enunciative situation. The same raised fist addresses different viewers at different moments. The same chainsaw acquires new meanings in new political contexts.

The same MAGA cap can operate as campaign material, identity marker, meme, journalistic image, or object of criticism.

The same economic chart can function as explanation, propaganda, evidence, or object of contestation.

Meaning consequently emerges not only from the original enunciation but from a **chain of successive re-enunciations**.

This is especially important for the analysis of post-truth because the origin of a sign can become progressively less important than its circulation.

An image may be detached from the conditions of its production. A quotation may be removed from context. A meme may transform a political statement. A fake image may circulate because it is emotionally and narratively coherent even after its factual status has been challenged.

The political sign acquires a **circulatory existence**. Credibility can therefore be generated through repetition and recognition as much as through reference to an original event.

The corpus suggests that Trump and Milei are particularly compatible with this environment because their political identities are organized around signs possessing high degrees of enunciative portability.

A fist. A red cap. A luxurious airplane. A threatening image. A chainsaw. An angry face. The “casta”, A chaotic confrontation. An inflation chart. Each can circulate as a relatively autonomous fragment while continuing to reactivate a larger political world.

This portability contributes to the construction of what may be described as **distributed presence**.

The leader does not need to be physically present for his enunciative identity to remain active. His signs continue to speak.

Trump can be evoked by MAGA without appearing in the frame.

Milei can be evoked by a chainsaw without appearing beside it.

Political identity becomes partially detachable from the physical individual and transferable to a symbolic repertoire. This does not weaken personalization.

Paradoxically, it can intensify it. The more successfully signs become associated with a leader, the less explicit identification they require.

The political persona becomes a **semiotic system capable of functioning through metonymic fragments**.

At this point, the distinction between leader and brand becomes analytically relevant, although the political identity cannot simply be reduced to commercial branding.

What matters is the capacity of a stable repertoire of signs to activate recognition rapidly across heterogeneous contexts.

Trump's repertoire tends to produce recognition through **stability and recurrence**.

Milei's repertoire tends to produce recognition through **intensity and disruption**.

Both nevertheless create a coherent enunciative identity capable of surviving textual fragmentation.

The comparison therefore confirms that contemporary populist leadership is not merely communicated through media.

It is **constructed as an enunciative architecture adapted to media circulation**.

The political subject becomes recognizable through recurring ways of appearing, showing, speaking, gesturing, confronting, and mobilizing objects.

This architecture also helps explain the relationship between authenticity and mediation.

Authenticity does not require the disappearance of mediation.

It requires mediation to produce signs that can be interpreted as evidence of a coherent subject.

Trump's consistency across different visual environments contributes to the perception of a stable persona.

Milei's recurrent intensity across different situations contributes to the perception of an uncompromising persona.

The relevant authenticity is therefore not transparency in an absolute sense but **recognizable continuity between political identity and enunciative performance**.

The leader appears authentic when the audience can say:

THIS IS WHAT TRUMP DOES.

or:

THIS IS HOW MILEI ACTS.

Predictability at the level of style can coexist with unpredictability at the level of individual events.

Indeed, repeated stylistic coherence may allow even unexpected events to be rapidly incorporated into the political persona.

Trump's raised fist becomes intelligible as Trumpian strength. Milei's confrontation becomes intelligible as Mileian rupture.

The enunciative identity acts as an interpretive frame capable of absorbing new occurrences. This is one of the mechanisms through which political personas acquire durability.

The analysis of enunciative strategies therefore reveals that Trump and Milei construct two different but structurally comparable systems of political presence.

Trump tends to establish himself as the **stable center from which reality is interpreted, threats are identified, belonging is organized, and restoration is promised**.

Milei tends to establish himself as the **disruptive operator through whom crisis is diagnosed, antagonists are named, established conventions are challenged, and transformation is performed**.

In both cases, enunciation becomes inseparable from leadership. The leader does not merely occupy the position of the person who communicates a political project. He becomes the principal semiotic mechanism through which that project acquires visibility, coherence, emotional intensity, and apparent immediacy.

The political subject thus functions simultaneously as **speaker, image, body, interpreter, performer, and symbolic reference point**.

This convergence is one of the defining features of personalized digital populism.

As the distinction between political message and political persona becomes increasingly porous, credibility is progressively attached not only to the propositional content of discourse but to the perceived coherence of the entire enunciative performance. What counts is not simply whether a statement appears true in isolation, but whether the leader's body, style, objects, emotions, narrative position, and modes of intervention combine to produce a recognizable regime of political truth.

Enunciation therefore constitutes the point at which the different analytical dimensions reconstructed thus far begin to converge.

Values determine what is worth defending or destroying, narrative structures determine what transformation must occur, passions determine how that transformation should be experienced, bodily configurations make those passions visible, and enunciative strategies establish **who possesses the authority to interpret the crisis**, address the public, and present a particular transformation as necessary.

Trump and Milei answer these questions differently:

- Trump constructs the authority of the leader who promises to recover and defend a valued collective order;
- Milei constructs the authority of the leader who claims the competence and determination required to dismantle a negatively valorized one.

Both demonstrate that, within platformized political communication, leadership increasingly depends upon the capacity to transform the act of appearing itself into a form of political argument: **to be visible in a recognizable way becomes part of the process through which authority, authenticity, and credibility are produced.**

5.3. ENUNCIATIVE DEBRAYAGE AND EMBRAYAGE

The analysis of enunciation can be further developed through the concepts of **debrayage and embrayage**, which make it possible to examine the ways in which discourse projects subjects, spaces, and times outside the immediate instance of enunciation and subsequently reconnects them to the enunciating position.

Within the Greimasian tradition, debrayage can be understood as the operation through which discourse establishes a world that appears distinct from the immediate “I-here-now” of enunciation.

Actors, places, temporalities, events, objects, and conflicts are projected into the represented world and acquire a certain degree of discursive autonomy.

Embrayage operates in the opposite direction. It produces a movement of return toward the enunciative instance, re-establishing proximity among the discourse, the subject who assumes it, and the position from which the represented world is interpreted.

These operations should not be understood as mechanical alternations between complete absence and complete presence of the enunciator. Rather, they constitute different strategies for regulating **distance and proximity**, objectification and subjectification, representation and involvement.

This distinction is particularly useful for the present corpus because Trump and Milei continuously construct political realities that are initially presented as external conditions and subsequently reconnect those conditions to their own bodies, identities, actions, and political projects.

A recurrent structure can therefore be identified:

CONSTRUCTION OF A POLITICAL WORLD

↓

APPARENT AUTONOMIZATION OF THAT WORLD

↓

REINTRODUCTION OF THE LEADER

↓

PERSONALIZATION OF INTERPRETATION AND TRANSFORMATION

The political world first appears as something that exists. The leader then appears as the subject capable of explaining, confronting, or transforming it.

Debrayage and embrayage consequently participate directly in the personalization of political communication.

In the Trumpian corpus, debrayage is particularly visible whenever the discourse projects an America represented as threatened, weakened, divided, or deprived of its previous greatness.

The nation becomes a discursive space. Its decline becomes a temporal condition. Immigration, political opponents, cultural conflict, hostile media, and the establishment can become actors within that world.

The resulting structure initially appears to exist independently of Trump as an individual subject:

- AMERICA IS IN DECLINE;
- THE BORDER IS THREATENED;
- THE NATION HAS LOST GREATNESS;
- THE ESTABLISHMENT HAS FAILED.

The effect is one of relative objectification.

The crisis is presented as a condition of reality rather than merely as the speaker's personal perception. This operation is politically significant because the diagnosis must appear to precede the proposed solution.

If the crisis were perceived only as an effect of the leader's discourse, the necessity of the leader himself would become less compelling. The discourse therefore tends to construct the problem as **already there**.

Trump does not create the crisis within the preferred reading of the text. He recognizes it.

This produces an epistemic structure:

REALITY EXISTS → TRUMP SEES IT → TRUMP NAMES IT

The apparent priority of reality over discourse contributes to the construction of credibility. The debrayed political world does not remain autonomous.

An operation of embrayage progressively reconnects the crisis to Trump's enunciative position:

- the nation is threatened;
- Trump becomes its defender;
- greatness has been lost;

- Trump becomes the agent of its restoration;
- the political system is represented as incapable of solving the problem;
- Trump becomes the exceptional subject capable of acting outside ordinary political limitations.

The movement can therefore be represented as:

AMERICA IN CRISIS

↓

CRISIS REQUIRES A COMPETENT SUBJECT

↓

TRUMP ENTERS AS THAT SUBJECT

↓

NATIONAL DESTINY BECOMES CONNECTED TO LEADER'S PERFORMANCE

The transition from debrayage to embrayage thus produces personalization. A collective condition is translated into the necessity of an individual political actor.

This mechanism is particularly clear in the relationship among **IMG 1d, IMG 1e,** and **IMG 1a**.

In **IMG 1e**, the construction of immigration-related threat projects a political world populated by antagonistic figures. The represented danger is externalized and made visible.

The image asks the spectator to look outward:

LOOK AT WHAT IS HAPPENING.

The enunciative origin of the interpretation can temporarily recede behind the apparent immediacy of the represented threat.

This is a strong debrayage effect.

The world appears to speak for itself. The image presents an alleged situation. The spectator is encouraged to interpret that situation as evidence.

Trumpian discourse subsequently reconnects the external threat to the leader.

The implicit question:

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO AMERICA?

is followed by:

WHO CAN STOP IT?

At this point embrayage occurs. The political diagnosis returns toward the enunciating subject. The crisis is no longer merely an external object of representation.

It becomes the condition through which Trump's political role is defined.

The sequence can be summarized as:

THEY ARE THE THREAT

↓

WE ARE THE THREATENED COMMUNITY

↓

I AM THE SUBJECT WHO CAN PROTECT US

This movement among **they, we, and I** is one of the most important enunciative mechanisms in the Trumpian corpus.

The third person constructs alterity. The first-person plural constructs community. The first-person singular personalizes agency.

The resulting structure is:

THEY → WE → I

Each position performs a different function:

- **THEY** identifies the antagonist;
- **WE** constructs the collective subject;
- **I** identifies the operator of transformation.

The leader therefore becomes central through a sequence that initially appears to concern actors other than himself.

This is precisely why debrayage and embrayage are analytically productive: they show how a discourse can simultaneously construct an apparently objective political world and progressively organize that world around a highly personalized subject.

IMG 1d provides a complementary mechanism.

The MAGA universe projects a temporal structure that exceeds the immediate moment of enunciation.

The word “again” necessarily constructs at least three temporal positions:

A VALUED PAST

↓

A DEFICIENT PRESENT

↓

A RESTORED FUTURE

The slogan therefore performs a temporal debrayage:

- the desired value is projected beyond the immediate present;
- greatness belongs simultaneously to a remembered or imagined past and to a promised future;
- the present becomes the interval of loss.

This temporal structure is subsequently reconnected to the leader.

The future restoration does not appear as an automatic historical development. It requires political agency.

The slogan therefore implicitly establishes:

PAST GREATNESS → PRESENT LOSS → TRUMP/MAGA → FUTURE RESTORATION

The leader occupies the transformational threshold between temporal states.

Embrayage thus reconnects historical temporality to present political action. The abstract temporal opposition between “before”, “now”, and “after” becomes personalized.

The future depends upon what the political subject does in the present.

This is one of the strongest mechanisms through which Trumpian discourse transforms nostalgia into political mobilization.

Nostalgia alone is retrospective. The MAGA structure makes it prospective. The past becomes an object of future-oriented action.

This apparent paradox is central to restorative leadership. The desired future is imagined through the values attributed to a previous condition.

Trump consequently occupies a temporal position that can be formulated as:

THE SUBJECT WHO MAKES RETURN POSSIBLE

This position contributes to the construction of his restorative ethos.

IMG 1a produces a different and particularly compressed alternation between debrayage and embrayage.

The assassination attempt initially constitutes an event external to the leader’s control: the event happens.

At this stage, Trump occupies the position of an actor within a larger situation.

The event appears to exceed intentional political communication. The raised fist then produces a rapid embrayage. The body reclaims the center of the scene. The contingency of the event is reorganized around the leader's response.

The sequence becomes:

EVENT

↓

BODY AFFECTED BY EVENT

↓

GESTURAL RESPONSE

↓

RETURN OF THE LEADER AS ENUNCIATIVE CENTER

This return is especially powerful because it occurs through the body rather than through extended verbal explanation.

The fist produces a form of **somatic embrayage**. The political subject reconnects the external event to his established identity through gesture. Danger is absorbed into the ethos of strength. The unexpected becomes narratively compatible with the pre-existing persona.

The image therefore demonstrates how embrayage can function retrospectively. The leader does not control the occurrence itself. He can nevertheless attempt to control its incorporation into his political identity.

This mechanism helps explain the rapid iconicization of the Butler image. The image does not remain exclusively attached to the factual chronology of the assassination attempt. It becomes connected to a broader symbolic structure of resistance, strength, persecution, survival, and political persistence.

The event is progressively transformed into **an event about Trump's identity**. This is an important distinction.

The referential event remains historically specific. Its political circulation increasingly integrates it into a generalized ethos. Embrayage thus contributes to the transformation of contingency into identity.

In **IMG 1b**, spatial embrayage becomes especially relevant.

Trump's frontal and central positioning reduces the distance between the represented scene and the spectator's viewing position. The leader appears to occupy the visual field in a manner that continually redirects attention toward himself.

The surrounding environment may be a rally, debate, or public event, but the composition tends to produce a gravitational effect:

SPACE → LEADER

Other elements acquire meaning in relation to the central figure. The political environment therefore becomes personalized through spatial organization.

The visual text effectively says:

THIS IS THE SCENE

but immediately:

THIS IS THE SUBJECT THROUGH WHOM THE SCENE MUST BE READ

The leader becomes an interpretive center. This spatial embrayage contributes to monumentalization because the surrounding world is organized around the subject rather than the subject being merely one element among others.

IMG 1c operates similarly through the relation between subject and environment: airplanes, gilded interiors, and luxury initially belong to a debrayed world of material objects. They can be seen. They possess recognizable cultural meanings. Those meanings are progressively reconnected to Trump.

The airplane is not merely an airplane. The luxury is not merely luxury. The gold is not merely a chromatic or material property. Each element becomes a sign of the subject.

The movement is:

OBJECT → VALUE → SUBJECT

Airplane:

PRIVATE AIRCRAFT → WEALTH / MOBILITY / EXCEPTIONALITY → TRUMP

Gold:

LUXURY → SUCCESS / ABUNDANCE → TRUMP

The material world is therefore subjectivized. Objects function as extensions of the political persona. This operation can be described as **possessive embrayage**: the environment is semiotically drawn toward the identity of the subject who owns, inhabits, or displays it.

The result is a highly personalized material universe in which objects appear to speak about the leader even when he is not verbally speaking.

Across the Trump corpus, debrayage and embrayage therefore participate in a recurrent movement:

NATION / HISTORY / THREAT / OBJECT / EVENT

↓

TRUMP

The political world is repeatedly brought back toward the leader. This does not mean that collective actors disappear. Rather, their meaning becomes increasingly organized in relation to the central political subject.

The Trumpian structure can therefore be summarized as:

DEBRAYAGE → CONSTRUCT THE WORLD THAT REQUIRES RESTORATION

EMBRAYAGE → CONSTRUCT TRUMP AS THE SUBJECT OF RESTORATION

The Mileian corpus develops an analogous but semantically different movement. Here debrayage predominantly constructs **a system in crisis**.

Inflation, state inefficiency, bureaucracy, political privilege, economic stagnation, and the "casta" are projected as elements of a dysfunctional political reality.

The world initially appears as a structure external to Milei:

- THE ECONOMY IS FAILING
- INFLATION IS DESTROYING PURCHASING POWER
- THE STATE IS INEFFICIENT
- THE CASTA PRESERVES ITS PRIVILEGES

Again, the problem is presented as preceding the leader. Milei does not create the dysfunction. Within the preferred political reading, he recognizes and reveals it.

The debrayed world therefore functions as the object of diagnosis. This is particularly evident in **IMG 2e**.

Economic graphs and statistical indicators produce a strong effect of objectification. Numbers appear external to the speaker. The chart appears to exist independently of Milei's personality.

This can temporarily create the impression that the political discourse has withdrawn behind empirical evidence.

The structure is:

DATA → REALITY

rather than:

MILEI → OPINION

This apparent depersonalization is strategically important.

It allows the political enunciator to construct a distinction between interpretation and mere subjective preference.

The implied claim becomes:

- THIS IS NOT SIMPLY WHAT I THINK;
- THIS IS WHAT THE NUMBERS SHOW.

The apparent autonomy of the data is followed by embrayage. Milei selects the indicators. Interprets them. Frames their meaning. Connects them to previous governments. Uses them to legitimate his diagnosis. Transforms them into justification for political rupture.

The sequence therefore becomes:

DATA

↓

CRISIS

↓

INTERPRETATION OF CRISIS

↓

MILEI AS COMPETENT INTERPRETER

↓

MILEI'S PROGRAM AS NECESSARY RESPONSE

The apparently objective world returns to the political subject. This movement is especially significant because it combines depersonalization and personalization within the same communicative structure.

The data appear impersonal. Their political meaning becomes intensely personalized. Milei's epistemic authority is constructed precisely through his capacity to mediate between the two levels.

He appears to say:

THE NUMBERS EXIST INDEPENDENTLY OF ME,

BUT I AM THE ONE WHO EXPLAINS WHAT THEY MEAN.

This position is central to the construction of the economist-leader. The authority of the enunciator derives partly from his claimed ability to move between technical evidence and political interpretation.

In **IMG 2c**, debrayage projects the "casta" as a collective antagonist.

The term produces distance. It creates a "they". The political system is externalized into an identifiable adversarial category.

The structure initially becomes:

THEY HAVE BUILT / MAINTAINED THE SYSTEM

↓

THE SYSTEM HARMS OTHERS

This is followed by a movement toward the collective subject:

THEY HARM US

The opposition becomes relational. The debrayed antagonist contributes to the construction of an embrayed community. The existence of "them" makes "us" more visible.

Milei then inserts himself into this relation:

THEY HARM US

↓

I DENOUNCE THEM

↓

I WILL DISMANTLE THEIR SYSTEM

The sequence can therefore be represented as:

THEY → WE → I

At this abstract level, the structure resembles Trump's. The semantic investment differs.

For Trump:

THEY → THREATEN THE COMMUNITY

WE → MUST DEFEND OUR IDENTITY

I → WILL RESTORE AND PROTECT

For Milei:

THEY → CONSTRAIN / EXPLOIT THE COMMUNITY

WE → SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES

I → WILL BREAK THE STRUCTURE

The same enunciative grammar thus supports two different political narratives.

This distinction is important because it demonstrates that populist opposition cannot be reduced to the simple presence of a "we/they" division. What matters semiotically is **how the division is invested with values and inserted into a transformational program**.

The Trumpian antagonist threatens something that should be restored or defended. The Mileian antagonist maintains something that should be dismantled.

The resulting embrayage therefore produces different leader functions. Trump becomes **protector-restorer**. Milei becomes **disruptor-liberator**.

IMG 2a provides perhaps the clearest example of Mileian embrayage because the chainsaw establishes an immediate connection among abstract policy, material object, and leader's body.

Fiscal reduction could remain debrayed as an economic concept. Public expenditure could remain a technical category. State restructuring could remain an institutional process.

The chainsaw collapses these distances. The abstract political program is brought into the immediate space of the body. The leader holds the object. The object represents the action. The action represents the program. The program becomes embodied.

The sequence is:

ABSTRACT ECONOMIC PROGRAM

↓

FIGURATIVE OBJECT

↓

LEADER'S BODY

↓

PERFORMED INTENTION

This is a powerful form of embrayage because abstraction is transformed into corporeal immediacy. The distance between policy and persona is drastically reduced. The leader does not merely endorse the program. He appears to **incarnate its operative principle**.

The chainsaw becomes an extension of the political body. The subject and the program become mutually recognizable. To see Milei with the chainsaw is to see rupture embodied.

To see the chainsaw in the relevant political context is to reactivate Milei.

The relationship is therefore bidirectional:

MILEI → CHAINSAW

CHAINSAW → MILEI

This semiotic reciprocity contributes to the stabilization of the symbol.

In **IMG 2b**, the body produces embrayage through passion. Anger could be described as a general social condition. Frustration could belong to the population. Indignation could circulate across a broad political environment.

Milei's bodily performance brings those passions back to a singular visible subject. The diffuse becomes concentrated. The collective affect becomes embodied.

The structure can be represented as:

SOCIAL FRUSTRATION

↓

COLLECTIVE INDIGNATION

↓

MILEI'S BODY

↓

VISIBLE ANGER

The leader becomes a site of affective condensation. This does not mean that the body simply mirrors a pre-existing collective emotion.

The relation is more complex. The leader's performance can also intensify, organize, and legitimate that emotion.

The movement therefore works in both directions:

COLLECTIVE PASSION → LEADER

and

LEADER'S PERFORMANCE → COLLECTIVE PASSION

This reciprocal structure produces what may be described as an **affective embrayage**.

The political body draws collective emotion toward itself and subsequently projects an intensified version of that emotion back toward the public. The leader thus functions as a semiotic amplifier.

This mechanism is particularly compatible with digital circulation because highly expressive bodily moments can be extracted from longer communicative situations and redistributed as images, clips, GIFs, or memes.

The original emotional performance becomes detachable. Its detachment does not necessarily eliminate the enunciative connection to Milei.

On the contrary, repeated circulation can strengthen the association between the leader and a particular affective style.

IMG 2d, concerning productive chaos, extends this mechanism from the body to the communicative environment.

Chaos initially appears as an external condition:

- multiple voices;
- conflict;
- provocation;
- hyperbole;
- acceleration;
- media confrontation.

The scene appears unstable. The instability becomes progressively connected to Milei's political identity. The leader is not simply located within chaos. He becomes its principal organizer and beneficiary.

The relation changes from:

CHAOS AROUND MILEI

to:

MILEI AS PRODUCER OF POLITICALLY MEANINGFUL CHAOS

The embrayage transforms environmental instability into a property of leadership.

This is crucial to the notion of “productive chaos”. Without this return toward the subject, chaos could remain mere disorder.

Through embrayage, it becomes a sign of disruptive agency. The political persona absorbs the instability and redefines it.

The resulting movement is:

DISORDER → MILEI → DISRUPTION → TRANSFORMATION

The subject gives the disorder a teleology. What might otherwise appear accidental is interpreted as part of a political trajectory.

This operation contributes to the resemanticization of excess examined in the previous chapters.

The same principle can be observed at the temporal level. Milei’s political discourse projects a rejected past and present associated with the old political order. The desired future is positioned beyond rupture.

The temporal structure can be represented as:

OLD ORDER

↓

CURRENT CRISIS

↓

RUPTURE

↓

NEW ORDER

Milei occupies the threshold. Unlike Trump, whose temporal role is to reconnect the present with positively valorized values attributed to the past, Milei must produce discontinuity.

The two temporal embrayages can therefore be compared directly:

TRUMP

VALUED PAST ← PRESENT LEADER → RESTORED FUTURE

(Trump connects)

MILEI

REJECTED PAST → PRESENT LEADER → DIFFERENT FUTURE

(Milei interrupts and redirects)

This distinction is fundamental. Trump's political temporality is **restorative**. Milei's is discontinuous.

Trump legitimizes the future by connecting it to an idealized value already known. Milei legitimizes the future by differentiating it from an order represented as exhausted.

The leader consequently occupies different semiotic positions within historical time:

- Trump is the **bridge**;
- Milei is the **break**.

The contrast can be further expressed spatially. Trumpian embrayage tends to produce **centripetal organization**. Signs converge toward the leader. Nation, flag, MAGA, wealth, resistance, and threat become increasingly organized around Trump as central figure.

The dominant movement is:

PERIPHERY → CENTER

Mileian embrayage is more frequently **explosive or centrifugal**. The leader occupies a central position only to project transformative force outward against the existing order.

The movement becomes:

CENTER → IMPACT ON SYSTEM

This distinction is not absolute, but it is analytically productive:

- Trump's visual world tends to monumentalize;
- Milei's tends to activate;
- Trump's body stabilizes the scene;
- Milei's body destabilizes it;
- Trump's centrality communicates command;
- Milei's centrality communicates intervention;

Debrayage and embrayage therefore reveal not only how the leaders are inserted into discourse but **what kind of relation they establish between themselves and the political world**.

Trump is constructed as the subject toward whom the threatened nation must return in order to recover coherence. Milei is constructed as the subject through whom the dysfunctional system must pass in order to be transformed. This distinction can be represented schematically:

TRUMPIAN ENUNCIATIVE MOVEMENT

THREATENED WORLD

↓

IDENTIFICATION OF LOSS

↓

RETURN TO LEADER

↓

LEADER AS CENTER

↓

RESTORATION

MILEIAN ENUNCIATIVE MOVEMENT

DYSFUNCTIONAL WORLD

↓

IDENTIFICATION OF CONSTRAINT

↓

RETURN TO LEADER

↓

LEADER AS OPERATOR

↓

RUPTURE / REFOUNDATION

Both structures produce personalization, but they personalize different functions:

- Trump personalizes **stability and recovery**;
- Milei personalizes **discontinuity and transformation**.

The distinction also clarifies the role of digital platforms. Platform circulation continuously alternates between decontextualization and recontextualization.

An image is detached from its original situation. A gesture becomes a fragment. A phrase becomes a slogan. An object becomes a meme. A chart becomes a screenshot.

This process can itself be interpreted through the logic of debrayage and embrayage. The fragment is first detached from its original communicative coordinates. It then enters a new enunciative situation.

A user reposts it. A journalist comments on it. An opponent criticizes it. A supporter celebrates it. A meme transforms it. The sign therefore undergoes repeated movements of distancing and reattachment.

The digital environment can be represented as:

ORIGINAL ENUNCIATION

↓

DETACHMENT

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

RECONTEXTUALIZATION

↓

NEW ENUNCIATION

This process complicates the identification of a single stable enunciative center.

Trump and Milei retain a high degree of recognizability precisely because their signs are strongly associated with their political personas.

The fragment may travel. The identity remains attached. This produces what can be described as **enunciative resilience**.

A successful political sign survives contextual displacement without completely losing its connection to the leader.

The raised fist can circulate outside the original news report while remaining Trumpian. The red cap can appear without Trump's body while remaining connected to Trumpism. The chainsaw can circulate as a meme while continuing to evoke Milei. The inflation chart can be detached from a longer economic explanation while remaining associated with his epistemic performance.

This resilience is particularly important within platformized communication because visibility depends upon the capacity of content to travel across contexts.

Political signs that require extensive contextual reconstruction are less immediately portable.

Trump and Milei instead rely heavily on signs capable of **rapid re-anchoring**.

The spectator recognizes the political world through a small number of recurring elements. The fragment reactivates the whole.

This mechanism can be formulated as:

PART → POLITICAL PERSONA → NARRATIVE WORLD

A cap reactivates MAGA. MAGA reactivates Trump's restorative narrative.

A chainsaw reactivates Milei. Milei reactivates anti-caste rupture.

A raised fist reactivates resilience.

An angry bodily performance reactivates disruptive authenticity.

The sign therefore functions as an access point to a larger semiotic structure.

At the same time, repeated embrayage produces a significant consequence: **political reality becomes increasingly readable through the leader**.

National decline becomes Trumpian decline. Restoration becomes Trumpian restoration.

Systemic crisis becomes Mileian crisis. Rupture becomes Mileian rupture.

This does not mean that the underlying social, economic, or political phenomena are reducible to the leaders. It means that within the analyzed discourses they are organized through highly personalized interpretive frameworks.

The leader becomes a kind of **semiotic interface** between public and political reality.

The audience encounters the world through recurring categories, images, antagonisms, and emotional structures associated with the leader.

This process strengthens personalization because the political subject becomes not only the proposed solution but also the principal means through which the problem itself is made intelligible.

Trump tells the audience what America has lost and simultaneously presents himself as the subject capable of restoring it.

Milei tells the audience why Argentina's system has failed and simultaneously presents himself as the subject capable of dismantling it.

Problem and solution are consequently connected by the same enunciative instance.

This circularity can produce a particularly powerful regime of credibility:

I AM CREDIBLE BECAUSE I CORRECTLY IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

and

MY DIAGNOSIS IS CREDIBLE BECAUSE

I AM THE SUBJECT CAPABLE OF SOLVING THE PROBLEM

The two propositions reinforce one another. The enunciator becomes simultaneously diagnostician and protagonist.

This convergence helps explain why the personalization observed in the corpus cannot be treated merely as a stylistic feature.

It is a **structural principle of meaning production**. The leader organizes the passage between world and interpretation, crisis and explanation, emotion and action, present and future.

Debrayage constructs the political reality that requires intervention.

Embrayage reconnects that reality to the subject who claims the competence to intervene.

The comparison between Trump and Milei therefore confirms that both political universes depend upon continuous movements between **distance and proximity, objectification and personalization, collective condition and individual agency**.

Their difference lies in the direction given to these movements:

- Trump repeatedly draws the political world toward a center capable of restoring order;
- Milei repeatedly draws the crisis toward an operator capable of breaking an order represented as dysfunctional.

In this sense, the two enunciative structures reproduce at another analytical level the broader opposition that organizes the entire corpus:

TRUMP

CRISIS → CENTRALIZATION → RESTORATION

MILEI

CRISIS → ACTIVATION → RUPTURE

Debrayage and embrayage thus reveal how the leader can simultaneously appear as **external observer and internal protagonist, interpreter and actor, representative and transformative agent**.

Political discourse first projects a world that seems to exist independently of the leader and then progressively reconnects that world to his body, voice, competence, and political destiny.

This movement is crucial to the production of credibility. If the leader appeared to invent the crisis entirely through his own discourse, his intervention could seem arbitrary; if the crisis remained completely independent of him, his centrality could appear unnecessary.

The alternation between debrayage and embrayage resolves this tension: **the problem is constructed as objectively existing, while the solution is increasingly personalized**.

Trump and Milei therefore occupy different positions within structurally comparable enunciative mechanisms:

- Trump becomes the subject who brings the threatened collective back toward a positively valorized identity;
- Milei becomes the subject who pushes the constrained collective beyond an order represented as no longer sustainable.

In both cases, the movement between projected reality and enunciative return transforms political leadership into the privileged point at which **interpretation of the present and imagination of the future are made to converge**.

5.4. LEVELS OF REALITY AND SEMIOTIC CONNECTIONS

A further dimension of the corpus concerns the continuous connection among different **levels of reality**, understood here not as ontologically separate worlds but as distinct regimes of representation that political communication brings into contact: institutional politics, journalism, entertainment, celebrity culture, meme culture, economic discourse, symbolic performance, and digital circulation.

The images analyzed do not simply represent political events. They continually translate political reality into other representational codes:

- a rally can acquire the visual grammar of spectacle;
- a political gesture can become an icon;
- a statistical graph can become a theatrical object;
- a private aircraft can become a political sign;
- a meme can become a vehicle of ideological recognition;
- a fabricated image can enter political discourse as if it possessed documentary value.

The political text therefore operates through a process of **semiotic crossing** among heterogeneous domains.

This crossing is particularly important in the contemporary digital environment because political meaning is increasingly produced through the interaction of forms that were once more clearly separated:

- institutional speech circulates beside entertainment content;
- journalistic images become memes;
- campaign objects become fashion accessories;
- economic charts become viral screenshots;
- private lifestyle imagery becomes evidence of public competence;
- political conflict becomes audiovisual spectacle.

The boundaries among these domains do not disappear completely, but they become increasingly permeable. The result is a political communication system in which meaning emerges precisely from **the movement between levels**.

In the Trumpian corpus, this process is especially visible in the relation between **politics and celebrity culture**.

IMG 1c provides the clearest example.

Airplanes, gilded interiors, luxury, wealth, and the aesthetics of business success belong initially to a representational universe associated with celebrity, status, consumption, and personal branding.

At this first level, the image can be read as a representation of an affluent lifestyle.

Within Trump's political communication, the same elements undergo a process of recontextualization.

Luxury becomes success. Success becomes competence. Competence becomes political legitimacy.

The transition can therefore be represented as:

PRIVATE WEALTH

↓

CELEBRITY-BUSINESS AESTHETIC

↓

PUBLIC IMAGE OF SUCCESS

↓

POLITICAL COMPETENCE

The movement across levels is crucial because the political meaning does not originate exclusively within the political field.

It is imported from a pre-existing symbolic universe.

The cultural prestige attached to success in business and celebrity culture becomes available as a resource for political leadership.

The political figure consequently appears to possess a biography already structured according to a narrative of victory.

This creates a significant overlap between **economic success and political authority**.

The transition is not logically necessary. It is semiotically constructed. The business world supplies the signs. Political discourse supplies the new context. The audience is invited to perform the translation.

This mechanism helps explain why Trump's public identity can remain coherent across domains that would otherwise appear separate.

Businessman, celebrity, television personality, political leader: these roles are not merely successive stages of a biography. They become **layers of a single semiotic persona**.

The political image inherits recognizability from the celebrity image, while the celebrity image is retrospectively reinterpreted as evidence of political competence.

The relation therefore works in both directions:

CELEBRITY SUCCESS → POLITICAL LEGITIMACY

and

POLITICAL POWER

↓

REINTERPRETATION OF CELEBRITY SUCCESS AS PRE-POLITICAL COMPETENCE

This reciprocal resemanticization contributes to the exceptional density of Trump's public persona.

A single image of a private airplane can evoke wealth, business achievement, celebrity status, autonomy, exceptionalism, and political capability simultaneously.

The distinction among these semantic fields becomes increasingly compressed.

IMG 1b produces a comparable movement between **political leadership and heroic representation**.

Frontality, centrality, low-angle framing, and spatial dominance initially belong to visual grammar rather than political content in the narrow sense.

These formal elements can be found in cinema, advertising, portraiture, propaganda, and celebrity photography.

Within Trump's political communication, however, they are actualized as signs of leadership.

The image therefore connects:

VISUAL MONUMENTALITY

with

POLITICAL DOMINANCE

and potentially with

HEROIC OR CHARISMATIC REPRESENTATION

The political body acquires qualities traditionally associated with larger-than-life figures. This is not equivalent to claiming that Trump literally becomes a fictional hero. The point is that political representation can adopt **formal codes of heroization** already familiar from other visual cultures.

The spectator does not need to consciously identify the cinematic origin of these codes. Their meaning can operate through culturally sedimented expectations about what dominance looks like:

- low-angle framing enlarges;
- centrality privileges;
- frontality confronts;
- monumentality elevates.

The political figure therefore enters a representational register in which authority is made perceptible before it is explicitly argued.

IMG 1a intensifies this process by connecting **news event, bodily vulnerability, political narrative, and iconic representation**.

The assassination attempt belongs first to the level of historical and journalistic event. Something occurs in the world. The event is photographed and recorded. At this level, the image functions as documentary representation. The raised-fist gesture rapidly produces another level.

The photograph no longer operates only as evidence that an attack occurred. It becomes a sign of resistance. Through circulation, it can become emblematic. Through repetition, it can become iconic.

The transformation can be represented as:

EVENT

↓

JOURNALISTIC IMAGE

↓

POLITICAL SYMBOL

↓

ICON OF RESISTANCE

The same visual text therefore participates in several regimes simultaneously. It remains connected to a factual event. It acquires narrative meaning. It enters political identity. It becomes available for repetition beyond the original context.

This multiplication of functions is central to digital political communication. An image is not exhausted by its first use. It can be repurposed. Reframed. Captioned. Memorialized. Celebrated. Criticized. Parodied.

The initial documentary function becomes only one layer in a larger semiotic history.

This is especially important because iconicization tends to reduce contextual complexity.

As the image becomes more recognizable, the surrounding event can become less necessary for interpretation.

The fist can eventually signify Trumpian resistance even for viewers who no longer recall every detail of the original moment.

The image becomes **semantically portable**.

This process creates a shift from historical specificity toward symbolic condensation.

The political event enters collective visual culture.

IMG 1d similarly connects **campaign communication, consumer object, fashion, identity display, and political ritual**.

The MAGA cap begins as campaign merchandise, but the campaign is not merely a medium carrying a slogan.

The cap is wearable. Its meaning therefore enters the bodily and social space of everyday life.

The political object crosses from:

CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATION

to

PERSONAL APPEARANCE

to

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

to

PUBLIC POLITICAL DISPLAY

This movement is crucial because it allows political ideology to inhabit ordinary material culture.

Politics leaves the podium. It enters clothing.

The supporter becomes visually marked. The slogan becomes socially mobile.

Political belonging can therefore be encountered outside explicitly political situations.

The red cap may appear in streets, shops, photographs, social media profiles, entertainment contexts, or news coverage.

The object carries political meaning across these environments. This produces a process of **everyday politicization of material culture**.

At the same time, the cap can move in the opposite direction. An ordinary object of clothing becomes monumentalized by its political associations.

Its practical function becomes secondary to its symbolic function.

The object is therefore located at the intersection of:

- COMMODITY;
- POLITICAL SIGN;
- IDENTITY DEVICE;
- MEDIA ICON.

The different levels reinforce one another:

- commercial reproducibility facilitates political circulation;
- political circulation increases visual recognizability;
- recognizability strengthens collective identity;
- collective identity increases the value of the object as a political sign.

The process is recursive.

IMG 1e introduces a more problematic and theoretically significant connection among **fiction, visual evidence, political narrative, and digital virality**.

The fake images depicting immigrants allegedly “eating cats” occupy an unstable position between representation and fabrication.

At the level of factual reference, the image cannot be treated as reliable documentation of the alleged event.

At the level of political discourse, it can still function as a representation of a broader narrative of threat.

This distinction is crucial.

The image may be false as documentary evidence while remaining effective as **ideological fiction**.

Its political force derives from compatibility with an already established narrative.

The representation can therefore move through the following levels:

FABRICATED CONTENT

↓

DIGITAL IMAGE

↓

VIRAL POLITICAL MATERIAL

↓

FIGURATIVE CONFIRMATION OF THREAT

The key semiotic problem is that the viewer may encounter the image initially at the level of perceptual immediacy.

It looks like something shown. Only subsequently may questions concerning provenance, manipulation, or factual reliability emerge.

The image therefore exploits the tension between:

SEEING

and

KNOWING HOW THE IMAGE WAS PRODUCED

This gap becomes particularly significant within a post-truth environment.

The effect of reality can precede the verification of reality.

A visual claim may circulate faster than its correction.

Its emotional and narrative meaning may become stabilized before its factual status has been fully examined.

Once integrated into a political worldview, even later debunking does not necessarily erase the symbolic function acquired during circulation.

The image can persist as a reference point, joke, accusation, meme, or shorthand for immigration-related fear.

The political sign therefore develops a life partially independent of its factual origin.

This does not make factual status irrelevant.

It makes factual status and semiotic circulation **distinct dimensions that may evolve differently**.

The Trumpian corpus consequently reveals a recurrent movement from empirical or material reality toward **spectacular, symbolic, and mythic organization**.

Aircraft become success. Gestures become icons. Caps become identities. Threatening images become ideological condensers. Political spaces become stages of dominance. The political world becomes increasingly readable through a stable symbolic repertoire.

In the Mileian corpus, the connection among levels of reality follows a different trajectory.

The most distinctive feature is the strong interaction among **politics, economic discourse, bodily spectacle, meme culture, and performative disruption**.

IMG 2a provides an exemplary case. The chainsaw is first a physical object. At the practical level, it belongs to a material world of mechanical cutting.

Within Milei's political communication, this ordinary function is translated metaphorically. Cutting material becomes cutting expenditure. Mechanical force becomes political determination.

The object therefore moves from:

PHYSICAL TOOL

↓

METAPHOR

↓

CAMPAIGN PROP

↓

IDEOLOGICAL SYMBOL

↓

MEDIA ICON

This movement across levels is unusually efficient because the practical function of the object and the political metaphor remain closely connected.

The chainsaw does not acquire meaning through an arbitrary association.

Its ordinary use already contains the semantic operation required by the political narrative: **cutting**.

The metaphor therefore appears immediately intelligible.

Abstraction becomes material action.

Economic policy becomes spectacle.

The object simultaneously belongs to the material, political, symbolic, and performative worlds.

This multi-level structure explains its exceptional recognizability.

A technical discussion of expenditure reduction may be difficult to circulate visually.

A chainsaw performs the same ideological condensation almost instantaneously.

The object therefore translates **economic discourse into visual dramaturgy**.

IMG 2b extends the relationship between politics and spectacle through the body.

Milei's anger, shouting, facial expressions, gestures, and expansive movement belong initially to the level of bodily performance.

Through media representation they become recognizable signs of political identity.

The bodily act moves from:

IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE

to

MEDIA IMAGE

to

CHARACTER TRAIT

to

POLITICAL AUTHENTICITY

The transition is important because a momentary expression can become generalized.

A photograph or clip freezes an instant.

Repeated circulation transforms the instant into a pattern.

The pattern becomes identity.

The political persona is therefore constructed through the accumulation of selected bodily moments.

Media circulation does not merely transmit performance.

It **stabilizes performance into character**.

This is especially relevant to Milei because communicative intensity becomes one of the most recognizable features of his public image.

The repeated visibility of anger can transform individual emotional episodes into a generalized ethos of non-conformity.

The leader becomes recognizable as someone who refuses moderation.

Again, the distinction between event and representation becomes porous.

The event provides the material. Media repetition provides continuity. Political interpretation provides value.

IMG 2c operates at another level by transforming a complex institutional system into the figurative category of the **"casta".**

Political institutions are empirically heterogeneous. They include different actors, parties, offices, interests, histories, and functions.

The category "casta" reduces this complexity through a single morally charged label.

The movement is therefore:

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLEXITY

↓

DISCURSIVE SIMPLIFICATION

↓

ANTAGONISTIC CATEGORY

↓

MORALIZED POLITICAL REALITY

The term constructs a more legible political world.

Actors who may be institutionally different become narratively equivalent because they occupy the same oppositional position.

The empirical world is reorganized through a semiotic classification.

This does not mean that the empirical differences disappear outside the discourse.

It means that the political text creates a **second-order map of reality** in which those differences become less relevant than the shared antagonistic function assigned to them.

The category consequently connects sociopolitical complexity with populist narrative simplification.

The “casta” is both a description and an ideological operation.

It claims to identify reality while simultaneously reorganizing it.

This is one of the principal mechanisms through which political discourse produces intelligibility.

A complex institutional environment becomes narratively inhabitable because actors are distributed into recognizable roles.

IMG 2d brings together perhaps the greatest number of heterogeneous levels.

“Productive chaos” involves shouting, provocation, hyperbole, conflict, visual acceleration, media confrontation, and digital recirculation.

At the first level, these elements may appear as communicative disorder.

At another level, they become spectacle.

At another, they become a recognizable aesthetic.

At another, they become evidence of authenticity.

At another, they become a political philosophy of disruption.

The sequence can be represented as:

COMMUNICATIVE DISORDER

↓

MEDIA SPECTACLE

↓

RECOGNIZABLE STYLE

↓

AUTHENTICITY EFFECT

↓

IDEOLOGY OF TRANSFORMATION

This progressive stabilization is central. Chaos initially appears unstable. Through recurrence, however, instability itself becomes predictable.

The paradox is fundamental:

REPEATED CHAOS BECOMES A STABLE SIGN.

The political identity can therefore become stable precisely through the repetition of signs of instability. This is one of the most distinctive features of Milei's communication.

Disruption becomes codified. Transgression becomes expected. Unexpectedness becomes recognizable. The resulting political persona can maintain an anti-conventional identity even after the audience has learned to anticipate its anti-conventional behavior.

This tension between **predictable unpredictability** is characteristic of mediatized disruptive leadership.

The spectacle does not undermine political identity. It can become the principal mechanism through which identity is stabilized.

IMG 2d therefore demonstrates how political communication can transform a style of interaction into a **semiotic form of life**.

The leader does not merely use chaos instrumentally. Chaos becomes one of the ways in which his political worldview is made perceptible. A system that must be disrupted is represented by a communication that itself disrupts.

The correspondence between form and content reinforces coherence.

IMG 2e provides another highly significant connection among **economic reality, technical representation, spectacle, and political identity**.

Inflation charts ostensibly belong to the domain of economic analysis. They quantify. Compare. Visualize. Simplify numerical relations.

Once incorporated into political performance, the graph acquires functions beyond technical representation.

It can become an accusation. A demonstration. A dramatic contrast. A visual proof of failure. A sign of expertise. A symbolic weapon against previous governments.

The movement can therefore be represented as:

ECONOMIC DATA

↓

STATISTICAL VISUALIZATION

↓

POLITICAL INTERPRETATION

↓

MEDIA PERFORMANCE

↓

IDEOLOGICAL LEGITIMATION

The graph crosses several regimes of truth. At one level, it refers to measurable economic phenomena. At another, it depends upon choices of scale, comparison, periodization, and presentation. At another, it becomes embedded in a political narrative. At another, it participates in spectacle.

The important point is not to deny the factual dimension of economic data but to recognize that **data become politically meaningful only through forms of selection and interpretation**.

A number does not enter political discourse naked. It arrives within a frame.

The chart therefore occupies a particularly interesting intermediate position between objectivity and rhetoric. Its visual form suggests neutrality. Its political placement provides direction.

This allows Milei to combine two identities that might otherwise appear opposed:

THE TECHNICAL ECONOMIST

and

THE SPECTACULAR DISRUPTOR

The statistical chart becomes the bridge.

Technical expertise is theatricalized without necessarily being abandoned. Political spectacle acquires epistemic material. The two levels reinforce one another. The result is a distinctive form of **spectacularized rationality**.

Reason itself becomes performative. The economist does not disappear behind the data. He appears through the act of displaying, interpreting, and dramatizing them. This complicates simplistic distinctions between rational and emotional political communication.

In the Mileian corpus, numbers and anger can belong to the same semiotic system. Data justify indignation. Indignation gives urgency to data. The chart and the shout can therefore perform complementary functions.

The first says:

THE CRISIS CAN BE DEMONSTRATED.

The second says:

THE CRISIS CANNOT BE TOLERATED.

Together, they connect knowledge and passion.

At the comparative level, Trump and Milei therefore construct different but structurally analogous **crossings between levels of reality**.

Trump predominantly connects:

POLITICS ↔ CELEBRITY CULTURE

POLITICS ↔ NATIONAL MYTH

POLITICS ↔ LUXURY / BUSINESS SUCCESS

POLITICS ↔ JOURNALISTIC ICONOGRAPHY

POLITICS ↔ DIGITAL FABRICATION / VIRALITY

Milei predominantly connects:

POLITICS ↔ ECONOMIC TECHNICAL DISCOURSE

POLITICS ↔ BODILY SPECTACLE

POLITICS ↔ MEME CULTURE

POLITICS ↔ MATERIAL METAPHOR

POLITICS ↔ COMMUNICATIVE CHAOS

The difference is significant.

Trump's crossings tend to produce a political world in which leadership becomes **monumental, aspirational, patriotic, and celebrity-oriented**.

Milei's crossings tend to produce a political world in which leadership becomes **accelerated, disruptive, technical-performative, and memetically reproducible**.

The two systems nevertheless converge in one fundamental respect: **politics is no longer represented as a self-contained domain**.

Its signs move across other cultural fields. They borrow their codes. Transform them. Return them to political circulation. The political text becomes interdiscursive.

This process can be understood through a broader sequence:

EXTERNAL CULTURAL CODE

↓

POLITICAL APPROPRIATION

↓

RESEMANTICIZATION

↓

DIGITAL CIRCULATION

↓

STABILIZATION WITHIN LEADER'S IDENTITY

A business aircraft becomes Trumpian success. A chainsaw becomes Mileian rupture. A patriotic cap becomes restorative belonging. A graph becomes libertarian expertise. The political leader increasingly functions as the point at which heterogeneous symbolic resources are brought together.

This convergence is especially compatible with digital platforms because platform interfaces routinely place different genres beside one another.

A political clip can appear between entertainment videos. A meme beside a news article. An economic chart beside an emotional reaction. A campaign advertisement beside user-generated parody. Different levels of representation coexist within the same feed.

The platform therefore creates a **context of generalized adjacency**. Political meaning is encountered in relation to content that may belong to entirely different genres.

This does not mean that all distinctions collapse completely. Journalism remains distinguishable from parody. Data remain distinguishable from memes. Campaign communication remains distinguishable from spontaneous user content.

The conditions of circulation bring these forms into permanent contact.

Political communication increasingly depends upon its capacity to move successfully through this heterogeneous environment.

Trump and Milei are particularly significant because their political identities contain signs capable of functioning across several genres.

Trump can appear in campaign communication, celebrity imagery, news photography, memes, lifestyle content, and patriotic iconography without losing recognizability.

Milei can move among political rallies, economic explanation, television confrontation, memetic imagery, symbolic spectacle, and institutional discourse while preserving a recognizable identity of disruption.

This capacity for **cross-generic recognizability** is one of the main conditions of contemporary platformized leadership.

The leader must remain identifiable even when the surrounding representational regime changes.

A useful distinction can therefore be introduced between **referential continuity and semiotic continuity**.

Referential continuity concerns the fact that the same empirical person is represented.

Semiotic continuity concerns the persistence of recognizable values, gestures, objects, styles, and narrative functions across different representations.

The corpus demonstrates that the second is particularly important.

Trump is not recognizable merely because his face appears.

He is recognizable because the visual field repeatedly activates strength, success, MAGA, patriotism, resistance, and threat.

Milei is not recognizable merely because his body appears.

He is recognizable because the communication repeatedly activates rupture, chainsaw, anger, anti-caste antagonism, productive chaos, and economic diagnosis.

The leader becomes a **network of recurring semantic associations**.

These associations allow heterogeneous texts to remain coherent.

The connection among levels of reality therefore contributes directly to the formation of **isotopic continuity**, which will be examined more systematically later in the study.

For the moment, it is sufficient to observe that political identity survives representational variation because deeper semantic structures remain stable.

The aircraft and the rally are visually different.

Both can signify Trumpian superiority.

The chainsaw and the graph are materially different.

Both can signify Mileian competence to transform.

The similarity is therefore not figurative.

It is structural.

Different levels of reality converge on the same political values.

Another major consequence concerns the distinction between **political representation and political production**.

Traditional models may suggest that media first encounter a political reality and subsequently represent it.

The corpus complicates this sequence.

Media representation itself can become part of political reality.

The Butler photograph contributes to the political meaning of the attack.

MAGA imagery contributes to the existence of the movement as a visible community.

The chainsaw performance contributes to Milei's political program by giving it a recognizable symbolic form.

Inflation graphs contribute to the construction of economic crisis as a politically actionable narrative.

Representation is therefore not merely subsequent to politics.

It becomes one of the practices through which politics is **socially constituted and made actionable**.

The relation can be reformulated as:

POLITICAL EVENT ↔ MEDIA REPRESENTATION ↔ POLITICAL MEANING

rather than:

POLITICAL EVENT → MEDIA REPRESENTATION

This reciprocal model is particularly appropriate to the platform environment.

Political actors increasingly anticipate circulation. Gestures are made in front of cameras.

Objects are chosen for visibility.

Slogans are designed for repetition.

Performances become fragmentable.

Visual signs are created with their possible afterlife already implicit.

The political act therefore contains a **media horizon**.

It is performed in anticipation of representation.

The representation then returns to political life by influencing subsequent interpretations, interactions, and performances.

The loop can be represented as:

POLITICAL PERFORMANCE

↓

MEDIA REPRESENTATION

↓

DIGITAL CIRCULATION

↓

PUBLIC RECOGNITION / REACTION

↓

REINFORCED POLITICAL IDENTITY

↓

NEW POLITICAL PERFORMANCE

This recursive structure is common to both corpora. It is one of the most important consequences of mediatization and platformization.

The leader does not merely produce messages. The leader becomes an ongoing **media object**. Political identity must therefore be continuously renewed while remaining recognizable.

Trump solves this tension primarily through the recurrence of stable symbols.

Milei solves it primarily through the recurrence of stable disruptive operations.

Trump's continuity is iconographic. Milei's continuity is performative. Both produce serial political identities.

This seriality contributes to the progressive blurring between **political event and political episode**.

An event is historically singular. An episode belongs to a continuing narrative.

The Butler assassination attempt is singular as an event, but the raised-fist image can be incorporated into a serial narrative of Trumpian resistance.

A specific chainsaw appearance is singular, but the object becomes part of a continuing narrative of Mileian rupture.

A particular inflation chart refers to a specific dataset, but its political use can become one episode in a repeated narrative of failed previous management and libertarian correction.

The media environment therefore transforms singular events into **serializable signs**.

This process is essential to political myth-making.

The leader's biography increasingly appears as a sequence of episodes confirming an already recognizable identity.

Trump resists. Trump wins. Trump confronts. Trump displays success.

Milei cuts. Milei attacks the caste. Milei explains inflation. Milei destabilizes.

Each new event can be incorporated into the existing pattern.

The pattern provides interpretive continuity.

This also explains why contradictory events do not necessarily produce immediate identity collapse.

A strong semiotic system possesses mechanisms for **recontextualization**.

Vulnerability can become resistance. Criticism can become persecution. Chaos can become authenticity. Opposition can become evidence of effectiveness. Economic sacrifice can become transitional necessity.

The political persona can therefore absorb heterogeneous realities by assigning them functions within the existing narrative.

At this point, the connection among levels of reality becomes inseparable from **resemanticization**.

The same element changes meaning as it moves across contexts.

An attack becomes an iconic moment. A commodity becomes an ideological marker. An economic tool becomes a spectacular prop. A technical chart becomes political weaponry. A fake image becomes a vehicle of polarization. Meaning is produced through movement.

This is why the corpus cannot be adequately understood through static representation alone.

The political sign has a **trajectory**. It moves through levels. Each passage modifies it. The resulting meaning is accumulated rather than given once and for all.

The contrast between Trump and Milei can consequently be summarized through two different processes of symbolic integration.

TRUMP

POLITICAL EVENT / NATIONAL MYTH / CELEBRITY / BUSINESS / CONSUMER OBJECT

↓

PERSONALIZATION AROUND THE LEADER

↓

MONUMENTALIZATION / RESTORATION / SUCCESS

MILEI

ECONOMIC CRISIS / INSTITUTIONAL CONFLICT / BODILY EXCESS / TECHNICAL OBJECT / MEMETIC CULTURE

↓

PERSONALIZATION AROUND THE LEADER

↓

RUPTURE / ACCELERATION / TRANSFORMATION

The two systems therefore construct different aesthetic regimes while relying on the same deeper capacity to integrate heterogeneous representational domains into a coherent political persona.

This has direct consequences for credibility.

A leader whose identity is repeated coherently across different levels of reality can appear increasingly **self-confirming**.

Trump's business success appears consistent with his claim to political competence. His dominant posture appears consistent with his discourse of strength. MAGA symbolism appears consistent with national restoration. The Butler fist appears consistent with resilience.

The different domains point toward the same identity.

Milei's economic graphs appear consistent with his claim to technical expertise. His chainsaw appears consistent with radical reform. His anger appears consistent with the diagnosis of intolerable crisis. His productive chaos appears consistent with disruptive politics.

Again, the domains converge.

Credibility can therefore emerge from **cross-level coherence**. The political persona appears believable because different signs seem to tell the same story. This mechanism does not prove factual truth. It produces structural consistency. The distinction is essential.

A coherent symbolic universe can support both factually grounded and factually unreliable claims.

IMG 1e demonstrates precisely why coherence and truth must not be conflated.

The fake image can fit the broader narrative extremely well while remaining factually false.

Semiotic coherence therefore explains part of the **persuasive plausibility** of a representation, not its empirical validity.

This difference is central to any rigorous analysis of post-truth.

The post-truth environment does not abolish the distinction between truth and falsehood.

It intensifies competition among different mechanisms through which claims are experienced as credible: visuality, emotion, narrative coherence, identity, repetition, authority, community recognition, virality.

Factual verification remains one mechanism among these, and from an epistemic standpoint an indispensable one, but it does not operate alone in the formation of public credibility.

The corpus makes this interaction particularly visible.

IMG 1e shows how visual and narrative coherence can temporarily compete with factual reliability.

IMG 2e shows how data can be incorporated into spectacular political communication without losing their epistemic appearance.

The contrast is significant: one case demonstrates the political use of **fabricated visibility**, the other demonstrates the political theatricalization of **quantified reality**.

Both reveal that the relation between reality and representation is mediated by semiotic form.

The political question is therefore never simply:

IS THERE AN IMAGE?

or:

IS THERE A NUMBER?

The analytical questions must also be:

- HOW IS THE IMAGE PRODUCED?
- HOW IS THE NUMBER SELECTED?
- HOW IS IT FRAMED?
- WHAT NARRATIVE DOES IT ENTER?
- WHAT EMOTION DOES IT ACTIVATE?
- WHO PRESENTS IT?
- HOW DOES IT CIRCULATE?
- WHAT PRE-EXISTING IDENTITY DOES IT CONFIRM?

The level of reality is thus inseparable from the level of enunciation. Something appears real through a particular act of representation. The representation is produced by someone. It addresses someone. It enters an interpretive community. It circulates through infrastructures. Its credibility develops through these relations.

The progressive connection among political reality, spectacle, media representation, and digital culture therefore does not imply that reality simply disappears into simulation. A more precise conclusion is that **access to political reality is increasingly organized through multiple overlapping representational regimes**.

Trump and Milei provide two particularly revealing examples because their leadership models depend upon the successful coordination of these regimes.

Trump connects political authority with celebrity, business success, national mythology, visual monumentality, and digital polarization.

Milei connects political authority with economic expertise, bodily excess, anti-institutional spectacle, material metaphor, and memetic acceleration.

In both cases, the political leader becomes the point of convergence among different forms of reality and representation.

The resulting persona is neither purely institutional nor purely spectacular. It is **hybrid**. It operates simultaneously as political actor, visual object, narrative protagonist, emotional performer, symbolic brand, and digital sign.

This hybridity is not peripheral to contemporary leadership. It is increasingly one of its constitutive conditions.

The corpus therefore suggests that the relationship between politics and spectacle should not be conceived simply as the contamination of an originally pure political sphere by entertainment. Such a model would underestimate the extent to which contemporary political meaning is generated through representational practices from the outset.

Spectacle is not always an external layer applied to politics. It can become one of the modes through which political agency itself is made visible.

Trump's dominance is spectacular because its visibility is part of its political meaning.

Milei's rupture is spectacular because disruption must be seen in order to function as a sign of disruptive competence.

The spectacle does not merely amplify the political message.

It can become **the form in which the message exists**.

This is particularly evident in highly condensed political signs.

The fist must be seen. The chainsaw must be seen. The gold interior must be seen. The angry body must be seen. The MAGA cap must be seen and recognized. The chart must be seen and interpreted. Visual presence is therefore an integral component of political efficacy.

The same applies to digital reproduction. A sign that cannot be reproduced remains locally bounded. A sign capable of becoming a screenshot, meme, icon, profile marker, clip, or repost acquires an expanded communicative life.

This leads to a final distinction between **political reality and circulating political reality**.

The first concerns events, institutions, policies, actors, and social conditions.

The second concerns the forms through which those realities become visible, memorable, emotionally charged, and socially exchangeable.

Platformized politics increasingly requires the second in order for the first to enter public attention.

The leader who successfully organizes circulating reality can therefore acquire considerable power over the symbolic interpretation of political events.

Trump's restorative world and Milei's disruptive world are produced precisely through this organization:

- different events enter them;
- different media genres express them;
- different users reproduce them.

The underlying semantic structures remain recognizable. The ultimate effect is not the disappearance of reality but its progressive narrativization, spectacularization, and personalization.

Political reality becomes easier to circulate when it can be condensed into recognizable protagonists, enemies, objects, gestures, colors, and transformations.

This process lies at the heart of the corpus.

Trump's world becomes legible through restoration, strength, greatness, success, patriotism, and threat.

Milei's becomes legible through rupture, freedom, anger, anti-caste antagonism, productive chaos, and economic diagnosis.

Different levels of reality continually converge upon these recurrent semantic centers.

The images therefore do not merely depict political reality. They act as **interfaces among reality, narrative, spectacle, ideology, and collective interpretation**, contributing to the construction of the very political worlds through which Trump and Milei become recognizable.

At this level, the distinction between representation and political action becomes increasingly difficult to maintain in absolute terms. An image can document an event and simultaneously reshape its political meaning; an object can belong to everyday material reality and simultaneously become an ideological operator; a graph can communicate data and simultaneously stage competence; a meme can parody a leader and simultaneously reinforce his recognizability. The corpus thus reveals a political environment in which reality and representation are not simply opposed, but continually **connected, translated, and transformed through circulation**.

Trump and Milei ultimately construct two different regimes of this connectivity. Trump's political universe tends to transform heterogeneous realities into signs of **restorative strength and monumentalized leadership**; Milei's tends to transform them into signs of **disruptive agency and accelerated transformation**. In both cases, however, credibility increasingly depends on the capacity to make different levels of reality converge within a coherent symbolic system, so that events, bodies, objects, images, data, and performances appear to confirm one another and collectively stabilize the political identity of the leader.

5.5. VERIDICTION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF CREDIBILITY

The analysis of enunciation leads directly to the problem of **veridiction**, one of the central issues of the present research. Political communication does not merely produce statements about reality; it continually organizes conditions under which those statements, images, gestures, objects, and performances can appear true, sincere, authentic, credible, misleading, or false. The question of credibility therefore cannot be reduced to the binary distinction between factual truth and factual falsity, although that distinction remains epistemically fundamental.

From a semiotic perspective, veridiction concerns the relationship between **being and seeming** and the discursive mechanisms through which something is made to appear as true, false, secret, or illusory. Political credibility consequently depends not only on whether a proposition corresponds to reality, but also on the signs through which truthfulness, sincerity, competence, authenticity, and authority are made perceptible.

This distinction is particularly important in the digital environment of post-truth examined throughout the study.

The argument is not that factual truth has ceased to matter.

Nor is it that all political claims have become equivalent.

Rather, contemporary political communication makes especially visible the existence of multiple mechanisms through which credibility can be constructed alongside, and sometimes in competition with, factual verification.

These mechanisms include:

- visual evidence;
- bodily authenticity;
- narrative coherence;
- emotional correspondence;
- repetition;

- identity recognition;
- technical expertise;
- social endorsement;
- virality;
- consistency of performance.

A political statement can therefore be factually inaccurate while remaining narratively compatible with a pre-existing worldview.

Conversely, factually accurate information may fail to become politically credible if it conflicts with the interpretive framework through which a public evaluates the source, the message, or the institution presenting it.

The semiotic problem is consequently not simply:

IS IT TRUE?

but also:

HOW IS IT MADE TO APPEAR TRUE?

WHO IS AUTHORIZED TO SAY IT?

WHAT SIGNS SUPPORT THE CLAIM?

WHAT PREVIOUS NARRATIVE MAKES IT PLAUSIBLE?

WHAT FORM OF AUTHENTICITY DOES THE SPEAKER PERFORM?

WHAT POSITION IS THE RECEIVER INVITED TO OCCUPY?

These questions are essential for understanding both Trump and Milei.

The two leaders construct different regimes of credibility, both rely on a significant displacement from exclusively institutional forms of authority toward **personalized and performative forms of veridiction**.

In the Trumpian corpus, credibility is closely connected to **strength, consistency, resistance, success, patriotic identification, and the performance of revelation**. Trump repeatedly constructs an enunciative position from which he appears to possess privileged access to a political reality allegedly misunderstood, concealed, distorted, or denied by mainstream institutions.

The resulting veridictory structure can be formulated as:

THE ESTABLISHMENT SAYS X

but

THE LEADER REVEALS Y

This opposition produces a conflict not merely between political interpretations but between **competing authorities of truth**.

The political struggle becomes epistemic. Who can be trusted? The journalist? The institution? The expert? The political adversary? The leader? The answer is not established exclusively through evidence. It is also constructed through the political identity assigned to each actor.

If mainstream media have already been positioned as hostile or deceptive, their contradiction of the leader can be interpreted not as disproof but as confirmation of their antagonistic role.

This creates a potentially self-reinforcing regime.

The structure becomes:

MEDIA CONTRADICT TRUMP

↓

MEDIA ARE ALREADY CONSTRUCTED AS HOSTILE

↓

CONTRADICTION IS INTERPRETED AS HOSTILITY

↓

TRUMP’S ANTI-MEDIA POSITION IS REINFORCED

The same information can therefore acquire radically different meanings according to the veridictory framework within which it is interpreted.

This mechanism is particularly important because it demonstrates how **source credibility and propositional credibility interact**.

A claim is never evaluated in a social vacuum.

The receiver also evaluates the subject who presents it.

If the source is already regarded as trustworthy, ambiguity may be resolved in its favor.

If the source is regarded as hostile, even correction can be interpreted suspiciously.

Veridiction therefore involves relationships among subjects, not simply relationships between propositions and external reality.

Trump's public persona becomes especially important in this context because consistency of performance can itself function as a sign of authenticity.

The leader's recurrent language, recognizable gestures, antagonistic style, repetition of slogans, resistance to conventional political decorum, and refusal to modify certain communicative habits can produce the impression that he remains the same subject across situations.

This gives rise to a veridictory inference:

CONSISTENCY → GENUINENESS → AUTHENTICITY → CREDIBILITY

Again, the inferential chain is not logically necessary.

A consistently performed persona can still be strategically constructed.

Politically, repetition can make identity appear stable and therefore authentic.

The subject seems not to adapt himself excessively to the expectations of different audiences.

He appears to speak "as himself". This is one of the paradoxes of performative authenticity.

The more stable the performance becomes, the easier it is for the audience to interpret performance as evidence of an underlying authentic self.

Trumpian authenticity is therefore not the absence of theatricality.

It is often produced precisely through the **consistency of theatricality**.

The spectacular persona becomes credible because it remains spectacular.

The hyperbole becomes authentic because it remains characteristic.

The confrontation becomes believable because it repeatedly corresponds to the same public identity.

This mechanism is particularly evident in **IMG 1b**.

Trump's posture of dominance, centrality, frontality, and low-angle framing does not provide factual evidence for a political proposition.

It provides **bodily evidence of a political quality**.

Strength appears visible. Control appears embodied. Authority appears spatially organized.

The image therefore operates within a regime in which physical configuration contributes to political credibility.

The implicit sequence is:

HE LOOKS IN CONTROL

↓

CONTROL IS A SIGN OF STRENGTH

↓

STRENGTH IS REQUIRED BY THE POLITICAL SITUATION

↓

THE LEADER APPEARS CREDIBLE AS A STRONG SUBJECT

The body functions as a veridictory device.

This is particularly important because bodily signs can be perceived before verbal claims are fully processed.

Posture, scale, centrality, and facial expression can establish an initial interpretive orientation.

Credibility is therefore partly **pre-propositional**.

The spectator can form an impression of authority before evaluating the detailed content of political discourse.

IMG 1a develops a related mechanism through the relationship between **vulnerability and authenticity**.

The assassination attempt introduces an event whose physical seriousness cannot be reduced to staged political imagery. The raised fist, however, gives the event a political form.

The resulting image can be interpreted as especially credible because it appears to capture behavior under conditions in which conventional performance might seem difficult to sustain.

The implicit veridictory reasoning becomes:

THE SITUATION IS EXTREME

↓

THE RESPONSE APPEARS IMMEDIATE

↓

IMMEDIACY SUGGESTS SPONTANEITY

↓

SPONTANEITY SUGGESTS AUTHENTIC CHARACTER

The gesture can therefore be read as revealing something “true” about the leader.

The image appears to say:

WHEN TESTED, THIS IS WHO HE IS.

This is one of the most powerful forms of political authentication because the event can be interpreted as a test of correspondence between previously constructed identity and behavior under pressure.

Trump has been presented as strong. Danger occurs.

He responds with a gesture readable as strength. The public identity appears confirmed.

The relation is:

PRE-EXISTING ETHOS

↓

UNEXPECTED TEST

↓

CONSISTENT RESPONSE

↓

AUTHENTICATION OF ETHOS

The event therefore functions as a veridictory sanction. It does not prove every political claim associated with Trump.

It can nevertheless strengthen the perceived authenticity of the subject making those claims. This distinction between credibility of person and truth of proposition is crucial.

A political leader can become more credible as a persona even when the factual reliability of individual statements remains a separate question.

The corpus repeatedly demonstrates the importance of this separation.

IMG 1c constructs credibility through another mechanism: **visible success**. Airplanes, wealth, and luxury provide material signs interpreted within a broader cultural mythology of achievement.

The veridictory operation can be represented as:

SUCCESS IS VISIBLE

↓

VISIBLE SUCCESS APPEARS TO CONFIRM COMPETENCE

↓

COMPETENCE IS TRANSFERRED TO POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The leader appears credible because the environment presents signs that seem to attest to previous achievement.

This is a particularly interesting form of veridiction because the evidence can be factually real at one level while the political inference remains interpretive.

The existence of wealth does not logically prove governing competence. Within the semiotic system of success, wealth can function as evidence of capability.

The transition from fact to value and from value to political competence therefore occurs through cultural coding.

WHAT IS becomes evidence of **WHAT THE SUBJECT CAN DO**. The distinction between factual reference and political implication must consequently remain clear.

Semiotics analyzes the inferential bridge. It does not assume its logical validity.

IMG 1d, centered on MAGA, constructs credibility through **collective repetition and social recognition**.

The slogan gains force not only because Trump repeats it, but because supporters repeat it as well.

A political proposition becomes socially visible across bodies, rallies, merchandise, online profiles, and public performances.

Repetition can generate the impression of consensus.

The relation becomes:

MANY PEOPLE DISPLAY THE SIGN

↓

THE MOVEMENT APPEARS SOCIALLY REAL

↓

THE LEADER APPEARS COLLECTIVELY RECOGNIZED

↓

SOCIAL RECOGNITION CONTRIBUTES TO LEGITIMACY

This mechanism does not demonstrate that the political claims contained in the movement are factually true. It produces a different form of credibility: **social credibility**. The message appears important because many people recognize it. The leader appears legitimate because many people visibly support him. The political community becomes evidence of itself.

This creates a recursive relation:

THE MOVEMENT PRODUCES SUPPORTERS

and

THE VISIBLE SUPPORTERS PRODUCE THE REALITY OF THE MOVEMENT

Collective visibility functions as a veridictory resource. The political subject can point to the crowd as evidence of representativeness. The crowd can point to the leader as evidence of common identity. Each confirms the other.

The most problematic Trumpian case is **IMG 1e**, because it directly exposes the tension between **factual falsity and semiotic plausibility**. The fake images depicting immigrants allegedly “eating cats” cannot be treated as reliable documentary evidence of the represented event.

At the factual level, this is decisive. The images can still produce an effect of credibility within a political worldview already organized around immigration as threat.

The mechanism can be reconstructed as:

PRE-EXISTING BELIEF OR NARRATIVE: IMMIGRATION IS DANGEROUS

↓

IMAGE VISUALLY REPRESENTS EXTREME DANGER / CULTURAL TRANSGRESSION

↓

IMAGE FITS THE NARRATIVE

↓

NARRATIVE COMPATIBILITY PRODUCES PLAUSIBILITY

The crucial term is **plausibility**, not truth.

Something can appear plausible because it confirms what the receiver already expects from the world.

The veridictory effect therefore depends on **narrative consistency rather than factual correspondence**.

This is one of the central semiotic mechanisms of post-truth.

The political representation does not need to create an entirely new worldview.

It can attach itself to an existing one.

The stronger the pre-existing frame, the easier it becomes for congruent representations to be accepted.

The image effectively says:

THIS IS THE KIND OF THING

THAT HAPPENS IN THE WORLD YOU ALREADY BELIEVE EXISTS

This mechanism also helps explain why factual correction may encounter resistance.

Correction addresses the individual claim. The political belief may belong to a larger narrative.

If one image is debunked but the underlying narrative remains intact, the receiver can reject the specific representation without abandoning the broader interpretation of immigration.

In some cases, the fake image may even continue circulating after its factual status is known, functioning no longer as literal documentation but as meme, provocation, symbolic exaggeration, or ideological shorthand.

The sign thus changes veridictory regime.

It can move from:

THIS REALLY HAPPENED

to:

THIS SYMBOLIZES WHAT I BELIEVE IS HAPPENING MORE GENERALLY.

This movement is analytically important because it demonstrates how a factually discredited representation can retain political life through **symbolic resemanticization**.

The distinction between documentary truth and ideological truth-claim becomes unstable.

Again, the analysis must remain rigorous.

Symbolic usefulness does not make the false claim true.

It explains why falsity alone may not terminate the sign's political function.

The Trumpian corpus therefore reveals several different sources of credibility:

- BODILY CONSISTENCY
- RESISTANCE UNDER THREAT
- VISIBLE SUCCESS

- PATRIOTIC RECOGNITION
- SOCIAL REPETITION
- ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT REVELATION
- NARRATIVE PLAUSIBILITY

These mechanisms converge upon a political ethos in which Trump appears credible insofar as he looks, acts, speaks, and survives in ways consistent with the strong restorative leader already constructed by the discourse.

The Mileian corpus develops a different but structurally comparable regime of veridiction.

Here credibility is organized primarily around **epistemic competence, emotional sincerity, anti-institutional consistency, radical action, and correspondence between diagnosis and performance**.

Milei's political persona repeatedly combines two forms of authority that might initially appear contradictory:

TECHNICAL AUTHORITY

and

DISRUPTIVE AUTHENTICITY

The first depends on knowledge.

The second depends on refusal of conventional political codes.

Their combination is central to the distinctiveness of his veridictory regime.

IMG 2e provides the clearest representation of epistemic authority.

Inflation charts, economic indicators, statistical comparisons, and technical explanations construct a subject who claims the ability to interpret economic reality correctly.

The graph functions as an external support for the political claim.

The veridictory structure becomes:

THE DATA EXIST

↓

THE LEADER INTERPRETS THE DATA

↓

THE INTERPRETATION IDENTIFIES THE CRISIS

↓

THE DIAGNOSIS LEGITIMATES THE POLITICAL PROGRAM

The data provide an effect of objectivity. The leader provides interpretation.

Political legitimacy emerges from the conjunction of the two. This creates what may be described as **epistemic veridiction**.

The subject appears credible because he demonstrates knowledge. As already noted, the chart does not speak by itself.

The political meaning of a graph depends on choices concerning indicators, temporal periods, comparisons, visual scale, explanatory framing, and causal interpretation.

The apparent neutrality of data therefore coexists with an enunciative operation.

The relevant question is not whether numbers are inherently rhetorical, but how quantified information becomes **politically narrativized**.

Milei's communication transforms economic visualization into an argument about competence.

The graph says:

THERE IS A REALITY THAT CAN BE MEASURED.

The leader adds:

I UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT REALITY MEANS.

The political program concludes:

THEREFORE, MY TRANSFORMATION IS JUSTIFIED.

This three-stage structure connects fact, interpretation, and prescription. The transitions among them are precisely where semiotic analysis becomes necessary.

IMG 2b constructs credibility through almost the opposite expressive regime.

Instead of apparent objectivity, it offers **visible subjectivity**.

Anger, shouting, facial tension, bodily movement, and confrontational gestures make the leader's affective investment perceptible.

The veridictory effect is based on a culturally familiar inference:

HE APPEARS DEEPLY AFFECTED

↓

HE APPEARS TO BELIEVE WHAT HE IS SAYING

↓

HE APPEARS SINCERE

This is a regime of **passional veridiction**. Emotion becomes evidence of conviction. Conviction becomes evidence of authenticity. Authenticity can then contribute to credibility.

The important distinction remains between **sincerity and truth**.

A speaker may sincerely believe something false.

A speaker may calmly express something true.

The intensity of emotion does not establish factual validity.

Political communication frequently exploits the association between visible conviction and perceived truthfulness.

Milei's bodily performance is particularly compatible with this mechanism because restraint itself can be negatively coded as political artificiality.

If conventional politicians are represented as scripted, calculating, detached, or hypocritical, emotional excess can appear to demonstrate the opposite qualities.

The contrast becomes:

POLITICAL PROFESSIONALISM → ARTIFICIALITY

versus

EMOTIONAL EXCESS → GENUINENESS

This inversion is central to anti-establishment credibility.

Institutional competence and authenticity cease to be automatically aligned.

The outsider can appear more truthful precisely because he violates the conventions through which institutional authority has traditionally been performed.

Milei therefore constructs what may be called an **anti-institutional regime of sincerity**.

He appears authentic by refusing to sound like what his discourse defines as conventional politics.

IMG 2c, centered on the "casta", extends this regime into the field of revelation.

As in Trumpian anti-establishment discourse, Milei claims to identify a reality that established political actors allegedly refuse to acknowledge.

The term "casta" performs a veridictory act because it claims to **reveal the true nature of the political system**.

The leader says, in effect:

WHAT APPEARS TO BE NORMAL POLITICS IS ACTUALLY A SYSTEM OF PRIVILEGE.

The operation is a transformation from appearance to alleged essence:

SEEMING: NORMAL INSTITUTIONAL POLITICS

↓

REVELATION

↓

BEING: CASTA / PRIVILEGE / PARASITIC SYSTEM

The leader acquires credibility as the subject capable of penetrating appearances. This is a classic structure of populist revelation. The political world contains a hidden truth. Conventional institutions conceal or normalize it. The outsider reveals it. The enunciatee becomes part of the enlightened community that now "sees" what was previously hidden.

Credibility therefore becomes connected to the **capacity to unveil**. The political subject appears truthful because he claims to say what established actors supposedly cannot or will not say.

This mechanism creates an asymmetry between insiders and outsiders.

Institutional proximity becomes epistemically suspicious.

Exteriority becomes a resource.

The outsider can claim:

I CAN TELL THE TRUTH BECAUSE

I DO NOT BELONG TO THE SYSTEM THAT MUST HIDE IT.

This proposition is particularly powerful in the construction of Milei's anti-caste ethos.

It creates a structural challenge once the outsider enters government.

Institutionalization risks weakening the very exteriority that supported credibility.

The political discourse must therefore preserve a distinction between **the leader in power** and **the system that continues to resist him**.

The “casta” can be relocated, the exact occupants may change, but the veridictory relation remains:

MILEI = SUBJECT WHO REVEALS AND TRANSFORMS

versus

SYSTEM = SUBJECT THAT CONCEALS AND RESISTS

The outsider identity thus survives institutional incorporation through continual narrative differentiation.

IMG 2a, centered on the chainsaw, provides a third source of credibility: **performative correspondence between words and action**.

The chainsaw functions as a promise of cutting. Its force derives from the apparent compatibility between ideological discourse and material gesture.

The veridictory structure becomes:

HE SAYS HE WILL CUT

↓

HE PUBLICLY PERFORMS CUTTING AS A SYMBOL

↓

THE SYMBOL CREATES EXPECTATION OF ACTION

↓

SUBSEQUENT POLITICAL ACTION CAN BE EVALUATED AGAINST THE SYMBOL

This makes the chainsaw particularly demanding as a political sign. A strong symbol can increase recognizability, but it can also establish a clear criterion of consistency. If political action appears compatible with the promised rupture, the symbol can function retrospectively as evidence that the leader “meant what he said”. If action appears inconsistent, the same symbol can become a point of contradiction.

Credibility therefore depends partly on **diachronic coherence**. The political persona must remain sufficiently consistent across:

CAMPAIGN PROMISE

SYMBOLIC PERFORMANCE

INSTITUTIONAL ACTION

SUBSEQUENT NARRATION OF RESULTS

This temporal dimension is fundamental. Authenticity is not produced only at a single moment. It is continually evaluated through the relation between previous and subsequent signs.

IMG 2d, centered on productive chaos, intensifies this mechanism by transforming communicative style into evidence of political consistency.

If Milei presents himself as a disruptive actor, conventional political behavior could create tension with the persona. Continuous provocation, confrontation, hyperbole, and destabilizing communication can therefore function as confirmation that institutional office has not neutralized the disruptive subject.

The logic becomes:

HE PROMISED RUPTURE

↓

HE CONTINUES TO COMMUNICATE DISRUPTIVELY

↓

THE STYLE APPEARS CONSISTENT WITH THE PROMISE

↓

CONSISTENCY CONTRIBUTES TO AUTHENTICITY

Again, performative consistency does not prove policy effectiveness or factual truth.

It contributes to a narrower but politically powerful form of credibility:

HE IS STILL WHO HE SAID HE WAS.

This kind of authenticity can be especially important in populist leadership because institutionalization creates constant pressure toward normalization.

The leader who entered politics by attacking political conventions must preserve signs of difference after becoming part of political institutions.

Productive chaos can perform this difference.

The communication itself becomes evidence that assimilation has not occurred.

The Mileian veridictory regime therefore combines:

DATA → I KNOW

ANGER → I BELIEVE

CHAINSAW → I WILL ACT

ANTI-CASTE DISCOURSE → I REVEAL

PRODUCTIVE CHAOS → I HAVE NOT BECOME LIKE THEM

These different mechanisms converge on a single political persona. The result is a particularly dense form of credibility because epistemic, passional, performative, and anti-institutional signs reinforce one another.

The economist legitimates the disruptor. The disruptor differentiates the economist from conventional technocracy. Anger gives affective urgency to data. Data give epistemic support to anger. The chainsaw gives material form to the proposed action.

The “casta” gives the action an opponent. Productive chaos gives the political style continuity.

The different components form a **veridictory ecosystem**.

The comparison between Trump and Milei therefore reveals both structural similarities and significant differences.

Both construct credibility through **anti-establishment authenticity**. Both claim privileged access to realities allegedly denied or distorted by conventional political or media actors.

Both rely heavily on bodily performance. Both convert consistency into sincerity. Both personalize truth claims. Both transform political opposition into potential evidence of their outsider status.

Both construct followers as communities capable of recognizing a truth that others allegedly fail to see.

The dominant veridictory resources differ.

Trump's regime is more strongly organized around:

- **STRENGTH**
- **RESISTANCE**
- **VISIBLE SUCCESS**
- **PATRIOTIC IDENTITY**
- **CONSISTENCY OF PERSONA**
- **REVELATION OF THREAT**

Milei's is more strongly organized around:

- **ECONOMIC KNOWLEDGE**
- **PASSIONAL SINCERITY**
- **ANTI-CASTE REVELATION**
- **PERFORMATIVE RUPTURE**
- **CONSISTENCY OF DISRUPTION**
- **TECHNICAL-POLITICAL DIAGNOSIS**

The two models can therefore be condensed into different credibility formulas:

TRUMP

I AM CREDIBLE BECAUSE I AM STRONG, CONSISTENT, SUCCESSFUL, RESISTANT, AND WILLING TO SAY WHAT OTHERS CONCEAL.

MILEI

I AM CREDIBLE BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND THE CRISIS, FEEL ITS INTOLERABILITY, REVEAL ITS CAUSES, AND AM WILLING TO BREAK THE SYSTEM THAT PRODUCES IT.

These formulations reconstruct the deeper semiotic structures of the corpus rather than literal political statements.

Their significance lies in the convergence among different modes of evidence.

Trump's body supports his narrative. His biography supports his competence. His supporters support his legitimacy. His conflicts support his outsider identity.

Milei's graphs support his diagnosis. His anger supports his sincerity. His chainsaw supports his transformative intent. His conflicts support his disruptive identity.

Credibility therefore emerges through **cross-modal redundancy**.

Different signs point toward the same interpretation.

This redundancy is particularly important within digital environments because audiences may encounter only fragments of the larger political discourse.

A viewer who sees only Trump's raised fist still encounters a sign compatible with strength.

A viewer who sees only the chainsaw still encounters a sign compatible with rupture.

A viewer who sees only an inflation graph may still encounter Milei's claim to economic expertise.

A viewer who sees only MAGA merchandise encounters restorative belonging.

The political identity remains legible because the same veridictory qualities are encoded across different textual forms.

This creates what can be described as **distributed credibility**.

Credibility is not located in a single argument. It is spread across the entire symbolic repertoire.

The leader becomes credible through accumulation. Gesture after gesture. Image after image. Conflict after conflict. Slogan after slogan. Object after object. The repeated convergence of signs produces the impression of a coherent subject.

This coherence can become particularly powerful when combined with **algorithmic repetition**.

Platform environments expose users to recurring fragments according to social networks, engagement patterns, recommendation systems, reposting practices, and public controversy.

The individual may therefore encounter multiple instances of the same political identity without encountering the complete argumentative context.

Repetition can produce familiarity. Familiarity can reduce interpretive uncertainty.

The political persona becomes increasingly easy to recognize.

This gives rise to an important relation:

REPETITION

↓

FAMILIARITY

↓

RECOGNIZABILITY

↓

PERCEIVED COHERENCE

↓

POSSIBLE CREDIBILITY

The qualification “possible” is essential.

Familiarity does not automatically produce agreement. Repeated exposure can also intensify rejection. Even hostile audiences may contribute to the recognizability of the persona.

This returns us to the distinction between **evaluation and identification**.

An opponent can identify the meaning of a chainsaw without endorsing Milei.

A critic can recognize the MAGA cap without supporting Trump.

Political signs can therefore achieve high levels of semiotic stabilization across ideological divisions.

This stabilization itself becomes politically important because the leader occupies symbolic space even among those who reject him.

Credibility, however, depends on something more than recognition. It requires a favorable interpretive conversion from sign to political quality.

Supporters may read Trump’s fist as strength. Opponents may read it as theatrical exploitation. Supporters may read Milei’s anger as authenticity. Opponents may read it as instability. The same expressive form can therefore support competing veridictory judgments.

This reveals the fundamentally **relational character of political truth effects**.

The text offers a preferred configuration. Interpretive communities evaluate it through different codes. The political struggle consequently extends to the very meaning of the signs themselves.

Is luxury evidence of competence or elitism? Is anger authenticity or lack of control? Is disruption courageous or irresponsible? Is MAGA patriotism or exclusion? Is the chainsaw determination or destructive extremism? Is a statistical graph expert evidence or selective framing?

The political sign becomes a site of **veridictory contestation**. This is precisely why post-truth should not be understood as the disappearance of truth.

What becomes visible is an intensified struggle over **which signs count as evidence, which subjects count as credible, and which interpretive frameworks determine what appears plausible**.

The conflict is not merely propositional. It is also semiotic and institutional.

Trust in sources. Recognition of authority. Emotional identification. Community belonging. Visual plausibility. Narrative consistency. All participate in the evaluation of political claims.

The corpus therefore suggests that contemporary political credibility operates through at least four interrelated dimensions:

- **FACTUAL CREDIBILITY**
  Does the claim correspond to verifiable reality?
- **EPISTEMIC CREDIBILITY**
  Does the speaker appear competent to know what he is talking about?
- **PERFORMATIVE CREDIBILITY**
  Does the speaker act in a manner consistent with the identity and promises he presents?
- **AFFECTIVE-IDENTITARIAN CREDIBILITY**
  Does the speaker appear to understand, embody, and defend the values and emotions of the intended political community?

These dimensions can converge. But they can also diverge.

A claim may possess high affective credibility and low factual reliability. A technical statement may possess strong empirical support but weak identitarian resonance.

A political actor may appear sincere while being factually mistaken. A leader may produce strong performative consistency while failing to achieve promised outcomes.

Recognizing these distinctions is essential to avoiding a reductive analysis.

The concept of post-truth becomes analytically useful precisely when it allows us to examine **how these different dimensions interact and compete**.

Trump and Milei demonstrate that political credibility increasingly operates through a composite architecture in which factual claims coexist with embodiment, performance, identity, spectacle, antagonism, and technological circulation.

The central distinction is therefore not simply:

TRUTH / FALSEHOOD

but a more complex set of relations among:

- TRUTH
- PLAUSIBILITY
- SINCERITY
- AUTHENTICITY
- AUTHORITY
- COHERENCE
- EVIDENCE
- IDENTIFICATION

These categories should not be conflated. Something may appear sincere without being true. Something may appear plausible without being factual. Something may be factual without being believed. Something may be widely believed without being factual.

A political leader may possess authority within one interpretive community and none within another.

Semiotic analysis helps reconstruct the mechanisms through which these distinctions become socially meaningful.

The Trumpian and Mileian corpora also reveal that the leader’s body plays an unusually important role in this process.

Truth is conventionally imagined as belonging to propositions. Political credibility, however, is also attached to **bodies**.

A body can appear:

- confident;
- wounded;
- angry;
- controlled; uncontrolled;
- resistant;
- energetic;
- vulnerable.

These qualities influence the interpretation of the subject who speaks.

The body effectively becomes part of the evidence. This is especially visible in contemporary visual platforms, where viewers may encounter the bodily fragment before the verbal argument.

A facial expression can precede the speech. A gesture can circulate without context. A thumbnail can establish an emotional frame.

Political veridiction therefore increasingly operates at the intersection of **propositional and corporeal meaning**.

Trump's credibility is partly somatized through dominance and resilience.

Milei's through intensity and disruptive energy.

This bodily dimension connects veridiction directly with the previous analysis of kinesics, proxemics, and passions.

Theoretical separation among the levels remains analytically useful, but the corpus shows that they continually interact.

The same is true of material objects.

Objects can function as **veridictory proxies**.

Trump's airplane says that success is materially real.

The MAGA cap says that the political community is socially real.

Milei's chainsaw says that the promise of cutting is materially imaginable.

The inflation chart says that the crisis is quantitatively demonstrable.

Objects therefore provide external supports for political identity. They make abstract claims perceptible.

The leader's values appear to have material evidence.

This process contributes to the naturalization of political meaning.

The more a value can be made visible, embodied, worn, measured, or physically represented, the more it can acquire the appearance of immediacy.

Greatness becomes a cap. Success becomes an airplane. Resistance becomes a fist. Rupture becomes a chainsaw. Crisis becomes a graph. The political abstraction enters the material world.

Materialization can make ideology appear **less ideological** because it appears simply visible.

This is one of the most important functions of visual political communication.

The sign can conceal the interpretive work that made it meaningful. The airplane appears to "be" success. The chainsaw appears to "be" rupture. The chart appears to "be" economic reality. Each equivalence is culturally and discursively constructed.

Veridiction operates precisely through this transformation of **interpretation into apparent evidence**.

At the same time, political leadership itself becomes increasingly inseparable from a regime of **permanent authentication**.

The leader must continually prove that he remains consistent with the identity previously constructed. Every new event can function as a test.

Trump must continue to appear strong. Milei must continue to appear disruptive. Trump must continue to embody restoration. Milei must continue to embody rupture.

The political persona therefore requires repeated confirmation.

This creates a serial structure:

IDENTITY CLAIM

↓

PERFORMANCE

↓

PUBLIC INTERPRETATION

↓

CONFIRMATION OR CHALLENGE

↓

NEW PERFORMANCE

The process never reaches definitive closure. Credibility is continually reproduced.

This is particularly characteristic of platformized politics, where political subjects are exposed to continuous visibility and commentary.

A single inconsistency can circulate widely. But so can a single confirming moment.

The political leader consequently inhabits a **continuous veridictory test**.

The public evaluates whether the latest action, statement, image, or controversy corresponds to the established persona.

The persona itself becomes the standard against which new signs are interpreted.

This creates a form of self-referential credibility:

TRUMP IS CREDIBLE WHEN HE ACTS “LIKE TRUMP”

MILEI IS CREDIBLE WHEN HE ACTS “LIKE MILEI”

Such a structure can be politically powerful because it relocates part of the criterion of evaluation from external standards toward **internal consistency of persona**.

A controversial action may be defended precisely because it is “what one expects” from the leader.

Predictability becomes authenticity. This does not eliminate external evaluation. It introduces a competing standard.

The leader is judged both by what happens in the world and by whether he remains faithful to his symbolic identity.

The comparison ultimately reveals two distinct regimes of performative truth.

Trump’s can be described as a **veridiction of restorative strength**.

The leader appears credible when he successfully embodies resistance, dominance, success, patriotic belonging, and the capacity to protect a threatened community.

Milei’s can be described as a **veridiction of disruptive authenticity**.

The leader appears credible when economic diagnosis, visible anger, anti-caste antagonism, symbolic cutting, and communicative disruption converge upon the same representation of radical transformation.

The two regimes differ in content but share the same structural principle:

CREDIBILITY EMERGES WHEN MULTIPLE SIGNS APPEAR TO CONFIRM THE SAME POLITICAL IDENTITY.

This convergence is particularly important in the context of post-truth because it demonstrates that political credibility can become **systemic rather than propositional**.

Within that world, individual signs support one another. The fist supports strength. Strength supports the restorative narrative. The restorative narrative makes the fist meaningful. The chart supports diagnosis. Diagnosis supports rupture. Rupture makes the chart politically consequential. The resulting circularity creates highly coherent political universes. Coherence must never be confused with factual validity.

A coherent narrative can be false. An incoherent presentation can contain true information.

Semiotic analysis therefore does not replace factual verification; it explains a different phenomenon: **why some political representations become credible, memorable, and collectively reproducible regardless of whether their credibility corresponds perfectly to their factual reliability**.

The distinction is essential to the argument of the present study.

Post-truth politics is not characterized simply by an abundance of false statements. Its deeper significance lies in the increasing visibility of political environments where **truth claims compete through multiple regimes of credibility** and where factual verification interacts with identity, emotion, performance, spectacle, narrative, and platform circulation.

Trump and Milei make this process particularly visible because their leadership identities transform credibility into a highly embodied and recognizable performance. Trump's political truth is repeatedly staged through strength and restoration; Milei's through rupture and authenticity. Their communicative effectiveness therefore depends not merely on persuading audiences that individual statements are correct, but on constructing semiotic worlds in which **the leader himself becomes a recurring sign of what should count as credible**.

5.6. ENUNCIATIVE CONTRACT AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ENUNCIATEE

The analysis of veridiction developed in the previous section necessarily raises a further question: **what kind of relationship must be established between enunciator and enunciatee for a political discourse to function as credible?** No act of political communication operates exclusively through the production of statements, images, or performances. It also presupposes a relationship with a receiver who is invited to recognize particular values, accept certain interpretive

premises, attribute credibility to specific actors, and occupy a position within the world constructed by the discourse.

This relationship can be approached through the notion of an **enunciative contract**. The term does not imply an explicit agreement between political leader and audience. Rather, it designates the set of implicit expectations through which a text proposes how it should be interpreted, what kind of competence it attributes to its receiver, which values are assumed to be shared, and what relation of trust it attempts to establish between the subject who speaks and the subject who receives the message.

The political text therefore does not simply ask:

DO YOU AGREE WITH ME?

Before that question can become meaningful, it implicitly asks:

DO YOU RECOGNIZE THE WORLD AS I AM PRESENTING IT?

This distinction is crucial.

Political persuasion becomes easier when enunciator and enunciatee already appear to inhabit the same interpretive universe.

The contract therefore operates at a level deeper than individual policy preferences. It concerns the organization of reality itself.

Who are the protagonists? Who are the antagonists? What has been lost? What must be defended? What must be destroyed? What counts as evidence? Who deserves trust? Which emotions are legitimate? What future is desirable?

The enunciative contract supplies provisional answers to these questions and invites the receiver to accept them as the basis for subsequent interpretation.

In this sense, political communication does not merely transmit information to an already constituted audience. It also produces a **model enunciatee**: an implied receiver endowed with the competences, values, emotions, and expectations required for the discourse to achieve its preferred meaning.

The empirical audience and the model enunciatee should not be confused.

Real audiences are heterogeneous. They may accept, negotiate, reject, parody, or reinterpret the political text.

The model enunciatee instead belongs to the internal organization of discourse. It represents the receiver presupposed by the text.

This distinction is especially important for the present corpus because Trumpian and Mileian communication constructs remarkably specific positions for their respective audiences.

The Trumpian enunciatee is invited to recognize a world structured by **loss, threat, national belonging, strength, success, and restoration**.

The Mileian enunciatee is invited to recognize a world structured by **crisis, institutional constraint, anger, anti-caste antagonism, economic dysfunction, freedom, and rupture**.

The difference can initially be represented as:

TRUMP → “RECOGNIZE WHAT HAS BEEN LOST AND JOIN ITS RESTORATION”

MILEI → “RECOGNIZE WHAT HAS FAILED AND JOIN ITS DISMANTLING”

These are not literal slogans but reconstructed enunciative positions.

They indicate the different contracts through which the two political worlds become intelligible.

In Trump’s case, the contract is strongly connected to the construction of a **shared national memory**.

The MAGA universe analyzed in **IMG 1d** presupposes that the receiver can attribute positive value to the concept of American greatness.

The slogan *Make America Great Again* does not define greatness exhaustively. It does not need to.

Its effectiveness depends partly on leaving the object sufficiently open to permit different receivers to invest it with compatible meanings.

Economic prosperity, national strength, international prestige, cultural continuity, border security, social order, patriotic pride. The slogan creates a semantic container whose precise content can vary while preserving the same fundamental temporal structure:

AMERICA WAS GREAT

↓

AMERICA HAS LOST SOMETHING

↓

AMERICA CAN BECOME GREAT AGAIN

The enunciative contract begins when the receiver accepts this temporal presupposition.

To accept the slogan is not merely to desire a better future.

It is to accept that the desired future can be conceptualized as **restoration**.

The model enunciatee is therefore constructed as a subject capable of nostalgia.

This nostalgia need not concern direct personal memory.

A younger supporter may not have experienced the historical period implicitly idealized by the discourse.

The relevant past can be mediated. Narrated. Imagined. Inherited. Mythologized.

The enunciatee is invited to recognize a **collective memory** rather than necessarily an autobiographical one.

This allows the political contract to operate across generations.

The past becomes less a precise historical period than an axiological space.

It represents the condition in which positively valorized values are imagined as having been more fully realized.

The Trumpian contract can consequently be represented as:

I REMIND YOU OF WHAT “WE” WERE

↓

YOU RECOGNIZE THAT VALUE

↓

WE AGREE THAT IT HAS BEEN WEAKENED

↓

I OFFER RESTORATION

↓

YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE RESTORATIVE PROJECT

This is a powerful structure because persuasion begins before the explicit political proposal.

Once loss is accepted, restoration becomes more plausible. Once threat is accepted, protection becomes more necessary. Once greatness is accepted as an object of value, the subject who promises to restore it acquires narrative relevance.

The enunciative contract therefore prepares the narrative program.

IMG 1e intensifies this mechanism by constructing the receiver as a subject capable of recognizing **threat**.

Anti-immigration imagery does not simply show an alleged external actor. It positions the spectator in relation to that actor.

The image asks the receiver to distinguish between:

- INSIDE / OUTSIDE
- FAMILIAR / FOREIGN

- ORDER / DISORDER
- COMMUNITY / THREAT

The enunciatee is implicitly positioned inside the community that may be endangered. This is essential. Threat requires a vulnerable object.

An enemy becomes politically meaningful only when something valued is represented as exposed to that enemy.

The Trumpian contract therefore connects fear with belonging:

THIS THREATENS US

presupposes

THERE IS AN "US" WORTH PROTECTING.

The construction of the antagonist simultaneously constructs the collective subject.

This relation can be represented as:

THEY

↓

THREAT

↓

US

↓

NEED FOR PROTECTION

↓

LEADER

The enunciatee is therefore not merely a spectator of political conflict.

The receiver is narratively inserted into the conflict as a potential beneficiary of the leader's protective action.

This is one of the principal mechanisms through which the political audience is transformed into a **collective actant**.

The supporter is not outside the narrative. The supporter becomes one of its stakes.

The same process appears in **IMG 1a**, but through a different emotional configuration.

The raised-fist image invites the receiver to interpret Trump's physical vulnerability not as the collapse of leadership but as evidence of resilience.

The enunciative contract depends on recognition of the gesture.

The spectator is invited to understand:

THIS BODY WAS ATTACKED

but also:

THIS BODY RESISTS.

The preferred reading therefore requires the receiver to perform a semiotic transformation from vulnerability into strength.

This is significant because the image does not eliminate vulnerability.

Its power derives partly from preserving it.

Without danger, resistance would lose intensity.

Without the wounded or endangered body, the fist would possess a different meaning.

The enunciatee is thus invited to recognize a paradoxical structure:

VULNERABILITY + RESISTANCE = STRENGTH

The political contract does not ask the audience to deny the first term.

It asks the audience to reinterpret it through the second.

This mechanism contributes to identification because the leader can simultaneously appear exceptional and exposed to danger.

The exceptional subject becomes temporarily vulnerable.

The vulnerable subject demonstrates exceptional resistance.

The enunciatee can therefore participate both emotionally and symbolically.

The image may generate concern, solidarity, admiration, anger, or identification while directing those passions toward a common narrative outcome: **the confirmation of the leader's resilience**.

IMG 1b constructs a different relation with the receiver.

Trump's centrality, frontality, and dominant posture position the enunciatee before a leader who appears visually superior but communicatively accessible.

As noted previously, this produces a combination of distance and directness.

The enunciative contract can therefore contain an asymmetry:

I AM THE LEADER

while simultaneously producing proximity:

I SPEAK TO YOU DIRECTLY.

This combination is central to charismatic communication.

The receiver is not invited to become equivalent to the leader.

Rather, the receiver is invited to recognize the leader's exceptional status while simultaneously experiencing a direct relationship with him.

The political contract can thus be expressed as:

YOU RECOGNIZE MY SUPERIOR COMPETENCE

and

I RECOGNIZE YOU AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY I REPRESENT.

The asymmetry of leadership is compensated by the symmetry of belonging.

Leader and supporter do not occupy the same narrative function, but they are placed inside the same axiological universe.

Trump acts. The supporter legitimates. Trump represents.

The supporter recognizes himself as represented. Trump protects.

The supporter becomes the beneficiary of protection.

This distribution of roles produces a stable narrative relationship.

IMG 1c adds another component to the Trumpian enunciatee: the receiver is invited to recognize **success as politically meaningful**.

The airplanes and luxury environments presuppose a cultural competence through which material abundance can be interpreted as evidence of achievement.

The contract therefore depends upon a value conversion:

WEALTH → SUCCESS → COMPETENCE

The receiver must participate in this conversion for the imagery to function positively.

A hostile receiver may interpret the same luxury as ostentation, inequality, elitism, or narcissism.

The model enunciatee, however, reads the signs according to a different code.

Material success becomes aspirational.

The exceptional lifestyle does not necessarily distance the leader from the supporter.

It can instead make him the embodiment of a desired condition.

The relation becomes:

HE HAS ACHIEVED

↓

HE KNOWS HOW TO ACHIEVE

↓

HE CAN MAKE THE COLLECTIVE ACHIEVE

This inferential movement transforms private success into public promise.

The enunciatee is therefore constructed as a subject willing to accept the transferability of competence from one domain to another.

Trump's business and celebrity persona becomes politically relevant because the audience is invited to regard prior success as evidence of future governmental capacity.

Across the Trumpian corpus, the enunciative contract can therefore be summarized through several reciprocal positions:

- **TRUMP SAYS: THE NATION HAS LOST GREATNESS.**
  THE ENUNCIATEE RECOGNIZES LOSS.
- **TRUMP SAYS: THE COMMUNITY IS THREATENED.**
  THE ENUNCIATEE RECOGNIZES THREAT.
- **TRUMP PERFORMS STRENGTH.**
  THE ENUNCIATEE RECOGNIZES LEADERSHIP.
- **TRUMP DISPLAYS SUCCESS.**
  THE ENUNCIATEE RECOGNIZES COMPETENCE.
- **TRUMP OFFERS RESTORATION.**
  THE ENUNCIATEE ACCEPTS GREATNESS AS AN OBJECT OF VALUE.

The relationship is therefore based on **recognition before adhesion**.

The audience must first recognize the world.

Political adherence becomes possible within that recognized world.

This helps explain the importance of repetition. Repeated slogans, colors, objects, gestures, enemies, and narrative structures continually renew the contract.

Each recurrence asks the receiver to perform the same basic interpretive operations. Recognize greatness. Recognize decline. Recognize threat. Recognize strength. Recognize the leader.

The Trumpian enunciatee becomes increasingly competent in reading the political universe.

The signs require less explanation because their meanings have already been stabilized.

A red cap can activate an entire political narrative. A raised fist can activate resilience.

A luxury aircraft can activate success.

The sign becomes efficient because the receiver has acquired the necessary **semiotic competence**.

This competence is one of the most important effects of long-term political communication.

The audience learns how to read the leader.

At the same time, the leader learns which signs can be read most rapidly by the audience.

The enunciative contract therefore develops recursively.

The more often the code is used, the easier it becomes to activate.

This process is intensified by digital platforms, where repetition, recirculation, remixing, and algorithmic visibility expose audiences to recurring symbolic fragments.

The receiver does not need to encounter a complete speech to re-enter the Trumpian political world.

A single recognizable sign may suffice.

The Mileian corpus constructs a different model enunciatee.

If Trump's receiver is invited primarily to recognize **loss and threat**, Milei's is invited to recognize **constraint, dysfunction, and intolerability**.

The initial Mileian contract can be formulated as:

THE SYSTEM DOES NOT WORK

↓

YOU EXPERIENCE OR RECOGNIZE ITS FAILURE

↓

I EXPLAIN WHY IT FAILS

↓

WE IDENTIFY THOSE RESPONSIBLE

↓

RUPTURE BECOMES LEGITIMATE

This structure is particularly visible in the relation between **IMG 2c** and **IMG 2e**.

IMG 2e constructs the enunciatee as a subject capable of recognizing the significance of **economic evidence**.

Inflation charts and indicators do not merely display data.

They presuppose a receiver who understands that the data matter.

The audience does not need to possess specialist economic training.

The visual representation can simplify technical complexity into perceptually accessible contrasts: Up/Down, Before/After, More/Less, Failure/Improvement.

The graph therefore creates different possible levels of competence.

A specialist receiver may interpret methodology, scale, indicators, and causal relations.

A non-specialist receiver may recognize only the broader visual trajectory.

Both can nevertheless be incorporated into the same political narrative.

This is an important feature of Milei's economic communication.

Technical discourse is translated into **graduated accessibility**.

The chart preserves an appearance of expertise while allowing simplified interpretation.

The enunciative contract consequently operates at two levels:

I KNOW THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM TECHNICALLY

and

I CAN SHOW YOU ITS FAILURE VISUALLY.

The receiver is not required to become an economist.

The receiver is invited to trust the economist-leader while simultaneously being given enough visual evidence to feel capable of recognizing the diagnosis.

This produces a distinctive balance between **epistemic asymmetry and interpretive participation**.

Milei possesses specialized knowledge.

The enunciatee is nevertheless invited to see that the conclusion is evident.

The contract becomes:

I EXPLAIN

↓

YOU SEE

↓

WE RECOGNIZE THE SAME CRISIS

The apparent convergence between expert diagnosis and ordinary experience is particularly important.

Inflation is not merely a statistical phenomenon.

It is experienced through prices, purchasing power, savings, salaries, and everyday consumption.

The graph can therefore connect quantified reality with lived experience.

The receiver may recognize the economic claim because it corresponds to something already experienced.

This produces a powerful veridictory relation:

DATA SAY X

and

MY EXPERIENCE FEELS LIKE X

When technical representation and everyday perception appear to converge, credibility can be reinforced.

The enunciatee is no longer merely asked to believe an expert.

The receiver is invited to recognize personal experience within the expert's representation.

IMG 2c then supplies a causal and moral organization of this crisis.

The "casta" provides the antagonist.

The enunciative contract asks the receiver to accept that economic and institutional dysfunction is not merely accidental or technically complex but connected to a political system structured around privilege.

The audience is invited to move from:

I EXPERIENCE THE CRISIS

to:

I UNDERSTAND WHO OR WHAT PRODUCES IT.

This transition is crucial because suffering alone does not produce a political narrative.

It must be interpreted.

The “casta” provides a principle of intelligibility.

The receiver becomes a subject capable of **attribution**.

Economic pain is attributed to a system. Institutional frustration is attributed to a class of actors.

Political disappointment is attributed to a model of governance.

The enunciatee is consequently transformed from sufferer into interpreter.

The political discourse says:

YOUR EXPERIENCE HAS A CAUSE.

This is a powerful operation because it converts diffuse dissatisfaction into directed antagonism.

The receiver can now locate himself within a simplified political topology:

CASTA

versus

THOSE WHO SUFFER ITS CONSEQUENCES

Milei positions himself on the second side despite his increasingly central political role.

The enunciative contract therefore establishes an alliance:

- **I AM NOT ONE OF THEM;**
- **I AM WITH YOU AGAINST THEM.**

This is the foundational relation of anti-caste authenticity.

The political leader must preserve this symbolic proximity even as institutional circumstances change.

The model enunciatee is consequently invited to distinguish between **holding political office and belonging to the political caste**.

The distinction is narratively necessary.

Without it, the outsider position would collapse once Milei enters government.

The political contract therefore redefines outsider status as an axiological rather than purely institutional position.

One can occupy an institution while remaining symbolically outside the system.

The relevant criterion becomes not:

WHERE ARE YOU?

but:

WHICH VALUES AND ACTORS DO YOU OPPOSE?

This allows disruptive identity to persist within institutional power.

IMG 2a develops the contract through **action**.

The chainsaw does not ask the receiver merely to recognize the crisis.

It asks the receiver to accept a particular modality of transformation.

The object says:

THE SYSTEM MUST BE CUT.

The enunciatee is therefore invited to move from diagnosis toward authorization.

The sequence becomes:

THE SYSTEM FAILS

↓

THE SYSTEM IS RESPONSIBLE

↓

MARGINAL CORRECTION IS INSUFFICIENT

↓

RADICAL REDUCTION BECOMES LEGITIMATE

The chainsaw therefore presupposes a receiver willing to accept **discontinuity as a positive value**.

This is the central difference from Trump's restorative contract.

The Trumpian enunciatee accepts return.

The Mileian enunciatee accepts break.

Trump says:

LET US RECOVER.

Milei says:

LET US CUT AWAY.

The two political contracts can thus be placed in opposition:

- RESTORATION / RUPTURE;
- RECOVERY / DISCONTINUITY;
- PROTECTION / LIBERATION;
- RECONNECTION / SEPARATION;
- LOST GREATNESS / INTOLERABLE SYSTEM.

The model audiences are consequently invited to desire different transformations.

IMG 2b adds the passional dimension.

Milei's bodily anger presupposes a receiver capable of recognizing **indignation as legitimate**.

The political contract does not ask the audience to neutralize emotion. It authorizes emotion.

Anger becomes appropriate because the situation is represented as intolerable.

The relation is:

IF THE SYSTEM IS AS BAD AS WE SAY IT IS

↓

ANGER IS NOT EXCESSIVE

↓

ANGER IS AN ADEQUATE RESPONSE

This is fundamental to the normalization of Milei's performative intensity. The same shouting or gestural excess could appear inappropriate within another interpretive framework.

Within the anti-caste contract, however, emotional moderation may itself become suspicious.

Why remain calm before systemic failure? Why respect conventions produced by an illegitimate political class? Why speak politely to a system represented as parasitic? The discourse can therefore reverse conventional evaluations:

ANGER → COMMITMENT

EXCESS → AUTHENTICITY

DISRUPTION → COURAGE

ANTI-FORMALITY → INDEPENDENCE

The enunciatee must accept this axiological inversion for the performance to function positively.

A hostile audience may preserve the conventional code and interpret the same signs as instability, aggression, or irresponsibility.

The model enunciatee instead reads them through the disruptive code.

The political contract thus determines not only **what is seen but how it should be valued**.

IMG 2d extends this inversion to productive chaos.

The receiver is invited to accept communicative disorder as evidence that something politically significant is occurring.

Noise becomes energy.

Conflict becomes transformation.

Provocation becomes refusal of conformity.

Instability becomes movement.

The enunciative contract can be formulated as:

DO NOT READ CHAOS AS FAILURE OF CONTROL

READ CHAOS AS EVIDENCE OF RUPTURE

This interpretive instruction is one of the most distinctive elements of the Mileian corpus.

The enunciatee is trained to reinterpret what conventional political communication might treat as communicative dysfunction.

The discourse produces a new evaluative competence.

The receiver learns to read excess positively.

This mechanism contributes to the stabilization of disruptive leadership because potentially discrediting features can be reabsorbed into the political identity.

The louder the conflict, the more visible the rupture.

The stronger the institutional reaction, the more consequential the disruption may appear.

The greater the controversy, the more the leader can appear to be challenging established conventions.

This produces a potentially recursive structure:

DISRUPTION

↓

REACTION

↓

REACTION CONFIRMS THAT DISRUPTION HAS OCCURRED

↓

DISRUPTIVE IDENTITY IS REINFORCED

The enunciatee is therefore invited to interpret opposition itself as meaningful evidence.

This mechanism resembles aspects of Trumpian anti-establishment communication, but its axiological orientation differs.

Trumpian opposition can confirm persecution or resistance.

Mileian opposition can confirm rupture and systemic confrontation.

The opponent thus participates involuntarily in the construction of the leader's identity.

Across the Mileian corpus, the enunciative contract can be summarized as follows:

- MILEI SAYS: THE SYSTEM HAS FAILED,
  THE ENUNCIATEE RECOGNIZES CRISIS.
- MILEI SAYS: THE CASTA BENEFITS FROM THE SYSTEM,
  THE ENUNCIATEE RECOGNIZES ANTAGONISM.

- MILEI SHOWS DATA,
  THE ENUNCIATEE RECOGNIZES DIAGNOSIS AND COMPETENCE.
- MILEI PERFORMS ANGER,
  THE ENUNCIATEE RECOGNIZES SINCERITY AND INDIGNATION.
- MILEI DISPLAYS THE CHAINSAW,
  THE ENUNCIATEE ACCEPTS RUPTURE AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION.
- MILEI PRODUCES COMMUNICATIVE CHAOS,
  THE ENUNCIATEE REINTERPRETS DISORDER AS TRANSFORMATIVE ENERGY.

The enunciative contract therefore transforms the receiver progressively.

The subject begins as someone who experiences or observes crisis. The subject becomes someone who recognizes its causes. The subject then accepts a specific political interpretation.

Finally, the subject can become an advocate of rupture.

The movement can be represented as:

EXPERIENCE

↓

RECOGNITION

↓

ATTRIBUTION

↓

INDIGNATION

↓

AUTHORIZATION OF RUPTURE

This progression is central to the construction of the Mileian enunciatee.

The comparative analysis reveals that both Trump and Milei therefore construct their audiences through **interpretive competence**.

Neither model requires the receiver merely to obey. The receiver must know how to read.

Trump's audience learns to read particular signs as evidence of national decline, external threat, strength, success, patriotism, and restoration.

Milei's audience learns to read other signs as evidence of economic dysfunction, political parasitism, authentic anger, technical competence, rupture, and transformative chaos.

This semiotic competence produces an important consequence. Political communication can become increasingly **elliptical**.

Once the code is established, less needs to be said. A red cap is enough. A chainsaw is enough. A fist is enough. A graph may be enough.

The fragment activates the interpretive system.

The receiver supplies the missing narrative.

This can be represented as:

CONDENSED SIGN

↓

RECOGNITION

↓

ACTIVATION OF PRE-EXISTING POLITICAL FRAME

↓

RECONSTRUCTION OF LARGER NARRATIVE

The audience therefore performs part of the communicative work.

This is especially important in platform environments characterized by short attention spans, fragmented circulation, visual condensation, and rapid interaction.

The most efficient political signs are not necessarily those containing the greatest quantity of explicit information.

They may instead be those capable of activating the greatest quantity of **already shared meaning**.

The enunciative contract makes this compression possible.

Trump does not need to explain the entire restorative narrative every time MAGA appears.

Milei does not need to explain the entire anti-state program every time the chainsaw appears.

The receiver reconstructs the political world through acquired competence.

This process also explains why political communities can develop increasingly differentiated interpretive systems.

The same sign can mean radically different things to different audiences because they possess different codes.

For supporters:

MAGA CAP → PATRIOTIC BELONGING

For opponents:

MAGA CAP → POSSIBLY EXCLUSIONARY OR REACTIONARY POLITICS

For supporters:

CHAINSAW → COURAGEOUS REDUCTION OF THE STATE

For opponents:

CHAINSAW → DESTRUCTIVE POLICY OR SPECTACLE

The physical sign remains the same.

The enunciative contract changes. This demonstrates that meaning does not reside entirely within the object. It emerges from the relation among text, code, context, and interpretive subject.

The political struggle therefore includes a struggle over **interpretive contracts**.

Each political camp attempts not merely to circulate its signs but to stabilize the code through which those signs should be read.

This is one reason why repetition and community are so important.

Communities reinforce interpretations. A meme does not merely communicate content. It can teach the receiver how to interpret the leader.

A repost does not merely increase visibility. It can confirm that a particular reading is socially shared.

A comment section can become a space in which interpretive codes are negotiated and reinforced.

Digital platforms therefore do more than distribute political discourse. They facilitate the formation of **interpretive communities** around it.

This process has direct consequences for credibility. Trust becomes increasingly relational.

The enunciatee does not evaluate only the leader. The receiver also observes other receivers.

Visible likes, shares, comments, reposts, crowd images, hashtags, and community symbols produce signs of collective recognition.

The contract therefore expands from a dyadic relationship:

LEADER ↔ RECEIVER

to a triangular structure:

LEADER

↕

RECEIVER ↔ COMMUNITY

The community becomes part of the credibility mechanism.

The receiver can interpret the presence of others as evidence that the political world is collectively recognized.

This is especially evident in Trump's MAGA universe, where material and visual signs of belonging make the collective highly visible.

But it is also important for Milei, whose memetic circulation and anti-caste language can produce networked communities of recognition.

The leader therefore addresses not simply an individual but an individual who is invited to imagine himself as part of a larger collective subject.

The enunciative contract becomes simultaneously **personal and collective**.

The leader says "you". The political narrative says "we". The antagonist says "they".

The basic architecture becomes:

I ↔ YOU → WE ↔ THEY

The transition from "you" to "we" is decisive. It transforms communication into belonging.

The receiver is no longer simply the addressee of a message.

The receiver becomes a participant in a political identity. The two corpora construct this "we" differently.

Trump's "we" tends to be:

- **NATIONAL;**
- **PATRIOTIC;**
- **RESTORATIVE;**
- **PROTECTIVE;**
- **IDENTITARIAN.**

Milei's "we" tends to be:

- **ANTI-CASTE;**
- **LIBERTARIAN;**
- **DISRUPTIVE;**
- **ANTI-INSTITUTIONAL;**
- **TRANSFORMATIVE.**

Trump's collective subject is invited to recover an identity represented as historically legitimate.

Milei's collective subject is invited to free itself from a system represented as historically illegitimate.

The distinction can be expressed as:

TRUMP

WE ARE WHAT THE NATION MUST BECOME AGAIN.

MILEI

WE ARE WHAT CAN EMERGE ONCE THE OLD SYSTEM IS BROKEN.

The first collective identity is based on **recognition of continuity**. The second is based on production of discontinuity. This difference has important temporal consequences.

Trump's enunciatee is positioned between memory and restoration.

Milei's is positioned between exhaustion and refoundation.

The political subject is therefore invited to inhabit different historical roles.

Trump's supporter becomes the custodian and restorer of a valued national identity.

Milei's supporter becomes the participant in a rupture that promises to inaugurate a new political-economic order.

The enunciative contract thus organizes not only interpretation but **historical agency**.

The receiver is told implicitly what kind of actor he or she can become.

This is why the construction of the enunciatee cannot be reduced to audience targeting.

It is a process of **subjectivation**.

The political discourse proposes identities.

It provides categories through which the receiver can understand his or her position: patriot, victim of the system, taxpayer, defender of the nation, enemy of the caste, supporter of freedom, participant in restoration, agent of rupture.

These positions are not simply demographic. They are semiotic roles.

The individual can recognize himself within them and, through that recognition, enter the political narrative.

This is particularly important for populist discourse because “the people” is never merely an empirical population.

It must be discursively constructed. Not everyone belongs to “the people” in the same way.

The category is defined through opposition.

The Trumpian people acquire coherence through contrast with elites, hostile media, external threats, and actors represented as undermining national identity.

The Mileian people acquire coherence through contrast with the “casta”, bureaucratic privilege, statist structures, and actors represented as sustaining the old order.

The people therefore emerge through **relational differentiation**.

There is no “we” without a boundary.

The enunciative contract teaches the receiver where that boundary lies.

This process can be schematized as:

IDENTIFICATION OF VALUE

↓

IDENTIFICATION OF THREAT / OBSTACLE

↓

POSITIONING OF RECEIVER

↓

CONSTRUCTION OF "WE"

↓

RECOGNITION OF LEADER AS REPRESENTATIVE / OPERATOR

The leader and the people are consequently co-constructed.

Trump can become the restorer because there is a community requiring restoration.

Milei can become the disruptor because there is a community requiring liberation from an obstructive system.

Conversely, the community becomes politically legible through the leader's discourse.

This reciprocal relation prevents us from interpreting personalized populism as the simple disappearance of the collective behind the leader.

The collective remains essential. What changes is the way its agency is organized.

The leader becomes the privileged point through which the collective is represented and through which its transformation is narratively imagined.

The enunciative contract therefore creates a **functional asymmetry**:

THE PEOPLE LEGITIMATE THE LEADER

while

THE LEADER GIVES NARRATIVE FORM TO THE PEOPLE.

This reciprocal dependency is central to both corpora.

It also helps explain the importance of direct communication.

If the leader's legitimacy depends upon a privileged relation with "the people", intermediary institutions can become semiotically problematic.

Journalists, parties, experts, bureaucracies, institutional procedures, traditional gatekeepers: these actors can be represented as obstacles inserted between the authentic collective and its representative.

Digital platforms offer a powerful symbolic solution because they create the appearance of **disintermediation**.

The leader posts. The follower sees. The leader speaks. The follower comments. The leader publishes a video. The follower shares it.

The technological infrastructure is, of course, itself a complex system of mediation involving algorithms, platform governance, commercial logics, technical affordances, and recommendation systems. At the level of user experience, the relation can appear direct.

This creates a paradox:

HIGHLY MEDIATED TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNICATION

can produce an

EFFECT OF IMMEDIATE POLITICAL RELATION.

This effect is crucial to the enunciative contract of digital populism.

The leader can appear to bypass institutional mediation even while depending intensely on platform mediation.

The distinction between **absence of mediation and invisibility of mediation** therefore becomes essential.

Trump and Milei both benefit from communication environments in which the political message can appear to arrive directly from the leader.

The post. The video. The slogan. The gesture. The livestream. The image. Each can preserve signs of personal enunciation.

The receiver encounters not simply political information but **the leader's apparent presence**.

This strengthens the contract because trust can be personalized.

Instead of:

I TRUST THIS INSTITUTION TO MEDIATE POLITICAL REALITY

the relation increasingly becomes:

I TRUST THIS PERSON TO TELL ME WHAT POLITICAL REALITY IS.

This is one of the most significant transformations identified by the corpus.

The enunciative contract becomes progressively **leader-centered**.

Political credibility is transferred from procedures and institutions toward recognizable personas.

This transfer is not total, nor is it unique to populism, but it becomes particularly visible in the communicative strategies analyzed here.

The distinction between Trump and Milei nevertheless remains fundamental.

Trump's contract is built primarily around the promise:

I WILL REPRESENT, DEFEND, AND RESTORE

THE COMMUNITY TO WHICH YOU BELONG.

Milei's is built primarily around:

I WILL REVEAL, CONFRONT, AND DISMANTLE THE SYSTEM

THAT PREVENTS YOU FROM BEING FREE.

The first constructs trust through **protection and restoration**.

The second through **revelation and rupture**.

The first requires a receiver who desires continuity with a positively valorized identity.

The second requires a receiver who desires discontinuity with a negatively valorized system.

This can be summarized as:

TRUMPIAN ENUNCIATIVE CONTRACT

SHARED VALUE: national greatness

DIAGNOSIS: decline and threat

PASSION: fear, pride, belonging

LEADER FUNCTION: protection and restoration

ENUNCIATEE: patriotic subject invited to recover a valued order

EXPECTED ACTION: recognition, identification, mobilization

MILEIAN ENUNCIATIVE CONTRACT

SHARED VALUE: freedom

DIAGNOSIS: systemic crisis and political constraint

PASSION: anger, indignation, anti-caste enthusiasm

LEADER FUNCTION: revelation and disruption

ENUNCIATEE: constrained subject invited to authorize rupture

EXPECTED ACTION: recognition, indignation, mobilization.

Despite their differences, both contracts transform political support into more than agreement with a program.

Support becomes **participation in a worldview**.

To support Trump within the preferred textual configuration is to recognize restoration as necessary.

To support Milei is to recognize rupture as necessary.

The political decision is thus preceded by a semiotic decision about the nature of reality.

Is the present primarily a condition of **loss**? Or a condition of systemic obstruction? Should the future recover? Or should it break?

The answer determines which leader function becomes intelligible.

This leads to a central conclusion.

The effectiveness of the enunciative contract depends not only on the leader's capacity to speak convincingly, but on the audience's capacity to **recognize itself within the world produced by the discourse**.

Credibility is therefore relational. The leader must appear authentic.

But the political world must also appear experientially recognizable.

Trump's discourse becomes stronger when supporters can connect the narrative of national decline with their own perceptions of cultural, economic, or political change.

Milei's discourse becomes stronger when audiences can connect the narrative of systemic failure with lived experiences of inflation, institutional frustration, or economic insecurity.

The political text establishes a bridge between:

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

and

COLLECTIVE NARRATIVE.

The leader supplies the narrative form.

The receiver supplies experiential confirmation.

This produces a reciprocal authentication:

THE LEADER EXPLAINS MY EXPERIENCE

and therefore

MY EXPERIENCE APPEARS TO CONFIRM

THE LEADER'S EXPLANATION.

The circularity can be extremely powerful.

The political discourse provides categories through which reality is interpreted.

Subsequent experience is then interpreted through those categories.

The experience can appear to confirm the discourse that supplied the interpretive framework in the first place.

This does not mean that lived experience is unreal or politically irrelevant.

It means that experience becomes politically meaningful through **categorization, narration, and attribution**.

The enunciative contract participates directly in these processes.

Trump and Milei therefore construct not merely audiences but **interpretive subjects**.

Trump's model enunciatee learns to perceive the political world through the categories of greatness, decline, threat, strength, and restoration.

Milei's learns to perceive it through crisis, caste, constraint, freedom, anger, and rupture.

Once these interpretive matrices are established, individual images can operate with extraordinary economy.

The fist. The cap. The airplane. The chainsaw. The angry body. The graph. Each becomes a point of entry into a much larger political universe.

The ultimate function of the enunciative contract is precisely to make this compression possible.

It establishes the shared codes through which a minimal sign can activate a maximal political narrative.

For this reason, the construction of the enunciatee must be regarded as one of the central mechanisms of contemporary digital populism.

The leader does not simply seek an audience already waiting to receive a message.

Political discourse contributes to producing the very subject capable of interpreting that message as meaningful, authentic, and credible.

Through repeated acts of recognition, the receiver learns not only **what the leader says but how the leader's world is supposed to be read**.

The comparison consequently reveals two distinct processes of political subjectivation.

Trump constructs an enunciatee who is invited to become a participant in the restoration of a threatened collective identity.

Milei constructs an enunciatee who is invited to become a participant in the dismantling of a system represented as an obstacle to freedom.

The first subject is predominantly **restorative and protective**; the second **disruptive and transformative**.

In both cases, however, the enunciative contract performs the same deeper operation: it transforms the receiver from an external observer into an **internal participant in the political narrative**.

Once this transformation occurs, the leader's signs no longer appear as isolated campaign messages.

They become elements of a shared symbolic world in which the audience possesses a position, an identity, an antagonist, a desired transformation, and a criterion for recognizing who can credibly bring that transformation about.

VI. ACTORS AND SPACES

6.1. WHO INHABITS THE SCENE?

The political scene constructed by the corpus is never empty, neutral, or merely descriptive. It is populated by **actors whose identities and relations are organized according to specific narrative and axiological functions**.

Leaders, supporters, opponents, institutions, media actors, immigrants, economic subjects, political elites, and collective communities do not simply appear within the images as empirical presences. They are semiotically positioned within a broader configuration of meaning.

The question "who inhabits the scene?" therefore concerns more than the identification of visible individuals. It concerns the distribution of **roles, values, legitimacy, centrality,** and **distance**.

Who appears as protagonist? Who is constructed as antagonist? Who occupies the center? Who remains at the margins? Who is represented as legitimate? Who is represented as threatening? Who belongs? Who is excluded? Who speaks? Who is acted upon? These distinctions make the political world readable.

The Trumpian and Mileian corpora both construct strongly polarized scenes, the organization of actors differs significantly.

Trump's political universe is predominantly organized around a **restorative protagonist defending an authentic national community against forces represented as threatening, weakening, or corrupting it**.

Milei's political universe is predominantly organized around a **disruptive protagonist confronting a political-economic system represented as parasitic, obstructive, and structurally responsible for crisis**.

The difference can initially be represented as:

TRUMP → PROTECTIVE / RESTORATIVE SCENE

MILEI → CONFRONTATIONAL / DISMANTLING SCENE

Both are conflictual. But the topology of conflict differs.

In the Trumpian corpus, the primary actor is obviously **Trump himself**, whose presence is consistently privileged through visual centrality, narrative prominence, and symbolic condensation.

Trump appears not merely as a political candidate or office-holder, but as a figure capable of occupying several roles simultaneously:

- LEADER;
- PROTECTOR;
- RESTORER;
- WINNER;
- VICTIM WHO RESISTS;
- REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATION;
- INTERPRETER OF THREAT;
- EMBODIMENT OF STRENGTH.

These roles converge within the same political persona. Their coexistence contributes to the density of Trump's leadership identity.

The leader can appear vulnerable in **IMG 1a** without losing strength because vulnerability becomes the condition through which resistance is demonstrated.

He can appear economically distant from ordinary supporters in **IMG 1c** without losing populist identification because wealth is reinterpreted as competence.

He can occupy a dominant position in **IMG 1b** without losing claims to represent "the people" because hierarchy of competence coexists with identity of values.

The protagonist is therefore not constructed through one stable social position but through a **system of compatible semiotic functions**.

This multiplicity is important because contemporary personalized leadership requires the political actor to move across heterogeneous scenes without losing recognizability.

Trump must remain recognizably Trump:

- at a rally;
- in a public debate;
- inside a luxury environment;
- after an attack;
- within MAGA symbolism;
- when speaking about immigration.

The political scene changes. The protagonist remains structurally central. This centrality is one of the strongest isotopic features of the corpus.

Trump's body may not literally occupy the center of every image, but his political identity remains the **interpretive center** around which the other actors acquire meaning.

The second major actor is the **patriotic collective subject**. This collective is not represented simply as the entire empirical population of the United States. It is constructed more selectively as the authentic community whose interests, identity, security, and greatness are represented as requiring defense or restoration.

The collective subject can appear through:

- supporters;
- MAGA crowds;
- flags;
- red caps;
- slogans;

- national colors;
- references to “America”;
- the implicit “we” of political discourse.

The people are therefore both visible and symbolic.

They can be physically present as a crowd, but they can also be represented metonymically through objects and national signs.

IMG 1d is especially important because the MAGA symbolic universe turns the collective subject into a **visually identifiable community**.

The cap performs more than affiliation.

It creates a recognizable actor category.

The wearer becomes legible as participant in the Trumpian world.

This is a crucial semiotic transformation:

INDIVIDUAL PERSON

↓

WEARER OF POLITICAL SIGN

↓

MEMBER OF COLLECTIVE SUBJECT

The person becomes readable politically through material culture.

This allows the collective to become visible beyond the immediate rally.

Political belonging enters everyday life.

The supporter can therefore carry the collective actor into multiple spaces.

The crowd does not need to remain assembled physically.

The symbolic community can persist in distributed form.

Trump's political scene consequently contains an important tension between **centralized leadership and distributed collective identity**.

The leader remains singular.

The people become plural.

The plural remains organized around the singular figure.

The relation can be represented as:

- **TRUMP → CENTER OF REPRESENTATION**
- **MAGA COMMUNITY → DISTRIBUTED COLLECTIVE BODY**

The political scene therefore acquires a hierarchical but reciprocal structure.

The leader gives symbolic coherence to the collective.

The collective gives social legitimacy to the leader.

The third major actor in the Trumpian universe is the **opponent**, but this category is internally heterogeneous.

Different empirical actors can occupy the antagonistic position:

- political elites;
- Democratic opponents;
- sections of the mainstream media;
- bureaucratic institutions;
- foreign competitors;
- immigrants represented as threatening;
- cultural elites;

- other figures constructed as responsible for decline or obstruction.

The crucial point is not their empirical equivalence.

They are clearly not equivalent.

The semiotic comparison concerns their **functional position** within the narrative.

They can all become obstacles between the collective subject and its desired object of value.

The antagonistic structure can therefore be represented as:

TRUMP + PATRIOTIC PEOPLE

versus

FORCES OF DECLINE / THREAT / OBSTRUCTION

This opposition simplifies political complexity by distributing actors according to their relation to the restorative program.

The question becomes not merely:

WHO ARE THEY?

but:

DO THEY HELP OR PREVENT RESTORATION?

The political world is thus evaluated through the narrative trajectory.

Actors acquire meaning according to whether they facilitate or obstruct the movement toward greatness, security, sovereignty, or national strength.

IMG 1e makes this mechanism especially visible through the construction of the immigrant other.

The fake imagery depicting immigrants allegedly “eating cats” does not merely produce an individual antagonist.

It constructs a category of **alterity**.

The represented subject becomes meaningful because of distance from the cultural norms attributed to the in-group.

The political scene is therefore organized through a boundary:

- **FAMILIAR / FOREIGN;**
- **NORMAL / DEVIANT;**
- **INSIDE / OUTSIDE;**
- **COMMUNITY / THREAT.**

The immigrant figure is not simply different. Difference is moralized and securitized.

The actor becomes threatening because alterity is connected to violation.

This process is fundamental to the construction of the political other.

The image does not need to represent the entire migration issue.

It condenses it into a scene where cultural difference appears as transgression.

A complex social phenomenon is transformed into a **figurative antagonist**.

The political actor becomes easier to identify because abstraction has been converted into a body or image.

This process illustrates how visual communication can simplify political space.

“Immigration” is a policy field. An image presents a person. The policy debate becomes personified. The political boundary becomes visible. The other can now be seen. This visual personification contributes to emotional polarization because a visible actor can more easily become an object of fear, disgust, anger, or exclusion than an abstract policy category.

The political scene therefore becomes increasingly **dramaturgical**.

There is a protagonist. There is a community. There is a threat. There is a conflict. There is a desired transformation. The Trumpian scene acquires the structure of a drama of protection and restoration.

Within this drama, the **media** occupy a particularly ambiguous position.

They can function as observers of the political scene, but Trumpian discourse can also transform them into actors within it.

Journalistic mediation is therefore not always treated as external to politics. The media themselves can become political antagonists. This transformation has important semiotic consequences.

A journalist who questions the leader may cease to occupy the position of neutral intermediary within the preferred Trumpian reading.

The journalist can be repositioned as:

- **OPPONENT;**
- **DISTORTER;**
- **HOSTILE INTERPRETER;**
- **REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT.**

The mediator becomes participant.

This shift reduces the possibility of an external point of view.

Political communication becomes a scene in which even those describing the conflict are potentially incorporated into the conflict.

The relation can be represented as:

POLITICAL ACTORS ← MEDIA OBSERVATION

becoming:

POLITICAL ACTORS ↔ MEDIA AS POLITICAL ACTOR

This transformation is especially important to the post-truth environment because disputes over facts can be reinterpreted as disputes among competing political actors.

The authority of mediation is weakened.

The leader can present his own discourse as direct while institutional mediation becomes politically suspect.

The Trumpian political scene therefore tends toward **totalization of antagonism**: actors who might conventionally stand outside the conflict can be drawn inside it.

A similar mechanism appears in the Mileian corpus, though with different emphasis.

Milei is constructed as the central **disruptive actor**.

His principal roles include:

- **ANTI-SYSTEM LEADER;**
- **ECONOMIST;**
- **DIAGNOSTICIAN;**
- **ANTI-CASTE PROTAGONIST;**
- **DISRUPTOR;**
- **LIBERTARIAN TRANSFORMER;**
- **ANGRY WITNESS;**
- **OPERATOR OF RUPTURE.**

Again, these functions coexist.

The economist and the disruptor might initially appear contradictory.

One evokes technical rationality. The other evokes emotional intensity. The corpus integrates them through a common political trajectory.

The economist explains why the system fails.

The disruptor acts upon the system diagnosed as failing. Knowledge and action therefore converge.

The political actor can be represented as:

THE ONE WHO KNOWS

and

THE ONE WHO DARES

This double competence is particularly important to Milei's construction.

IMG 2e supports the first role.

IMG 2a supports the second.

The inflation graph constructs epistemic competence.

The chainsaw constructs transformative competence.

The body in **IMG 2b** connects both to passional investment.

The political persona therefore emerges through the integration of:

- **KNOWLEDGE;**
- **ANGER;**
- **ACTION.**

The scene is populated by a protagonist who claims to understand the system, emotionally reject it, and materially transform it.

This gives Milei's leadership a particularly strong sense of **total involvement**.

He is not merely a technical reformer.

Not merely a protest figure.

Not merely an outsider.

He is constructed as the point where diagnosis and disruption meet.

The second central actor is the **collective subject constrained by the system**.

Unlike Trump's patriotic collective, this actor is not primarily defined by national-cultural belonging.

Its dominant identity emerges through the experience of constraint.

Citizens, taxpayers, workers, entrepreneurs, consumers suffering inflation, individuals subjected to bureaucracy, productive actors represented as financing political privilege: these figures can be brought together through a common relation:

THEY BEAR THE COSTS OF THE SYSTEM.

The Mileian collective subject is therefore constructed through **shared negative experience**.

The people become coherent because they are represented as having something done to them. They pay. They lose purchasing power. They face bureaucracy. They endure political failure. They finance privileges.

The collective actor consequently begins from a position of **passivity or constraint**.

The narrative program promises transformation into agency.

The movement becomes:

CONSTRAINED SUBJECT

↓

RECOGNITION OF CAUSE

↓

POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

↓

LIBERATED SUBJECT

This is an important difference from Trump.

Trump's people are predominantly represented as a community whose authentic identity already exists and must be restored.

Milei's people are more strongly constructed as subjects whose capacity for action must be released from institutional obstruction.

The comparison can be expressed as:

- **TRUMP → PEOPLE AS COMMUNITY TO BE RESTORED**
- **MILEI → PEOPLE AS SUBJECTS TO BE LIBERATED**

The distinction is not absolute, but it clarifies the dominant semiotic orientation.

The third major actor is the **casta**.

IMG 2c is particularly important because the "casta" performs an extraordinary compression of political actors.

Instead of representing each opponent separately, the discourse establishes a meta-category.

Different political parties. Officials. Bureaucrats. Institutional actors. Professional politicians. Privileged groups. Potentially parts of the media or other intermediaries. Their differences are reduced through a common narrative function.

The "casta" becomes the **collective anti-subject**.

Its defining characteristic is not one specific ideological position but its location within the system Milei constructs as dysfunctional.

This means that the antagonistic category can be relatively flexible.

New actors can be inserted into it.

Former opponents can remain inside.

Institutional resistance can be interpreted as evidence of membership.

The category therefore possesses **expansive capacity**.

This is narratively useful because the antagonist can survive changes in political circumstances.

Milei may become president, but the “casta” does not disappear.

The antagonistic role can migrate toward other institutions and actors.

This allows the disruptive protagonist to preserve a degree of outsider identity even when occupying the institutional center.

The structure can be represented as:

MILEI ENTERS INSTITUTIONS

but

CASTA REMAINS ELSEWHERE WITHIN / AROUND INSTITUTIONS

Therefore:

MILEI ≠ SYSTEM

The symbolic distinction remains intact.

This mechanism is crucial to maintaining anti-system credibility after electoral victory.

The institutional position of the actor changes.

The semiotic role can remain stable.

Milei is inside the state empirically but continues to be represented as **outside the old system axiologically**.

The political scene therefore demonstrates that “inside” and “outside” are not purely spatial or institutional categories.

They are value positions.

The “casta” is inside the rejected system.

Milei is outside its values even when occupying its institutions.

This produces a paradoxical political topology:

INSTITUTIONALLY INSIDE / SYMBOLICALLY OUTSIDE

The paradox becomes a resource rather than a contradiction if the narrative continually distinguishes office from system.

IMG 2c therefore performs more than antagonistic naming.

It organizes the entire **social geography of legitimacy**.

Actors located on the side of the caste are negatively valued.

Actors positioned against it become potentially legitimate.

The political scene is simplified into two morally differentiated spaces.

Milei's corpus also contains another actor that complicates this binary structure: the **expert subject**.

IMG 2e introduces economic expertise as an important component of political legitimacy.

Here the leader does not merely confront an enemy.

He interprets an object.

The graph. The data. The inflation rate. The economic trend. Economic reality itself becomes an actor-like element within the scene because it imposes constraints, provides evidence, and appears capable of validating or falsifying political claims.

This creates a more complex structure:

- **MILEI → INTERPRETER;**
- **DATA → EVIDENTIARY OBJECT;**
- **CASTA / PREVIOUS MANAGEMENT → RESPONSIBLE ACTOR;**
- **PUBLIC → RECEIVER OF DIAGNOSIS.**

Economic indicators therefore mediate relationships among actors.

They connect technical reality with political blame.

A graph can function as a **third term** supporting the leader against the opponent.

The political conflict is no longer simply:

MILEI SAYS X

versus

OPPONENT SAYS Y

The leader can attempt to introduce:

THE DATA SHOW X

This gives the conflict an apparent external arbiter. As already noted, data require interpretation. Their role is therefore not neutral.

The chart enters the political scene through selection, framing, and explanation.

Nevertheless, its presence allows Milei to position himself differently from the purely passional protagonist of **IMG 2b**.

He becomes:

THE ONE WHO CAN READ REALITY

This epistemic position increases the number of roles available to the leader.

Milei can confront because he understands. He can disrupt because he diagnoses.

The chainsaw is therefore narratively connected to the graph.

The graph explains **why** cutting is necessary.

The chainsaw represents **how** the political transformation will occur.

The two images establish a relation:

IMG 2e → DIAGNOSIS

IMG 2a → INTERVENTION

The actor is complete only when both functions are considered together.

The political scene thus contains not simply a protagonist and antagonist but a sequence of positions:

CRISIS

↓

SUBJECT WHO KNOWS

↓

OPPONENT RESPONSIBLE FOR CRISIS

↓

SUBJECT WHO ACTS

↓

COLLECTIVE SUBJECT TO BE LIBERATED

This structure creates a highly coherent dramaturgy.

IMG 2b and **IMG 2d** contribute further actors in the form of **media and reaction publics**.

Productive chaos depends upon interaction. A provocation requires someone to react. A confrontation requires an interlocutor. A media controversy requires circulation.

The political scene therefore includes actors who may not belong clearly to the leader's camp or the caste but who nevertheless participate in the production of visibility.

Journalists, television hosts, critics, social media users, political, commentators, memetic communities: their reactions become part of the performance.

This is particularly important because Milei's disruptive communication can transform the **reacting other** into a semiotic resource.

The other does not need to support Milei. He or she only needs to respond. The response confirms disruption. The conflict becomes visible. The leader remains central.

This produces a new category of actor:

THE INVOLUNTARY AMPLIFIER

The actor may oppose the leader while simultaneously increasing his visibility.

This mechanism also exists in Trumpian communication, but it becomes especially relevant to productive chaos because the reaction itself is part of the aesthetic of acceleration.

The political scene therefore includes actors according to at least three relations:

- **SUPPORT;**
- **OPPOSITION;**
- **AMPLIFICATION.**

These functions need not coincide. A supporter can amplify positively. An opponent can amplify negatively. A journalist can amplify while attempting neutrality. A meme creator can amplify while parodying.

The digital political actor is therefore defined not only by ideological position but also by **circulatory function**.

This is a crucial transformation introduced by platformized communication. An actor can matter politically because of what he or she makes visible.

Visibility becomes a form of agency. The political scene thus expands beyond institutional actors.

Users enter it. Fans enter it. Critics enter it. Memes enter it. Algorithmically selected reactions enter it. The boundaries of the political scene become porous.

This porousness is especially important for the construction of both Trump and Milei as leaders whose identities are partly produced outside official communication.

A supporter posting a MAGA image participates in the Trumpian scene.

A critic reposting the Butler fist participates in its iconic circulation.

A meme creator exaggerating Milei's chainsaw contributes to the stabilization of the symbol.

A television confrontation clipped and shared online becomes a new textual scene.

Political agency therefore becomes **distributed across circulation**.

The empirical author of the political message no longer possesses complete control over all subsequent meanings.

The scene is continually repopulated by new enunciators.

This creates an important distinction between **primary actors and secondary actors of political signification**.

Primary actors include:

- Trump;
- Milei;
- their institutional opponents;
- supporters;
- the groups explicitly represented in the political discourse.

Secondary actors include:

- journalists;
- social media users;
- meme creators;

- commentators;
- photographers;
- content editors;
- platform communities.

These secondary actors can alter the interpretation and circulation of the primary scene.

A photograph can monumentalize. A caption can reframe. A meme can invert.

A repost can reinforce. A fact-check can challenge. A parody can unintentionally stabilize recognizability.

Political meaning therefore emerges through a **multi-actor ecology**.

This is why it would be reductive to analyze the corpus as if every sign were produced exclusively by Trump or Milei themselves.

Some signs originate in political performances. Others emerge through journalistic mediation. Others through digital manipulation. Others through collective repetition.

The leader remains central, but the semiotic system is distributed. This point is especially important for **IMG 1e**.

The fake images of immigrants are not equivalent to direct photographic self-representation by Trump.

Their political significance emerges through circulation within a narrative compatible with Trumpian anti-immigration discourse.

The actor structure therefore includes:

- **PRODUCER OF IMAGE;**
- **POLITICAL ACTOR WHO USES / AMPLIFIES RELATED NARRATIVE;**
- **REPRESENTED IMMIGRANT;**

- **AUDIENCE;**
- **FACT-CHECKING / JOURNALISTIC ACTORS;**
- **USERS WHO RECIRCULATE.**

The scene is complex. The image itself may attempt to simplify that complexity.

Semiotic analysis must do the opposite: reconstruct the multiple actor positions hidden beneath the apparent immediacy of representation. A comparable complexity exists in **IMG 2e**.

The inflation chart involves:

- economic institutions or data sources;
- the person who constructs the visualization;
- Milei as interpreter;
- previous governments as blamed actors;
- the audience;
- media outlets that recirculate the chart;
- critics who may contest methodology or interpretation.

The visual simplicity of the graph therefore conceals a **network of enunciative and institutional actors**.

The political communication gains force by reducing this network to a clearer relation:

THE DATA

↓

MILEI EXPLAINS

↓

THE OLD SYSTEM FAILED

The analytical reconstruction must preserve the distinction among these levels.

This is especially important to avoid treating political discourse as transparent description.

Actors are selected. Named. Grouped. Omitted. Foregrounded. Backgrounded. Their relative visibility is itself meaningful.

The political scene is therefore a process of **semiotic casting**. Some actors receive proper names. Others become categories. Some are individualized. Others collectivized. Some become heroes. Others become anonymous threats. Some speak. Others are spoken about.

This distribution of visibility is politically consequential.

Trump is intensely individualized.

The threatening immigrant in **IMG 1e** can become a generic category.

Milei is intensely individualized.

The “casta” becomes a collective abstraction.

The asymmetry can be represented as:

- **LEADER → HIGH INDIVIDUALIZATION**
- **OPPONENT → FREQUENT COLLECTIVIZATION**

This mechanism strengthens personalization. The protagonist has a face. The antagonist becomes a category. The leader possesses biography. The enemy possesses function. This asymmetry simplifies political narrative. The leader becomes emotionally and visually accessible. The antagonist becomes semantically expandable.

Different actors can be inserted into the collective negative category without requiring a complete reconstruction of the narrative.

This is particularly clear with “casta”. The term can absorb multiple institutional opponents.

A comparable mechanism appears in Trumpian references to “the establishment”, “the media”, or threatening outsider groups.

Collectivization therefore creates **narrative flexibility**.

The protagonist remains stable while opponents can change.

This facilitates political seriality.

One opponent disappears. Another occupies the same **actantial position**.

The narrative continues.

This is a significant reason why antagonistic populist structures can remain durable across changing political circumstances.

The conflict is not dependent on one specific adversary. It depends on the availability of an **antagonistic function**.

The political scene can continually be repopulated. This mechanism also affects the representation of supporters.

Supporters are frequently collectivized as “the people”, “patriots”, “citizens”, “taxpayers”, or productive subjects.

Individual supporters can occasionally become exemplary figures.

The relationship between individual and collective therefore operates differently according to narrative necessity.

A leader is individualized to concentrate agency. A supporter is collectivized to construct legitimacy. An opponent is collectivized to expand antagonism.

The resulting distribution can be summarized as:

- **INDIVIDUALIZED LEADER → TRANSFORMATIVE AGENCY;**
- **COLLECTIVIZED SUPPORTERS → LEGITIMATING COMMUNITY;**
- **COLLECTIVIZED OPPONENTS → STRUCTURAL ANTAGONISM.**

This configuration appears in both corpora despite their substantive differences.

The comparative structure can therefore be represented as follows:

TRUMPIAN SCENE

- **CENTRAL ACTOR: Trump;**
- **COLLECTIVE SUBJECT: patriotic America / MAGA community;**
- **OBJECT OF VALUE: greatness, security, sovereignty, prosperity;**
- **OPPONENTS: forces of decline, hostile elites, threatening outsiders;**
- **HELPERS: supporters, symbols, distributed political community;**
- **MEDIATORS: media and platforms, often themselves politicized;**
- **DOMINANT RELATION: protection and restoration.**

MILEIAN SCENE

- **CENTRAL ACTOR: Milei**
- **COLLECTIVE SUBJECT: constrained / productive citizens;**
- **OBJECT OF VALUE: freedom, prosperity, autonomy, refoundation;**
- **OPPONENTS: casta, bureaucracy, dysfunctional institutional system;**
- **HELPERS: supporters, economic knowledge, libertarian symbolic repertoire;**
- **MEDIATORS: media, platforms, memetic communities, reactive publics;**
- **DOMINANT RELATION: disruption and liberation.**

The similarity is structural. The difference lies in semantic investment.

Trump’s protagonist protects a community whose legitimate identity is threatened.

Milei’s protagonist activates subjects whose potential is constrained.

Trump’s antagonist threatens or obstructs restoration.

Milei's antagonist reproduces constraint and must therefore be dismantled.

Trump's collective begins from belonging.

Milei's begins more strongly from grievance and liberation.

These distinctions correspond closely to the broader opposition identified throughout the study.

The analysis of actors adds an important dimension: **political identities are constructed relationally through the allocation of visibility and narrative function**.

Trump cannot be the protector without someone to protect and something to protect them from.

Milei cannot be the disruptor without a system to disrupt and subjects represented as requiring liberation.

The protagonist does not precede the political scene. The protagonist is produced **through the scene**.

This relation can be expressed as:

THREAT → PROTECTOR

CONSTRAINT → LIBERATOR

The antagonist helps construct the leader. The leader helps construct the collective. The collective legitimates the conflict. The conflict stabilizes the political world.

The resulting relation is circular:

LEADER → PEOPLE → ANTAGONIST → CRISIS → LEADER

Each term acquires meaning through the others. This circularity is one of the central mechanisms of populist semiotics. It also reveals why the political scene tends toward simplification.

Complexity can weaken relational clarity. A clearly recognizable protagonist requires a clearly recognizable conflict.

The corpus therefore repeatedly condenses heterogeneous social processes into legible actor structures.

Immigration becomes threatening other. Institutional complexity becomes caste. Economic success becomes winner. Economic crisis becomes evidence of political failure. Collective support becomes MAGA. Political anger becomes Milei.

The process is one of **actorial condensation**. A social system becomes a cast of recognizable roles. This condensation is especially compatible with digital visual communication.

Platforms favor fragments.

A complex institution is difficult to represent in one image.

A face is easy. A chainsaw is easy. A cap is easy. A fist is easy. A threatening figure is easy. The simplification is not merely cognitive. It is **figurative**.

Political complexity becomes visualizable when it is translated into actors and objects. The corpus therefore demonstrates how contemporary digital populism constructs a world that can be rapidly entered through recognizable figures.

The user does not need to reconstruct the entire policy debate.

The actor structure supplies immediate orientation.

Who is with us? Who is against us? Who can act? Who caused the problem? What must happen next? The political image becomes a map of relations. At the same time, this map is normatively charged.

Centrality implies importance. Marginality can imply exclusion. Visibility can imply relevance. Repetition can imply legitimacy. The distribution of actors in the visual field is therefore not neutral.

It creates a **hierarchy of political existence**. Some actors become hypervisible. Others disappear. Some speak. Others are spoken for. Some are represented as competent, others as dangerous or parasitic.

This hierarchy is particularly important when analyzing political alterity.

IMG 1e demonstrates how a represented out-group can be deprived of complexity by being reduced to a threatening function.

IMG 2c demonstrates how institutional actors can be deprived of internal differentiation by being condensed into “casta”.

In both cases, antagonistic simplification produces narrative efficiency at the cost of social complexity. The semiotic mechanism is similar even though the empirical targets differ.

The other becomes **functionally homogeneous**. This allows the leader’s position to become clearer.

The political scene therefore operates through asymmetric complexity:

THE LEADER IS COMPLEX BUT COHERENT;

THE ANTAGONIST IS SIMPLIFIED BUT EXPANSIVE.

Trump can be businessman, victim, fighter, patriot, celebrity, protector. Milei can be economist, outsider, angry leader, disruptor, president, libertarian.

Their opponents are more frequently compressed into broad categories.

This asymmetry strengthens protagonist identification. The audience is given a rich hero and a simplified obstacle. Such a structure is narratively powerful because it organizes empathy unevenly.

The leader possesses a story. The antagonist possesses a function. The political scene can therefore begin to resemble a **moral drama**. The corpus also shows that this drama is not fixed.

Digital circulation can reverse roles. Opponents can parody the hero. Supporters can demonize critics. Journalists can challenge simplifications. Fact-checkers can contest visual claims. Memes can invert meanings. The political scene remains contested.

The roles proposed by the original discourse are not guaranteed. This distinction is essential.

Semiotic analysis identifies the actor positions constructed by the text.

It does not assume that every audience accepts them.

A receiver can refuse the role of threatened patriot. Reject the category of caste. Interpret luxury as elitism. Read anger as instability. Read the chainsaw as irresponsibility. Read the raised fist as political theatricalization. The empirical public can therefore **recast the scene**.

Platformized politics intensifies this possibility because interpretation itself becomes publicly visible. Comments and memes can redistribute roles. A hero becomes villain. An antagonist becomes victim. A symbol of strength becomes parody. A symbol of rupture becomes criticism.

The political scene thus acquires a second-order conflict: not only a conflict among actors, but a conflict over **who should occupy which role**.

This is one of the defining characteristics of contemporary digital political communication.

The struggle is representational.

Who gets to define the people? Who gets to define the caste? Who defines the immigrant? Who defines the leader? Who defines the media? Who defines the crisis?

The actorial structure itself becomes politically contested.

Trump and Milei nevertheless possess a significant advantage because strongly personalized leadership allows them to continually attempt to **reassert the original casting**.

Trump repositions himself as protector. Milei repositions himself as outsider-disruptor.

Opponents are repeatedly relocated into antagonistic categories.

Supporters are repeatedly called back into the collective.

The political world must therefore be continuously reproduced.

It is not established once and for all.

The cast requires constant rehearsal.

Digital communication provides that rehearsal.

Every post can reconstruct the roles. Every conflict can renew the boundaries. Every symbolic object can reactivate the protagonist.

Every image can remind the audience who belongs where.

The political scene becomes **serially regenerated**.

This seriality is especially important because the actors themselves change over time.

Political offices change. Campaign phases change. Opponents change. Economic conditions change. Media controversies change. The deeper actorial structure can remain relatively stable.

The other becomes functionally homogeneous.

Trump remains the subject of restoration. Milei remains the subject of rupture. The specific antagonist can vary without destabilizing the underlying grammar.

The corpus therefore reveals a distinction between:

EMPIRICAL ACTOR

and

SEMIOTIC ROLE.

An empirical person or institution may enter or leave the conflict.

The role of opponent remains available.

This distinction is one of the reasons structural semiotics is particularly useful for the analysis.

It allows the research to move beyond individual names and identify the positions that different actors occupy within the political system of meaning.

At the deepest level, the two scenes can be summarized as follows:

TRUMP

A LEADER WHO MUST RESTORE

(inhabits a world populated by)

A PEOPLE WHO MUST BE PROTECTED,

OPPONENTS WHO THREATEN OR OBSTRUCT, and

SUPPORTERS WHO CONFIRM COLLECTIVE BELONGING.

MILEI

A LEADER WHO MUST DISRUPT

(inhabits a world populated by)

SUBJECTS WHO MUST BE LIBERATED,

A SYSTEM THAT CONSTRAINS, and

SUPPORTERS WHO AMPLIFY TRANSFORMATIVE ENERGY.

The two configurations therefore differ in the kind of political community they construct and in the relation between protagonist and antagonist, but they converge in the intense personalization of agency.

The collective needs the leader.

The leader needs the collective.

Both need the antagonist in order for the transformation to remain intelligible.

The political scene is therefore not simply inhabited by actors.

It is produced through the relations among them.

Trump becomes restorative because America is represented as having lost something.

Milei becomes disruptive because Argentina is represented as trapped within something.

The people become a political subject because the leader names their condition.

The antagonist becomes meaningful because the narrative assigns responsibility.

The entire political world is thus generated through a relational grammar in which **identity is never autonomous.**

It emerges from position, opposition, proximity, distance, and the transformations assigned to each actor within the scene.

6.2. SPATIALIZATION AND THE TOPOLOGY OF POLITICAL CONFLICT

Space, in the corpus examined here, does not function as a neutral container in which political action simply takes place. It participates actively in the production of meaning.

Political space is organized.It has centers and margins.It establishes distances and proximities.

It creates boundaries. It separates inside from outside. It distinguishes high from low. It can produce inclusion or exclusion.

It can monumentalize the leader or dissolve the distinction between political actor and audience.

Spatialization therefore contributes directly to the construction of political identity.

The fundamental question is not simply:

WHERE DOES THE POLITICAL ACTOR APPEAR?

but:

WHAT DOES THAT POSITION MEAN

WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF RELATIONS CONSTRUCTED BY THE TEXT?

A leader placed at the center of the visual field acquires a different meaning from one positioned at its margins.

A leader represented above a crowd establishes a different relationship from one immersed within it.

A political community represented as occupying a protected interior constructs a different relation to alterity from one represented as constrained within an oppressive system.

Spatial relations can therefore translate abstract political values into immediately perceptible configurations.

This process is particularly important in visual communication because spatial organization can be apprehended before its ideological implications are consciously articulated.

The spectator sees centrality before interpreting authority. Sees distance before interpreting hierarchy. Sees a boundary before interpreting exclusion. Sees an elevated figure before interpreting superiority.

The plastic organization of the image thus prepares the semantic interpretation.

Within the Trumpian corpus, the dominant spatial configuration is one of **centralization**.

Trump repeatedly occupies, materially or symbolically, the center of the political scene.

This centrality is especially evident in **IMG 1b**, where frontal positioning, dominant posture, and low-angle framing contribute to a visual organization in which the leader appears to control the surrounding space.

The relationship can be represented as:

CENTER → VISIBILITY

↓

VISIBILITY → IMPORTANCE

↓

IMPORTANCE → AUTHORITY

The sequence is not universal or automatic, but within the corpus it participates in a broader system of correspondences.

Trump does not simply appear in the image. The image is organized **around him**. This distinction is fundamental.

When the leader becomes the organizing principle of the visual field, political space itself becomes personalized.

Other elements acquire meaning through their relation to the central figure. Supporters surround him. Flags frame him. Institutional or campaign settings reinforce him. The audience is directed toward him.

The spatial structure therefore reproduces the political structure:

LEADER AT THE CENTER

↓

COLLECTIVE ORGANIZED AROUND LEADER

The visual field becomes a model of political hierarchy.

Centrality is consequently more than compositional prominence.

It becomes a spatial metaphor for **political centrality**.

Trump is constructed as the subject around whom the conflict, the community, and the possibility of transformation are organized.

This mechanism reinforces the personalization already identified at the narrative and enunciative levels.

The desired transformation is increasingly inseparable from the person positioned at the center of the scene.

IMG 1a offers a particularly interesting variation on this structure.

The raised-fist image following the Butler assassination attempt transforms a contingent physical space into a symbolically organized political space.

The scene originates in danger and disruption.

The gesture recenters the image around the leader.

The body that has been physically threatened becomes the point around which the event is subsequently interpreted.

The spatial transformation can be reconstructed as:

DISRUPTED SPACE

↓

ENDANGERED BODY

↓

GESTURE OF RESISTANCE

↓

RECENTERING OF THE LEADER

↓

SYMBOLIC CONTROL OF THE SCENE

The leader does not control the occurrence of the attack.

But the subsequent image can transform the meaning of the event by restoring visual centrality to him.

This is an important distinction between **control of events and control of representation**.

The first may be absent.

The second can emerge retrospectively through images and circulation.

The political body becomes the stable center within an unstable situation.

This produces a particularly powerful spatial metaphor for restorative leadership.

Disorder surrounds the leader.

The leader remains recognizable.

The political scene can therefore translate resilience spatially:

INSTABILITY OUTSIDE

versus

IDENTITY AT THE CENTER.

The raised fist intensifies this configuration because it introduces a vertical vector. The gesture moves upward. Verticality here does not merely describe physical movement.

It can become associated with resistance, persistence, elevation, and refusal to collapse.

The opposition between falling and remaining upright becomes politically meaningful.

The attacked body does not remain lowered. It rises and signals.

The visual trajectory can therefore be represented as:

THREAT → LOWERING / VULNERABILITY

followed by

RESISTANCE → RISING / REASSERTION

The political body reoccupies the vertical axis.

Spatiality thus participates in the transformation of vulnerability into competence.

IMG 1b develops verticality in a more stable form.

Low-angle framing places the spectator visually below the leader.

This configuration can produce an asymmetrical relationship:

- **LEADER → ABOVE**
- **VIEWER → BELOW**

The resulting hierarchy is not necessarily perceived consciously as domination.

It can operate through culturally stabilized visual conventions in which elevation is associated with importance, power, monumentality, or heroic representation.

The leader appears larger.

The spectator’s visual position contributes to this enlargement.

Trump therefore becomes not only central but **vertically privileged**.

The political scene is organized through a double hierarchy:

CENTER / MARGIN

and

HIGH / LOW.

These oppositions reinforce one another. Centrality produces prominence. Verticality produces elevation. Frontality produces confrontation and presence.

Together, they construct a spatial regime of **monumental leadership**.

The political body does not merely inhabit space. It dominates it.

This spatial dominance is particularly coherent with the ethos of strength reconstructed in the previous chapters.

The relation between values and spatiality can therefore be expressed as:

- **STRENGTH → CENTRALITY**
- **AUTHORITY → VERTICALITY**
- **CONTROL → SPATIAL STABILITY**
- **LEADERSHIP → VISUAL DOMINANCE**

Space translates abstract values into perceptible relations.

IMG 1c extends this logic from the body to the **environment**.

The airplanes and luxurious interiors associated with Trump construct a spatial universe of privilege, mobility, exclusivity, and material abundance.

The relevant space is not simply expensive. It is selective. Not everyone has access to it.

The private aircraft creates a particularly clear distinction between ordinary and exceptional mobility.

Commercial travel is collective and standardized. Private aviation is individualized and exclusive. The spatial meaning therefore extends beyond wealth.

It constructs the leader as a subject capable of moving through space according to different rules.

The aircraft can signify:

- **MOBILITY**
- **AUTONOMY**
- **CONTROL**
- **ACCESS**
- **EXCLUSIVITY**
- **SUCCESS**

The political subject appears spatially unconstrained.

This is particularly significant because control over movement is itself a form of power.

The subject who can determine where and when to move possesses a different relation to space from the ordinary subject.

Trump's economic success is therefore not represented only through possessions.

It is represented through **spatial sovereignty**.

The private aircraft materializes the capacity to overcome ordinary constraints of distance, schedule, and collective infrastructure.

Within the celebrity-business mythology associated with Trump, mobility becomes part of the winner's identity.

The spatial relation can be expressed as:

SUCCESS → ACCESS TO EXCLUSIVE SPACE

and

EXCLUSIVE SPACE → VISIBLE EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

The relation is circular. The environment confirms the subject. The subject gives meaning to the environment.

Luxury space becomes an extension of the political persona. The gilded interiors further intensify this process because the distinction between subject and environment begins to weaken.

The leader inhabits a space that reflects the same values attributed to his public identity:

- visibility;
- excess;
- wealth;
- recognizability;
- monumentality.

The environment becomes a kind of **expanded political body**.

Trump's persona extends into architecture, decoration, objects, and means of transportation.

Space becomes biographical. But it also becomes ideological.

The spatial representation implicitly proposes a particular relation between success and political legitimacy.

The subject who has conquered economic space appears capable of conquering political space.

Again, this is a semiotic inference rather than a logical necessity.

Its importance lies precisely in the transformation of spatial privilege into a sign of competence.

IMG 1d produces a very different spatial configuration.

The MAGA universe is not based primarily on exclusive space but on **collective occupation of space**. Rallies, caps, flags, slogans, and crowds transform political gathering into territorial affirmation.

The political community becomes visible because it occupies space.

A crowd is not simply a quantity of individuals. It is a spatial form.

Bodies positioned near one another create density. Density produces the perception of collective presence.

The political community can therefore be represented through:

INDIVIDUAL BODIES

↓

PROXIMITY

↓

DENSITY

↓

VISIBLE COLLECTIVE

The rally spatializes political support. Support becomes measurable perceptually through occupation. A full arena appears different from an empty one.

A dense crowd can produce an effect of strength, legitimacy, enthusiasm, and social reality.

The collective subject therefore becomes spatially demonstrable.

This mechanism contributes to the veridictory function discussed previously:

WE EXIST BECAUSE WE CAN BE SEEN TOGETHER.

Political community becomes physical presence.

The rally also creates an opposition between **inside and outside**.

Inside the space, signs are shared. Colors recur. Slogans are repeated. Bodies orient themselves toward the same focal point. The political environment becomes relatively homogeneous. The participant is surrounded by signs confirming belonging.

The experience is therefore not merely visual but immersive. The supporter does not only look at MAGA. The supporter can temporarily inhabit MAGA as a spatial environment. This is fundamental to the ritual dimension of Trumpian politics. The rally constructs a temporary world in which the political identity is materially dominant.

Outside that environment, supporters may encounter heterogeneous signs and competing political discourses.

Inside the rally, the semiotic field is strongly saturated by the movement's own symbols.

The space thus operates as a **temporary intensifier of ideological coherence**.

The relation can be represented as:

ENTRY INTO RALLY SPACE

↓

IMMERSION IN SHARED SYMBOLS

↓

RECOGNITION OF COLLECTIVE BODY

↓

INTENSIFICATION OF BELONGING

The political community is not only imagined. It is temporarily experienced through co-presence.

IMG 1e constructs the inside/outside opposition in a more explicitly antagonistic manner.

Anti-immigration imagery presupposes a spatial boundary between a community and those represented as entering, approaching, or disturbing it.

Immigration is inherently spatial because it involves movement across territories and borders.

Political discourse can transform this empirical spatiality into a moral topology.

The border becomes more than a territorial line.

It separates:

US / THEM

ORDER / THREAT

BELONGING / NON-BELONGING

LEGITIMATE PRESENCE / ILLEGITIMATE PRESENCE

The political conflict becomes territorialized.

This is particularly important because territorial boundaries can naturalize social distinctions.

A geographic line can appear objective.

The meanings attributed to those positioned on either side are political and cultural constructions.

The border becomes a device for transforming a complex social relationship into a clear spatial opposition.

The logic is:

- **INSIDE = COMMUNITY**
- **OUTSIDE = ALTERITY**

and, within the threatening representation:

- **MOVEMENT FROM OUTSIDE TO INSIDE = DANGER**

The political narrative therefore depends on **boundary transgression**.

The other becomes threatening not simply because of difference, but because difference is represented as crossing into the space of the in-group.

This gives spatial form to the protective function of the leader.

If the political problem is represented as penetration of a boundary, leadership becomes the capacity to **restore or defend that boundary**.

The Trumpian spatial program can consequently be summarized through three major operations:

- **CENTERING THE LEADER**
- **CONSOLIDATING THE INTERNAL COMMUNITY**
- **CONTROLLING THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN INSIDE AND OUTSIDE**

These operations correspond closely to the restorative logic of the broader corpus.

The center must remain stable. The internal community must remain coherent. The boundary must remain protected.

Restoration is therefore not merely temporal. It is also spatial. It promises to reconstruct a political topology in which the correct actors occupy the correct places.

The leader at the center. The people inside. The threat outside. The nation territorially and symbolically coherent.

The dominant Trumpian topology can therefore be represented as:

- **CENTER → LEADER**
- **INTERIOR → PATRIOTIC COMMUNITY**
- **BOUNDARY → PROTECTION**
- **EXTERIOR → POTENTIAL THREAT**

This does not exhaust the complexity of Trumpian political communication, but it identifies a recurrent spatial grammar within the selected corpus.

The Mileian corpus constructs a markedly different topology.

Here the fundamental spatial problem is less strongly organized around protecting an interior from an exterior and more strongly around **escaping, breaking, or dismantling a constraining structure**.

The dominant opposition is therefore not simply:

INSIDE / OUTSIDE

but:

CONFINEMENT / LIBERATION

STRUCTURE / RUPTURE

IMMOBILITY / MOVEMENT

OBSTRUCTION / OPENING

Milei's political universe is spatially dynamic.

The existing system appears as something that blocks movement.

The disruptive leader opens a passage.

IMG 2a provides the clearest materialization of this logic.

The chainsaw is a tool that acts upon physical matter.

It cuts. Separates. Divides. Opens. Destroys continuity.

The object therefore has an inherently spatial function.

It transforms a continuous structure into separated parts.

Within the political discourse, this physical operation becomes a metaphor for institutional transformation.

The spatial logic can be represented as:

BLOCKED / SOLID STRUCTURE

↓

CUT

↓

SEPARATION

↓

OPENING

The chainsaw thus produces a topology of **rupture**.

Unlike Trumpian restoration, which seeks to re-establish boundaries and stabilize a valued order, Mileian disruption seeks to break through structures represented as excessive or obstructive.

The political transformation is imagined as a change in spatial continuity.

What was connected must be separated. What was solid must be cut. What was closed must be opened. What occupied too much space must be reduced.

The metaphor is particularly compatible with discourse about the size of the state.

The state can be represented spatially as **too large**.

Bureaucracy can be represented as **too extensive**.

Public expenditure can be represented as something that must be **cut**.

The chainsaw translates these quantitative and institutional abstractions into spatial action.

This is one reason for its semiotic effectiveness.

A complex fiscal program becomes imaginable through a simple physical operation.

The political project becomes:

THERE IS TOO MUCH

↓

REMOVE PART OF IT

The chainsaw makes reduction visible.

IMG 2c develops this topology through the “casta”.

Here the antagonistic system is represented as occupying an institutional space from which ordinary citizens are symbolically excluded or disadvantaged.

The opposition becomes:

CASTA → INSIDE THE PRIVILEGED SYSTEM

PEOPLE → OUTSIDE THE BENEFITS / SUBJECT TO ITS COSTS

This produces a different inside/outside relation from Trump.

In the Trumpian anti-immigration configuration, the interior is positively valorized and must be protected from threatening exteriority.

In the Mileian anti-caste configuration, the institutional interior can itself become **negatively valorized**.

Being inside the system can signify privilege, corruption, self-interest, or separation from ordinary citizens. The outsider position therefore acquires positive value.

The contrast can be expressed as:

TRUMP

- **INSIDE = BELONGING**
- **OUTSIDE = POTENTIAL THREAT**

MILEI

- **INSIDE THE OLD POLITICAL SYSTEM = PRIVILEGE / CASTA**
- **OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM = AUTHENTICITY / INDEPENDENCE**

This reversal is fundamental.

The two populist models organize political legitimacy through different spatial metaphors.

Trump's legitimate subject belongs to the interior of the nation.

Milei's legitimate leader originates symbolically outside the institutional system.

The meaning of "outside" therefore changes completely.

In Trumpian spatiality, outside can be threatening.

In Mileian spatiality, outside can be liberating.

The comparison demonstrates why spatial categories cannot be interpreted independently from their axiological investment.

"Inside" and "outside" possess no fixed political meaning.

Their value emerges from the narrative system.

The Mileian outsider becomes credible precisely because he is represented as not having been absorbed by the institutional interior.

This produces the paradox already identified in the previous section:

MILEI BECOMES INSTITUTIONALLY CENTRAL

while needing to remain

SYMBOLICALLY EXTERNAL TO THE CASTA.

Spatialization therefore becomes particularly complex after electoral victory.

The outsider now inhabits the presidential institution.

How can he remain outside? The solution is semiotic rather than physical.

The distinction between **institutional location and axiological location** becomes essential.

Milei may be inside the state as office-holder while remaining outside the old political system as value-bearing subject.

The topology is reconstructed:

PRESIDENCY ≠ CASTA

if

PRESIDENT ACTS AGAINST CASTA.

The relevant boundary is therefore no longer architectural or institutional. It is ideological.

Milei's position depends on maintaining a **symbolic distance from the system he governs**.

This distance can be reproduced through language, conflict, bodily performance, and repeated attacks on institutional actors.

IMG 2b contributes strongly to this process.

Milei's expansive gestures, shouting, bodily tension, and confrontational positioning destabilize the spatial conventions associated with institutional composure.

The political body appears to exceed the expected boundaries of conventional political behavior.

Gesture extends outward. Voice invades space. Movement creates instability. The body does not remain contained. This can be interpreted as a form of **corporeal overflow**.

The spatial relation becomes:

CONVENTIONAL POLITICAL BODY → CONTAINED

versus

MILEIAN BODY → EXPANSIVE / EXCESSIVE

The body itself performs the refusal of containment. This is highly coherent with the broader ideology of rupture.

The leader who seeks to break institutional constraints also appears bodily resistant to communicative constraint.

Form and content converge. The disruptive political project acquires a disruptive body.

The body therefore does not simply express anger. It spatializes it. Anger expands.

It crosses the conventional limits of posture, volume, and gestural moderation.

This creates a political body that appears difficult to contain within the existing order.

The relationship can be formulated as:

BODILY EXPANSION → REFUSAL OF CONTAINMENT

REFUSAL OF CONTAINMENT → ANTI-INSTITUTIONAL AUTHENTICITY

The body becomes a miniature representation of the political project.

IMG 2d develops the same spatial principle at the level of the entire communicative environment.

“Productive chaos” produces a space without stable equilibrium. Actors collide. Messages accelerate. Conflicts multiply. Visual and verbal elements compete for attention. The political scene appears constantly in motion. The dominant spatial value is therefore not position but **trajectory**.

This is a major difference from Trumpian monumentalization. Trump’s visual power often depends on being firmly positioned.

Milei’s often depends on appearing dynamically uncontained.

The contrast can be expressed as:

TRUMP → STABILITY OF POSITION

MILEI → INTENSITY OF MOVEMENT

Trump occupies. Milei traverses. Trump centralizes. Milei disrupts. Trump stabilizes the scene around himself. Milei can make instability itself part of the scene.

This distinction should not be absolutized, since both leaders can employ multiple spatial configurations. Nevertheless, it captures a recurrent opposition within the selected corpus.

IMG 2d therefore introduces a topology based on **collision**.

Political actors are not separated into stable territories. They confront one another continuously. The media space becomes an arena of contact.

This can be represented as:

ACTOR A → ← ACTOR B

rather than:

ACTOR A | ACTOR B

The first configuration emphasizes collision. The second emphasizes separation.

Mileian communication frequently derives energy from the first. The opponent must be encountered. Provoked. Challenged. Verbally attacked. Made to react.

The political scene is therefore constructed less as a protected territory than as a **field of confrontation**.

This is consistent with the role of the reacting other identified in the previous section.

Opponents become spatially useful because their proximity produces collision.

The political identity requires friction.

Without contact, disruption would be less visible.

The political space therefore functions almost as a **contact zone** in which antagonism is continually actualized.

IMG 2e initially appears very different.

Charts and economic indicators seem to construct an abstract rather than embodied space. Economic visualization is itself deeply spatial.

A graph distributes values across axes. It positions points. Creates trajectories. Establishes distances. Shows rises and falls. Separates before from after. The statistical visualization translates time and quantity into space. This operation is politically significant. Inflation becomes visible as movement.

Economic deterioration can become an upward trajectory. Improvement can become decline in an undesirable indicator. The graph allows political discourse to convert complex temporal processes into spatial relations that can be apprehended quickly.

The basic operations are:

- **MORE / LESS**
- **HIGH / LOW**
- **UP / DOWN**
- **BEFORE / AFTER**
- **NEAR / FAR**

These spatial oppositions give perceptual form to economic argument. The graph therefore creates a **topology of evidence**. The spectator can literally see distance between values.

This visible distance can then be translated into political difference. A large statistical difference becomes a large political difference. The image thus connects spatial magnitude to evaluative magnitude.

The larger the visual separation, the more consequential the political transformation may appear.

This does not make the graph inherently deceptive. It means that statistical evidence always requires visual organization. Scale, axes, temporal range, labels, and comparison points contribute to the interpretation.

IMG 2e therefore demonstrates that spatialization operates even in apparently technical political communication.

The Mileian corpus can consequently be summarized through three major spatial operations:

- BREAKING CONSTRAINT
- MAINTAINING SYMBOLIC EXTERIORITY TO THE CASTA
- TRANSFORMING STABILITY INTO MOVEMENT

These operations correspond closely to the disruptive logic reconstructed throughout the study.

The comparison between the two corpora reveals a fundamental opposition.

Trump's political topology is primarily organized around **recentring, protecting, and stabilizing**.

Milei's is primarily organized around **cutting, crossing, and destabilizing**.

The contrast can be schematized as:

TRUMP

CENTER

↓

STABILITY

↓

BOUNDARY

↓

PROTECTION

↓

RESTORATION

MILEI

CONSTRAINT

↓

COLLISION

↓

RUPTURE

↓

OPENING

↓

TRANSFORMATION

This spatial opposition corresponds to the broader distinction between restorative and disruptive leadership.

Trump's ideal political space is one in which the nation recovers coherence around a strong center.

Milei's ideal political space is one in which obstructive structures are broken to release movement.

The first privileges **recomposition**.

The second privileges **decomposition as a condition for recomposition**.

This final distinction is important because Mileian disruption should not be interpreted as destruction without a projected future.

Within the political narrative, destruction functions as a passage.

The old order must be broken so that another configuration can emerge.

Rupture is therefore **transitional**. The chainsaw does not merely signify negation.

It signifies the clearing of space for a differently organized political-economic order.

The narrative relation is:

OLD STRUCTURE

↓

DESTRUCTION

↓

OPEN SPACE

↓

NEW ORDER

This gives spatial form to the temporal structure of refoundation.

Trump's corresponding sequence is different:

DISORDERED / WEAKENED PRESENT

↓

RECENTERING

↓

RESTORATION OF BOUNDARIES AND VALUES

↓

RECOVERED ORDER

Both models therefore seek transformation. But transformation is spatially imagined in opposite ways.

Trump reconstructs. Milei clears.

Trump strengthens the center. Milei attacks the structure.

Trump protects the interior. Milei challenges the privileged interior.

Trump's political subject is legitimate because he belongs to and embodies the national center.

Milei's political subject is legitimate because he maintains symbolic exteriority to the institutional system he seeks to transform.

The spatial organization of the corpus also reveals an important relation between **power and distance**.

Political power can be represented through distance from ordinary actors, as in monumental or exclusive spaces.

But populist legitimacy frequently requires proximity to "the people".

Both leaders must therefore negotiate a tension:

EXCEPTIONALITY / PROXIMITY

The leader must be extraordinary enough to transform the political world but sufficiently close to the collective to represent it.

Trump resolves this tension partly through a separation between **material distance and symbolic proximity**. His luxury environments emphasize exceptionality. His MAGA universe emphasizes belonging.

The wealthy leader can inhabit exclusive spaces while presenting himself as representative of an ordinary patriotic community.

The two spatial regimes coexist.

The relation is:

ECONOMICALLY / VISUALLY EXCEPTIONAL

but

AXIOLOGICALLY "ONE OF US"

This apparent contradiction becomes functional within the broader mythology of success.

The distance confirms competence. The shared values restore proximity.

Milei resolves the same tension differently. His technical-economic competence establishes epistemic asymmetry. His bodily intensity and anti-caste discourse establish affective proximity.

The relation becomes:

I KNOW WHAT OTHERS DO NOT KNOW

but

I AM ANGRY AT WHAT MAKES YOU ANGRY.

Epistemic distance coexists with emotional proximity. Again, space is not purely physical.

It becomes a metaphor for social and political relations.

Both leaders therefore construct **selective proximities and selective distances**.

They are close to the people in values or emotions. Distant from the establishment. Superior to opponents in competence. Distinct from ordinary actors through charismatic exceptionality.

The political topology is multidimensional.

A leader can be simultaneously:

- CLOSE IN IDENTITY;
- DISTANT IN STATUS;
- ABOVE IN COMPETENCE;
- OUTSIDE IN RELATION TO THE ESTABLISHMENT.

These positions are not necessarily contradictory because they operate along different semantic axes.

The effectiveness of populist spatialization derives partly from the capacity to combine them.

The leader can say, semiotically:

I AM LIKE YOU

and

I CAN DO WHAT YOU CANNOT.

This is the spatial paradox of charismatic representation. Proximity produces identification. Distance produces exceptionality. Both are necessary.

The corpus also demonstrates that digital platforms transform political spatiality in a further way.

Physical distance becomes less relevant to visibility. The rally occurs in one location but circulates globally.

The chainsaw is held in one physical scene but becomes recognizable far beyond it.

The Butler gesture lasts only moments but is reproduced indefinitely.

A graph presented in one context can be detached and recirculated across platforms.

Digital circulation therefore produces a process of **deterritorialization**.

The original space loses exclusivity over the sign.

The political image enters multiple new contexts.

This can be represented as:

ORIGINAL PHYSICAL SPACE

↓

MEDIATIZATION

↓

DIGITAL CIRCULATION

↓

MULTIPLE RECONTEXTUALIZATIONS

The political scene is no longer confined to where the event occurred. But this deterritorialization is accompanied by **reterritorialization**.

Each platform, account, meme, repost, news article, or comment thread provides a new context.

The sign acquires a new surrounding space.

The Butler image can appear in campaign communication.

Journalistic reporting, supporter profiles, critical commentary, memes, historical retrospectives: each environment reconstructs its meaning.

The same applies to Milei's chainsaw. The physical object leaves the rally and enters a vast symbolic territory. It becomes icon, meme, metaphor, criticism, merchandise, political shorthand.

Digital political space is therefore characterized by continual movement between:

DETERRITORIALIZATION

and

RETERRITORIALIZATION.

This movement contributes to the transformation of political images into autonomous symbolic units. They no longer require their original location to remain intelligible.

Indeed, the most successful political signs can become increasingly independent from it.

The fist ceases to belong exclusively to Butler. The red cap ceases to belong exclusively to a rally. The chainsaw ceases to belong exclusively to a specific performance. They enter a **distributed symbolic space**. This is one of the defining spatial transformations of platformized politics.

The leader therefore inhabits two spaces simultaneously:

PHYSICAL POLITICAL SPACE

and

NETWORKED SYMBOLIC SPACE.

The first is geographically bounded. The second is potentially continuous.

The first requires physical presence. The second requires circulation.

The first organizes bodies. The second organizes visibility.

Contemporary political leadership increasingly depends on the capacity to connect these two spatial regimes.

The rally must become content. The gesture must become image.

The object must become symbol. The confrontation must become clip.

The chart must become shareable evidence. Political space is therefore produced not only through occupation but through **circulation**.

A leader who dominates the physical scene but fails to circulate may remain locally visible.

A sign that circulates can occupy political attention far beyond its place of origin.

Visibility becomes a form of spatial expansion.

This produces what can be described as **algorithmic territorialization**.

The political actor occupies not merely geographic territory but portions of the platform's attention space.

The relevant political question increasingly becomes not only:

WHO OCCUPIES THE SQUARE?

but also:

WHO OCCUPIES THE FEED?

Trump and Milei are particularly compatible with this spatial transformation because their symbolic repertoires contain highly recognizable elements capable of travelling independently.

The red MAGA cap, the raised fist, the luxury aircraft, the chainsaw, the angry gesture, the inflation chart: each provides a compact visual unit capable of entering heterogeneous digital environments while preserving at least part of its political recognizability.

The topology of contemporary populism is therefore simultaneously:

- **BODILY;**
- **TERRITORIAL;**
- **SYMBOLIC;**
- **MEDIAL;**
- **ALGORITHMIC.**

The leader occupies the stage. The community occupies the rally. The antagonist occupies a negatively valorized position. The symbolic object occupies the image. The image occupies the feed. The feed enters everyday life.

Political spatialization thus extends from the physical arrangement of bodies to the organization of attention itself.

This final transition is essential for understanding the corpus as a whole.

Trump and Milei do not merely construct different representations of political space. They participate in a media environment in which **political visibility has itself become a form of spatial power**. To occupy the center of the image, the center of controversy, the center of circulation, or the center of algorithmically intensified attention means to acquire different but interconnected forms of political presence.

The comparison therefore reveals two distinctive spatial grammars operating within the same platformized environment. Trump tends to transform space into a structure of **centrality, boundary, belonging, and restoration**. Milei tends to transform it into a structure of **constraint, collision, rupture, and liberation**. Both, however, depend on the capacity to convert physical scenes into circulating symbolic spaces in which the leader remains recognizable beyond the original event.

Space is consequently not the passive location of political communication. It is one of its fundamental semiotic materials. Through space, political discourse determines who belongs, who threatens, who dominates, who remains outside, what must be protected, what must be broken, and where the leader stands in relation to the collective. In this sense, the spatial organization of the corpus gives visible form to the deeper axiological opposition running through the entire analysis: **Trump's restoration requires a center to be recovered and defended; Milei's rupture requires a constraining structure to be opened and transformed.**

6.3. BOUNDARIES, THRESHOLDS, AND POLITICAL ACCESSIBILITY

The spatial analysis developed in the previous section can be further specified through the concepts of **boundary and threshold**. If political space is organized through relations such as center and margin, inside and outside, proximity and distance, the boundary constitutes the point at which these differences become perceptible and politically consequential.

A boundary separates. A threshold, however, does something more complex. It establishes the conditions under which separation can be crossed.

The distinction is important because political discourse does not merely divide actors into different spaces. It also defines **who may legitimately move between them, under what conditions, and with what consequences**.

A boundary can therefore be understood as a semiotic operator of differentiation:

A / B

while a threshold introduces the possibility of transformation:

A → THRESHOLD → B

Crossing a threshold may alter the status of the subject. An outsider becomes an insider. A private individual becomes a political representative. A supporter becomes a member of a collective. A businessman becomes a political leader. An anti-system candidate becomes president. An economic indicator becomes political evidence. A material object becomes an ideological symbol.

Thresholds therefore concern not only physical movement but **changes of semiotic status**.

This distinction is particularly productive for the comparison between Trump and Milei because both political identities are organized around boundaries, but the two leaders attribute radically different values to their preservation, violation, or transformation.

In the Trumpian corpus, boundaries are predominantly associated with **identity, protection, belonging, and controlled access**.

In the Mileian corpus, boundaries are more frequently associated with **constraint, institutional closure, transgression, and the need to open or destroy existing limits**.

The fundamental opposition can initially be represented as:

TRUMP

BOUNDARY → SOMETHING TO DEFEND

MILEI

BOUNDARY → SOMETHING THAT MAY NEED TO BE BROKEN

This opposition does not apply uniformly to every image, but it identifies two dominant tendencies in the spatial organization of the selected texts.

For Trump, the clearest manifestation of the boundary is the distinction between **national interior and external alterity**.

IMG 1e is particularly important in this respect.

The anti-immigration imagery constructs political identity through a spatialized opposition in which the national community appears as a bounded collective whose integrity may be threatened by uncontrolled entry.

The semiotic structure can be represented as:

OUTSIDE → CROSSING → INSIDE → POTENTIAL DISRUPTION OF ORDER

Movement itself acquires political meaning.

The subject represented as threatening is not simply different.

The subject becomes politically consequential because difference is imagined as **crossing a boundary**.

This produces an important transformation. The border ceases to be merely a geographic object.

It becomes a **value boundary**. It separates not only territories but categories. Belonging and non-belonging. Legitimacy and illegitimacy. Security and danger. Familiarity and alterity.

The political significance of the border therefore derives from its capacity to materialize an otherwise abstract distinction between “us” and “them”.

The relation becomes:

TERRITORIAL BOUNDARY

↓

SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION

↓

AXIOLOGICAL DIFFERENTIATION

↓

POLITICAL ANTAGONISM

This sequence shows how spatial organization can become ideological organization.

A line in space is transformed into a line between identities.

The Trumpian political narrative can consequently construct border control as something more than administrative policy.

It can become a symbolic act of **collective self-definition**.

To determine who may cross the threshold is to determine who belongs to the political community.

The issue of access therefore becomes inseparable from the issue of identity.

This mechanism also contributes to the construction of the leader's competence.

If the boundary is represented as endangered, political authority becomes the capacity to regulate crossing.

The leader is positioned as **guardian of the threshold**.

The sequence can be reconstructed as:

VALUED INTERIOR

↓

THREATENED BOUNDARY

↓

POTENTIAL INTRUSION

↓

NEED FOR CONTROL

↓

PROTECTIVE LEADER

The spatial problem produces the political role.

Trump's protective function therefore depends partly upon the construction of something that must be protected.

The national interior becomes that object.

The border becomes the site where leadership can demonstrate competence.

This is consistent with the restorative structure identified throughout the study.

Restoration requires not only recovering values but re-establishing distinctions represented as weakened.

The desired political transformation can therefore involve the reconstruction of **clear boundaries**.

Who belongs. Who does not. What is legitimate. What is threatening. What is American. What is represented as foreign to the desired national order. The Trumpian boundary is consequently both **territorial and classificatory**.

This classificatory function extends beyond immigration.

The MAGA symbolic universe in **IMG 1d** constructs another kind of boundary: the distinction between those who participate in the political identity and those who remain outside it.

Here the threshold is not geographic. It is symbolic. The red cap functions as a particularly efficient marker. Wearing it makes political belonging visible.

The object establishes a semiotic passage:

INDIVIDUAL

↓

ACQUISITION / DISPLAY OF SIGN

↓

VISIBLE POLITICAL AFFILIATION

↓

MEMBER OF SYMBOLIC COMMUNITY

The material object therefore operates as a **threshold device**.

It allows the individual to move from relative political anonymity to explicit political legibility.

The wearer becomes recognizable.

This transformation is particularly important in a mass political movement because the community must be capable of identifying itself.

Political identity becomes stronger when it can be seen.

The cap therefore simultaneously separates and connects.

It separates:

MAGA / NON-MAGA

but connects:

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTER ↔ POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

This double function is central to political symbols. They create boundaries precisely by making belonging possible.

The sign says both:

I AM PART OF THIS

and

THIS IS DIFFERENT FROM THAT.

Political identification and political differentiation are therefore inseparable.

The threshold into the MAGA symbolic community is relatively accessible.

Unlike Trump's luxury environments in **IMG 1c**, the cap can be acquired, worn, reproduced, photographed, and displayed by ordinary supporters.

This produces an interesting contrast within the Trumpian corpus.

IMG 1c constructs **restricted material accessibility**.

IMG 1d constructs **expanded symbolic accessibility**.

The private aircraft says:

THIS SPACE IS EXCEPTIONAL.

The MAGA cap says:

THIS SYMBOLIC SPACE CAN BE YOURS.

The two images therefore organize two different relationships between leader and supporter.

Luxury preserves distance. Merchandise reduces distance. The leader possesses what the supporter may not possess materially. But the supporter can possess the sign of the political community.

The relationship can be represented as:

LEADER → EXCLUSIVE MATERIAL WORLD

while

LEADER + SUPPORTER → SHARED SYMBOLIC WORLD

This distinction helps resolve one of the apparent contradictions of Trumpian populism.

The leader can display extreme wealth without necessarily dissolving populist identification because material inequality and symbolic identification operate on different levels.

The supporter is not invited to inhabit Trump's private aircraft literally. The supporter is invited to inhabit the **value system** in which that aircraft signifies success.

Accessibility is therefore displaced from material space to symbolic space. The follower can participate in the winner's mythology without sharing the winner's possessions.

This produces what may be described as **vicarious symbolic access**. The political leader occupies the exclusive space. The supporter participates in its meaning.

The relation becomes:

HE POSSESSES SUCCESS

↓

HE EMBODIES SUCCESS

↓

I IDENTIFY WITH THE POLITICAL PROJECT REPRESENTED BY SUCCESS

The threshold between ordinary supporter and exceptional leader is not abolished. It is narratively mediated.

Distance becomes aspirational rather than necessarily alienating. This mechanism is especially important in celebrity politics.

The inaccessible world can become attractive precisely because it is inaccessible.

The spectator gains symbolic proximity through media visibility.

The aircraft is private, but its image is public.

The luxury interior is exclusive, but its representation circulates.

Mediatization therefore opens a **visual threshold** into a materially closed space. The audience sees what it cannot ordinarily inhabit.

This produces another important distinction:

PHYSICAL ACCESS ≠ SEMIOTIC ACCESS

A space can remain physically inaccessible while becoming culturally familiar through repeated representation.

The media convert exclusive space into shared imagery.

Trump's luxury environment therefore becomes part of the collective political imagination even though access to the actual environment remains restricted.

The threshold is crossed through representation.

IMG 1a presents a different type of threshold: the passage between **ordinary political temporality and exceptional event**.

The Butler assassination attempt creates a rupture.

The campaign scene suddenly crosses into a condition of physical danger.

The political leader crosses the threshold between symbolic conflict and bodily vulnerability.

The raised-fist gesture subsequently creates another transformation:

TARGET / ENDANGERED BODY

↓

THRESHOLD OF RESPONSE

↓

RESISTANT POLITICAL BODY

The gesture marks the passage. It transforms the meaning of the subject within the event.

Trump is no longer represented only as the person against whom violence was directed.

He becomes the subject who responds to danger. The threshold is therefore **actantial**.

The subject changes role. Vulnerability becomes the condition from which resilience emerges.

This transformation is one reason why the image can become iconic. It condenses a before and an after into a single visual configuration.

The image contains the memory of the attack and the sign of resistance simultaneously.

The spectator sees not simply a gesture but a **transition of status**.

Trump's political body appears to cross from threatened to resistant.

The threshold becomes visible in the body itself.

IMG 1b similarly constructs a threshold between ordinary human presence and **monumentalized leadership**.

Low-angle framing, frontality, and visual centrality elevate the political actor beyond everyday representation.

The body remains recognizably human.

The representational system moves it toward the heroic.

This can be represented as:

EMPIRICAL POLITICAL ACTOR

↓

VISUAL CODIFICATION

↓

MONUMENTAL FIGURE

The threshold here is representational. The leader does not literally become larger. The image makes him appear symbolically larger.

The passage from person to icon is therefore mediated by visual form. This is a central process in personalized politics.

Political leadership depends partly on transforming an individual biography into a recognizable public figure capable of exceeding ordinary individuality.

The person must become a **type** without ceasing to be a person.

Trump becomes:

- the winner;
- the fighter;
- the strong leader;
- the defender;
- the embodiment of MAGA.

The threshold between individual and political archetype is repeatedly crossed.

This transition is particularly important in digital communication because iconicity facilitates circulation.

The more condensed the political persona becomes, the easier it is to recognize across fragmented media contexts.

The Trumpian corpus therefore contains several distinct boundaries:

- NATIONAL BOUNDARY;
- COMMUNITY BOUNDARY;
- MATERIAL BOUNDARY;
- REPRESENTATIONAL BOUNDARY;
- ACTANTIAL BOUNDARY.

These boundaries are not equivalent. They share a common function: they organize differences and regulate transformations.

The Mileian corpus presents a different configuration. Here the threshold is frequently associated with the possibility of **breaking out of an existing order**.

IMG 2a again provides the clearest representation. The chainsaw is a threshold-producing object because it creates openings by destroying continuity. It acts upon a barrier.

The spatial operation can be schematized as:

CONTINUITY

↓

CUT

↓

DISCONTINUITY

↓

POSSIBILITY OF REORGANIZATION

The political meaning of the chainsaw therefore depends on a paradox. Destruction creates accessibility. Something must be removed so that something else becomes possible.

The threshold does not pre-exist the action. The leader **produces the threshold through rupture**.

This is markedly different from the Trumpian border guardian. Trump protects an existing or imagined boundary.

Milei creates an opening in a structure represented as excessively closed.

The two functions can be contrasted:

- **TRUMP → GUARDIAN OF THE THRESHOLD**
- **MILEI → PRODUCER OF THE BREACH**

This opposition captures an important difference between the two models of leadership.

The Trumpian subject controls access to a valued interior. The Mileian subject attacks a negatively valued enclosure. The relevant spatial object changes. For Trump, the interior is something to defend. For Milei, the institutional interior may itself be the problem.

IMG 2c makes this particularly clear.

The "casta" is represented as inhabiting a privileged political space.

Access to resources, power, institutional advantages, or decision-making appears asymmetrically distributed.

The people are positioned outside the privileged interior while bearing its costs.

The topology can therefore be represented as:

PRIVILEGED INTERIOR → CASTA

versus

EXCLUDED / BURDENED EXTERIOR → ORDINARY CITIZENS

The threshold becomes a mechanism of inequality. Those inside benefit. Those outside pay.

Political conflict therefore concerns not simply who crosses the threshold but whether the structure producing the distinction should continue to exist.

The Mileian answer, within the preferred narrative, is radical:

- THE PROBLEM IS NOT MERELY ACCESS TO THE OLD SPACE;
- THE PROBLEM IS THE OLD SPACE ITSELF.

This distinction is fundamental.

A reformist narrative might propose broader access. A disruptive narrative proposes **reconfiguration of the architecture**.

The goal is not necessarily to allow the people to become part of the caste. It is to dismantle the system that makes the caste possible.

The narrative trajectory therefore moves beyond inclusion:

EXCLUSION

↓

IDENTIFICATION OF PRIVILEGED STRUCTURE

↓

DELEGITIMATION OF STRUCTURE

↓

RUPTURE

↓

NEW CONFIGURATION

This is why the Mileian threshold cannot be understood simply as a door that must be opened.

The metaphor is stronger. The wall itself may have to be removed.

IMG 2b translates this logic into bodily performance. Milei's body repeatedly crosses thresholds of conventional political behavior.

Volume, gesture, facial expression, aggressiveness, movement, interactional decorum: the political performance becomes recognizable partly because it approaches or crosses boundaries traditionally associated with institutional self-control.

This produces an important semiotic inversion. Crossing the threshold does not necessarily discredit the actor.

Within the preferred Mileian code, it can authenticate him.

The relation becomes:

CONVENTIONAL LIMIT

↓

TRANSGRESSION

↓

DISTANCE FROM CONVENTIONAL POLITICS

↓

AUTHENTICITY

The boundary is useful because it can be violated. Without a convention, there can be no visible transgression.

The institutional norm therefore paradoxically supplies the background against which anti-institutional identity becomes legible.

Milei needs the threshold he crosses.

The political performance depends upon the spectator knowing, at least implicitly, what conventional political behavior looks like.

Only then can shouting, gestural intensity, or confrontational excess appear as rupture.

This means that disruption is relational. Nothing is disruptive in itself. It becomes disruptive **in relation to an expected norm**. The threshold marks that norm. **IMG 2d** radicalizes this process. Productive chaos continuously moves across boundaries between:

- political debate and spectacle;
- argument and provocation;
- information and entertainment;
- institutional discourse and memetic culture;
- seriousness and hyperbole;
- television performance and social media circulation.

The communicative identity becomes powerful precisely because it inhabits these thresholds. Mileian communication is not confined to one stable genre. It travels. The political speech can become a clip. The clip becomes a meme. The meme becomes political commentary. The commentary returns to television. Television generates another clip.

The sequence can be represented as:

POLITICAL EVENT

↓

MEDIA TEXT

↓

DIGITAL FRAGMENT

↓

MEME / REMIX

↓

RECIRCULATED POLITICAL SIGN

The boundaries among media forms become porous. This porosity contributes directly to productive chaos.

The political message can no longer be located entirely within one communicative space.

It exists through **crossing**. The threshold between media becomes productive.

This is particularly compatible with platformized communication, where content is constantly extracted, reformatted, captioned, shortened, recombined, and redistributed.

Milei's communicative intensity benefits from this mobility because high-intensity fragments can retain recognizability even when detached from their original contexts. The shout travels. The gesture travels. The chainsaw travels. The confrontation travels.

The threshold between original context and recirculated fragment becomes less an obstacle than a condition of visibility.

IMG 2e introduces another form of accessibility: **access to specialized knowledge**.

Economic data are potentially difficult. Technical expertise creates a boundary between expert and non-expert. The chart acts as a device for partially crossing that boundary. It translates. Simplifies. Spatializes. Selects. Compares. The audience is offered a perceptual route into technical discourse.

The process can be represented as:

COMPLEX ECONOMIC KNOWLEDGE

↓

VISUAL TRANSLATION

↓

ACCESSIBLE CONTRAST

↓

POLITICAL INTERPRETATION

The graph therefore operates as an **epistemic threshold**.

It mediates between specialized knowledge and ordinary political understanding.

This is particularly significant for Milei because his political identity combines anti-establishment disruption with economic expertise.

The expert must be different enough from the ordinary receiver to possess special competence.

But the expert must also make that competence accessible enough to become politically persuasive.

Again, distance and proximity must coexist.

The technical threshold cannot disappear completely.

If everyone already possesses the same expertise, the leader loses epistemic exceptionality.

But if the threshold is completely impermeable, the audience cannot follow the argument.

The political communication therefore constructs **controlled epistemic accessibility**.

The leader knows more. The audience is shown enough to recognize the conclusion.

This structure can be represented as:

ASYMMETRY OF KNOWLEDGE

but

SHARED ACCESS TO INTERPRETATION

Milei remains the economist. The audience becomes competent enough to see what he presents as the central evidence. The graph thus performs a bridging function.

This is structurally comparable to the MAGA cap, although the semantic domains are entirely different.

The cap provides access to **collective identity**. The graph provides access to **economic interpretation**.

Both are semiotic mediators. One allows the subject to enter a political community. The other allows the subject to enter an explanatory model.

The corpus therefore reveals that accessibility is never merely spatial.

It can be:

- **TERRITORIAL;**
- **SOCIAL;**
- **SYMBOLIC;**
- **ECONOMIC;**
- **EPISTEMIC;**
- **MEDIAL;**
- **AFFECTIVE.**

Political communication continually regulates these different forms of access.

Who may belong? Who may speak? Who can understand? Who can cross? Who can enter? Who must remain outside? Who possesses the competence to open or close the threshold?

These questions concern power. The subject who controls a threshold controls transformation. This leads to an important distinction between Trump and Milei.

Trump's dominant competence is frequently represented as the power to **regulate thresholds**.

Milei's as the power to **transgress or reconstruct thresholds**.

The opposition can be schematized as:

TRUMP

BOUNDARY

↓

CONTROL

↓

SECURITY

↓

IDENTITY

MILEI

BOUNDARY

↓

TRANSGRESSION

↓

RUPTURE

↓

LIBERATION

The same semiotic object — the boundary — therefore receives opposite axiological investments.

Trump's ideal boundary is often strong. Milei's negatively valorized boundary is often restrictive.

Trumpian weakness can appear as excessive permeability. Mileian oppression can appear as excessive closure.

The two political projects consequently imagine disorder differently.

For Trump:

DISORDER = FAILURE TO MAINTAIN THE CORRECT BOUNDARIES

For Milei:

DISORDER = PRODUCT OF A SYSTEM

WHOSE BOUNDARIES PREVENT NECESSARY TRANSFORMATION

The solution follows from the diagnosis. Trump strengthens. Milei cuts. Trump regulates movement. Milei generates movement. Trump restores differentiation. Milei breaks inherited configurations.

This opposition also has a temporal dimension. A boundary preserves continuity. A breach produces discontinuity.

Trump's restorative narrative requires the reactivation of a valued continuity between past greatness and future greatness.

Milei's disruptive narrative requires the interruption of continuity between the old political-economic order and the desired future.

Spatial and temporal structures therefore converge:

TRUMP

BOUNDARY → CONTINUITY → RESTORATION

MILEI

BREACH → DISCONTINUITY → REFOUNDATION

This convergence demonstrates that spatialization cannot be isolated from the other analytical levels.

The boundary is spatial. But it also organizes narrative.

The border can generate fear. The political enclosure can generate anger.

The protected interior can produce belonging. The broken barrier can produce liberation.

The threshold therefore becomes a **crossroads of semiotic dimensions**.

The corpus also demonstrates that political accessibility is deeply affected by digital platforms.

Platform communication appears to reduce certain thresholds.

A citizen can apparently encounter the leader directly.

A political image can circulate without passing through traditional editorial institutions.

A supporter can comment. Share. Remix. Respond. Produce derivative content.

This creates an apparent movement from:

VERTICAL COMMUNICATION

toward

DISTRIBUTED PARTICIPATION.

This apparent openness should not be confused with the disappearance of boundaries.

Platforms create their own thresholds. Algorithmic selection determines visibility. Account architecture determines access. Moderation determines what remains available. Technical affordances determine possible forms of interaction. Attention determines which content becomes socially relevant. Digital political communication therefore does not abolish thresholds.

It **reconfigures them**. The traditional gatekeeper may become less visible. The algorithmic gatekeeper becomes more important. The editorial threshold may weaken. The platform threshold strengthens.

This produces another paradox:

APPARENT DISINTERMEDIATION

coexists with

INTENSIFIED TECHNICAL MEDIATION.

The user may experience communication as direct while encountering a political message through a highly structured technological environment.

This matters particularly for Trump and Milei because their communicative effectiveness depends substantially on circulation.

The symbolic threshold between leader and supporter appears narrow.

The technological threshold determining whether the content reaches the supporter remains largely invisible.

Political accessibility is therefore partly an **effect of interface**.

The leader seems near. The infrastructure disappears.

The distance between public figure and ordinary user appears reduced because both occupy the same screen.

A presidential candidate's post may appear immediately above a friend's photograph or below an entertainment video.

Different social scales are flattened into the same interface.

This creates a remarkable spatial transformation:

INSTITUTIONAL DISTANCE

↓

INTERFACE PROXIMITY

The political leader enters the everyday communicative environment. This proximity is not physical. It is semiotic and interface-based. It can contribute to perceptions of intimacy, immediacy, and directness.

Trump's slogans and Milei's confrontational fragments can therefore inhabit the same digital spaces as ordinary interpersonal communication.

Political discourse crosses the threshold into everyday life. This is one of the most consequential spatial effects of platformization.

The distinction between political space and ordinary space becomes porous. The rally enters the smartphone. The debate enters the feed. The chainsaw enters the meme.

The MAGA cap enters the profile photograph. The inflation graph enters the repost.

The political scene is no longer somewhere else. It is **embedded within everyday media routines**.

This embeddedness increases the importance of symbolic condensation.

A political sign must survive movement across thresholds.

It must remain recognizable after reduction. After cropping. After captioning. After reposting. After being removed from the original speech. After becoming a meme. The most effective signs possess what might be called **trans-contextual recognizability**.

The MAGA cap has it. The raised fist can acquire it. The chainsaw has it. Milei's distinctive bodily performance can acquire it.

These signs can cross communicative thresholds while preserving a relatively stable connection to the leader's political identity.

This capacity helps explain why objects and gestures occupy such a central position in the corpus.

They are highly portable. Their semiotic density allows them to travel.

The boundary between one media context and another therefore becomes less threatening to meaning when the sign is strongly recognizable.

The sign becomes a kind of **semiotic passport**. It crosses platforms while carrying political identity with it.

This process also produces transformations. No crossing is completely neutral. A sign entering a new context may acquire irony.

Criticism, admiration, parody, fear, commercial value, historical significance: the threshold therefore creates both continuity and mutation.

The sign remains recognizable enough to travel but open enough to be reinterpreted.

This dual capacity is fundamental to digital political symbolism. Too much stability prevents adaptation. Too much instability destroys recognizability. Successful political signs often operate between the two.

They maintain a recognizable core while permitting contextual variation. The corpus thus reveals a final important dimension of the threshold: **it is a site of negotiation**.

The political boundary may be defended, broken, crossed, reconstructed, parodied, reframed. The threshold is where categories encounter one another and where their distinction must be continually reproduced.

Trumpian political communication tends to derive legitimacy from the capacity to determine and protect boundaries: between nation and external threat, authentic people and hostile actors, success and failure, strength and weakness.

Mileian communication tends to derive legitimacy from the capacity to expose and violate boundaries represented as illegitimate: between citizens and privileged caste, ordinary experience and economic expertise, conventional political decorum and disruptive authenticity, institutional continuity and libertarian refoundation.

The comparative opposition can therefore be summarized as:

TRUMP → POLITICS OF THE GUARDED THRESHOLD

MILEI → POLITICS OF THE BREACHED THRESHOLD

This formulation does not imply that Trump always closes or that Milei always opens. Rather, it identifies the dominant semiotic function attributed to boundaries within the selected corpus.

For Trump, legitimate political order depends substantially on the ability to **re-establish distinctions represented as endangered**.

For Milei, legitimate political transformation depends substantially on the ability to **destroy distinctions and constraints represented as protecting an illegitimate order**.

Both models consequently transform accessibility into a question of power.

Who has the right to enter? Who has the right to exclude? Who can cross? Who can cut? Who can redefine the line? Who decides where the political community begins and ends?

These questions demonstrate that boundaries are never merely located at the edges of political space. They are among the mechanisms through which that space becomes politically meaningful in the first place.

Ultimately, the analysis of thresholds confirms the broader opposition running through the corpus.

Trump's restorative leadership seeks to recover a political world by making its boundaries visible, meaningful, and defensible. **Milei's disruptive leadership** seeks to produce a new political world by rendering inherited boundaries contestable, penetrable, and, when necessary, destructible.

The threshold thus becomes the point at which spatial organization turns into political action: for Trump, predominantly through **protection and controlled access**; for Milei, predominantly through **transgression and transformative rupture**.

6.4. CENTER, MARGINS, AND REGIMES OF VISIBILITY

The spatial organization of the corpus also depends on a fundamental distinction between **center and margin**. This opposition concerns not only the physical position of actors within individual images, but the broader distribution of political visibility through which some subjects become hyper-visible, recognizable, and narratively decisive, while others remain peripheral, generalized, or represented primarily through the functions assigned to them by the political discourse.

Visibility is therefore not simply a technical condition of representation. It is a political resource. To occupy the center means to attract attention. To attract attention means to acquire interpretive importance. To acquire interpretive importance means to become increasingly capable of organizing the meaning of the surrounding scene. The relation can consequently be represented as:

CENTER

↓

VISIBILITY

↓

RECOGNIZABILITY

↓

NARRATIVE IMPORTANCE

↓

POLITICAL CENTRALITY

This sequence is particularly significant in highly personalized political communication.

The leader becomes powerful not only because he holds institutional authority or communicates particular ideas, but because the political field is repeatedly organized around his presence.

Events become events involving the leader. Conflicts become conflicts with the leader. Political communities become communities identified through the leader. Opponents become meaningful partly through their relation to the leader.

The result is a process of **semiotic centralization**. The political world increasingly acquires coherence through a privileged protagonist.

Both Trump and Milei demonstrate this process, although they construct centrality through different aesthetic and performative mechanisms.

Trumpian centrality tends primarily toward **monumentalization and stabilization**.

Mileian centrality tends primarily toward **intensification and disruption**.

The distinction can initially be formulated as:

- **TRUMP → CENTER AS POSITION OF AUTHORITY,**
- **MILEI → CENTER AS SOURCE OF TRANSFORMATIVE ENERGY.**

In both cases, however, the center becomes inseparable from the political persona.

Trump's visual centrality is especially evident in **IMG 1b**.

Frontality, low-angle framing, dominant posture, and controlled occupation of the visual field contribute to a structure in which surrounding elements appear subordinated to the leader.

The image does not simply contain Trump. It establishes a hierarchy. The central figure possesses greater visual weight than the surrounding environment.

This can occur through several mutually reinforcing devices:

- scale;
- orientation;
- contrast;
- framing;
- bodily posture;
- position relative to other figures;
- direction of attention.

The resulting image produces an effect of **visual sovereignty**.

Trump appears not merely visible but difficult to displace from the center. This distinction is important because visibility and centrality are not identical.

A peripheral actor may be highly visible. A central actor, however, tends to organize the relations among visible elements.

Trump's position therefore functions structurally. The scene is read outward from him.

This can be represented as:

TRUMP

↓

SPACE

↓

OTHER ACTORS

rather than:

SPACE → MULTIPLE ACTORS → TRUMP AS ONE AMONG THEM

The leader becomes the principal coordinate of interpretation. This visual organization corresponds closely to the personalization reconstructed at the narrative level.

If Trump is the subject capable of restoring greatness, the image can anticipate this function by organizing the political world around him before the transformation has occurred.

Centrality becomes a kind of **visual competence**. The leader appears already capable of holding the center. He does not need to acquire authority exclusively through argument. The image gives authority spatial form.

This mechanism is also closely related to the construction of charisma. Charismatic leadership depends partly upon a perceived asymmetry between ordinary actors and the exceptional subject.

Visual centralization creates such asymmetry. The leader is recognizable because he is differentiated. Differentiation produces distinction. Distinction can support exceptionalization.

The movement becomes:

CENTRALITY → DISTINCTION → EXCEPTIONALITY

This does not automatically produce admiration. The same centrality may be criticized as narcissism, authoritarian symbolism, or spectacular personalization. Within the preferred Trumpian reading, it contributes to the representation of a leader capable of dominating the scene.

IMG 1a transforms this centrality dynamically. The assassination attempt initially produces a situation in which the political subject could disappear behind the event. Violence becomes the center of attention. Security agents intervene. The campaign event is disrupted.

For a brief moment, the leader is not simply the organizing center of the political spectacle but the object of an uncontrollable occurrence. The raised-fist gesture produces a rapid **reconquest of visibility**.

The body emerges. The arm rises. The recognizable figure reappears. The attention of cameras and spectators is redirected toward Trump. The center is reconstructed. This is one of the reasons why the image possesses such strong symbolic potential. The gesture does not only signify resistance. It performs a return to centrality.

The sequence can be represented as:

LEADER AT CENTER

↓

DISRUPTIVE EVENT

↓

TEMPORARY LOSS OF CONTROL

↓

VISIBLE RE-EMERGENCE

↓

RECONQUEST OF CENTER

The political meaning of resistance therefore has a spatial dimension.

To resist is also to **remain visible despite the event that threatened to remove the subject from the scene**.

The political body refuses disappearance. Centrality is preserved through bodily reassertion. This mechanism is particularly compatible with Trump's restorative ethos.

A disrupted situation is reorganized around a stable protagonist. The center survives the disruption.

The image therefore condenses a broader political promise:

THE WORLD MAY BECOME UNSTABLE, BUT THE LEADER WILL REMAIN.

Centrality becomes a metaphor for resilience.

IMG 1c introduces a different type of center: the leader as focal point of a **material universe of success**. Airplanes, gilded interiors, luxury environments, and symbols of wealth possess their own visual force. They ultimately refer back to Trump.

The environment becomes meaningful as an extension of the subject. The center may therefore operate even when the leader's body does not dominate the entire composition. Trump remains the **semantic center**.

The aircraft matters because it is associated with Trump. The gilded interior matters because it signifies his lifestyle. The wealth matters because it participates in his biography.

This allows us to distinguish between:

VISUAL CENTER

and

SEMANTIC CENTER.

The **visual center** concerns the physical organization of the image. The **semantic center** concerns the element around which interpretation is organized. Trump's corpus repeatedly aligns the two, but they need not coincide.

IMG 1c demonstrates that an object can occupy substantial visual space while remaining subordinate to the political persona at the level of meaning. This produces a particularly powerful form of personalization. Material objects cease to be autonomous.

They become **satellites of the leader's identity**.

The relation can be represented as:

- **AIRPLANE → TRUMP**
- **GOLD → TRUMP**
- **WEALTH → TRUMP**
- **SUCCESS → TRUMP**

The political persona becomes a point of semantic convergence. This convergence helps stabilize identity across heterogeneous images. Even when the scene changes, meaning returns to the same central subject.

IMG 1d expands centrality from the individual leader toward a **collective symbolic center**.

The MAGA universe demonstrates that a political movement requires not only a central leader but also a repertoire capable of reproducing that center throughout the community.

The red cap is especially important because it creates multiple points of visibility while maintaining a single symbolic orientation. Each supporter wearing the cap becomes visually distinct. Each distinction refers to the same political center.

The apparent paradox can be represented as:

MULTIPLICATION OF SIGNS

but

CENTRALIZATION OF MEANING.

Thousands of caps do not fragment the political identity. They reproduce it. The leader's symbolic universe becomes distributed across many bodies. The political center therefore acquires a **networked form**. This is a crucial transformation. Traditional centrality might imply that all signs converge physically upon one figure. Platformized political centrality can operate differently. The sign can be distributed while the reference remains centralized.

The relation becomes:

ONE LEADER

↓

ONE SYMBOLIC UNIVERSE

↓

MANY SUPPORTERS

↓

MANY REPRODUCTIONS

↓

REINFORCED CENTRALITY OF THE SAME POLITICAL IDENTITY

Distribution therefore does not necessarily reduce personalization. It can strengthen it. The more bodies reproduce MAGA, the more Trump's symbolic centrality becomes socially visible.

This creates a structure of **distributed centrism**: the political sign appears everywhere while continuously pointing back toward the same leadership identity.

IMG 1e constructs the margin differently. The fake anti-immigration imagery represents alterity as a subject located outside the normative center of the political community.

The relevant distinction is not only spatial but cultural and axiological. The threatening other becomes peripheral to legitimate belonging.

The political topology can therefore be represented as:

CENTER → AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

MARGIN → ALTERITY

The margin is not neutral. It is evaluated. Distance from the center can become distance from legitimacy. This mechanism illustrates how political discourse can transform social difference into **hierarchical difference**.

The center becomes normative. The margin becomes problematic. The immigrant represented through threatening imagery occupies not merely an external location but a position outside the values attributed to the legitimate community.

The marginal subject can therefore become hyper-visible while remaining politically peripheral. This apparent contradiction is important. Marginality does not mean invisibility. Indeed, an antagonist may become extremely visible precisely because the political narrative requires a recognizable threat.

We should therefore distinguish between:

VISUAL VISIBILITY

and

NORMATIVE CENTRALITY.

An antagonist can be visually prominent while normatively excluded.

IMG 1e demonstrates this clearly. The threatening other becomes visible enough to generate fear or conflict but is not granted the same complexity or legitimacy as the central political subject.

The leader is individualized. The antagonist is frequently typified. This difference produces an asymmetrical regime of visibility.

Trump possesses:

- name;
- biography;
- history;
- voice;
- intentionality;
- multiple roles.

The represented other may be reduced to:

- category;
- threat;
- behavior;
- symbolic function.

The political center is therefore **semantically rich**.

The margin is often **semantically compressed**.

This asymmetry contributes to the narrative effectiveness of polarization. The audience knows whom to identify with and whom to fear. The central subject becomes complex enough to sustain long-term attachment. The marginal antagonist becomes simplified enough to sustain rapid recognition.

The Mileian corpus reproduces the distinction between center and margin but reorganizes its values.

Milei's centrality is not primarily produced through monumental stability.

It emerges through the capacity to become the **source of movement, confrontation, and interpretive intensity**.

IMG 2b provides a clear example. Milei's body becomes the center because it generates attention. Gestures expand outward. Facial expression produces intensity. Shouting commands auditory and visual space. The center is therefore not simply occupied. It is **activated**. The leader appears as a point from which communicative energy radiates.

The spatial relation can be represented as:

MILEI

↓

GESTURE / VOICE / INTENSITY

↓

SURROUNDING SPACE

↓

REACTION

The center produces effects. This is different from the more static gravitational logic characteristic of Trumpian monumentalization.

Trump's center attracts. Milei's center projects.

The opposition can be formulated as:

- **TRUMP → CENTRIPETAL CENTRALITY**
- **MILEI → CENTRIFUGAL CENTRALITY**

Trump's political space tends to converge upon the leader.

Milei's tends to be activated outward from him. This distinction corresponds closely to their respective political programs. The restorative leader must appear capable of organizing. The disruptive leader must appear capable of destabilizing.

The spatial organization therefore anticipates political transformation. **IMG 2a** makes this outward movement materially explicit. The chainsaw is directed toward something. Its meaning requires an object upon which action will be performed. The political center is thus inherently relational. Milei becomes central because he possesses the instrument capable of acting upon the surrounding system.

The relation is:

CENTER → TOOL → TARGET

The political protagonist therefore does not remain self-contained. His centrality is meaningful only through **intervention upon what lies beyond him**. This is a crucial feature of disruptive leadership. The center exists in order to produce a breach. The leader becomes the origin of a transformative vector.

Where Trumpian centrality often signifies:

LOOK AT THE SUBJECT WHO CAN CONTROL

Mileian centrality more often signifies:

LOOK AT THE SUBJECT WHO CAN ACT UPON THE SYSTEM.

IMG 2c constructs the corresponding margin through the "casta". Here the center/margin relation becomes paradoxical.

Institutionally, the "casta" may occupy the center of political power. Narratively, however, Milei attempts to **decenter it morally**. The political system is represented as formally central but normatively illegitimate.

This creates a reversal:

INSTITUTIONAL CENTER ≠ LEGITIMATE CENTER

The established political class occupies institution, but Milei claims authentic political centrality through opposition to them.

The struggle therefore concerns **who has the right to define the center**. This is one of the most significant spatial differences between Trumpian and Mileian populism.

Trump frequently seeks to identify the authentic nation with a center that must be recovered.

Milei seeks to displace an existing institutional center and replace its value system.

The Mileian narrative can therefore be represented as:

OLD CENTER → CASTA / SYSTEM

↓

DELEGITIMATION

↓

MARGINAL / OUTSIDER ACTOR

↓

MOBILIZATION

↓

NEW CENTER

The outsider seeks centrality by denying the legitimacy of those already occupying it. This produces a political movement from margin to center. The transformation is fundamental to outsider politics.

Milei's original legitimacy is partly connected to symbolic marginality relative to conventional professional politics. Electoral success moves him toward the institutional center.

The challenge is therefore to **occupy the center without losing the symbolic value of marginality**. This apparent contradiction can be managed through continuing antagonism.

Milei may occupy the presidency while representing himself as opposed to the broader institutional system. He becomes:

CENTRAL IN POWER

but

MARGINAL IN RELATION TO THE OLD POLITICAL CODE.

This is possible because center and margin operate on different axes:

- institutional center;
- cultural margin;
- political center;
- stylistic margin;
- executive center;
- anti-caste exteriority.

The subject can occupy several positions simultaneously. The political persona therefore becomes topologically complex.

Milei can claim:

I HAVE ENTERED THE CENTER TO DESTROY THE OLD CENTER FROM WITHIN.

This structure is strongly compatible with disruptive populism. The outsider does not normalize upon gaining power. He seeks to convert institutional occupation into an instrument of continued rupture.

IMG 2d reinforces this position. Productive chaos constructs communicative centrality through **controversy**. The leader becomes visible because communication repeatedly moves toward him.

A provocative statement generates reactions. Reactions produce coverage. Coverage produces circulation. Circulation generates new reactions. The political subject becomes a center of communicative gravity through conflict.

The sequence is:

PROVOCATION

↓

REACTION

↓

ATTENTION

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

RENEWED CENTRALITY

This mechanism is particularly important in platformized environments because attention can function as a scarce political resource. The leader who continually generates reactions occupies increasing portions of public visibility.

The centrality is therefore not only spatial or symbolic. It is **attentional**. Milei becomes central because other actors must respond to him. This creates a paradoxical relation with opponents.

Opponents may seek to discredit him. Their responses can increase his visibility. The margin reacts to the center—or, alternatively, the established center reacts to the disruptive challenger—and through reaction contributes to the challenger's centrality. The exact spatial metaphor may change according to the stage of the political trajectory.

Before power:

MARGINAL DISRUPTOR → ATTACKS CENTER

After power:

DISRUPTOR AT INSTITUTIONAL CENTER → CONTINUES TO ATTACK OTHER CENTERS

What remains stable is not position but **conflictual relationality**. Milei's identity requires an adversarial spatial arrangement. The political subject is defined by what he is against.

IMG 2e introduces a further type of centrality: **epistemic centrality**. The graph and economic indicators construct a political scene in which reality appears to require interpretation.

Milei positions himself as the subject capable of supplying that interpretation. The center therefore concerns not physical location but **authority over meaning**.

The relation becomes:

ECONOMIC DATA

↓

INTERPRETIVE PROBLEM

↓

MILEI AS EXPLANATORY CENTER

↓

POLITICAL DIAGNOSIS

The subject becomes central because he claims to organize otherwise dispersed information. This is an important form of political power.

The leader does not merely occupy the scene. He supplies the categories through which the scene becomes intelligible.

Economic complexity is brought toward an interpretive center. Inflation is explained. Previous political management is evaluated. Libertarian reform is legitimized.

The centrality of the subject therefore becomes epistemic:

HE KNOWS WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN.

This role complements the disruptive centrality of **IMG 2a**, **IMG 2b**, and **IMG 2d**.

Milei's political persona can simultaneously occupy:

- AFFECTIVE CENTER (the leader **feels**);
- PERFORMATIVE CENTER (the leader **acts**);
- ANTAGONISTIC CENTER (the leader **fights**);
- EPISTEMIC CENTER (the leader **explains**).

The combination is powerful because different dimensions of political authority converge upon the same individual. Centrality therefore becomes multidimensional. The comparative analysis shows that both Trump and Milei construct forms of **hypervisibility**, but the aesthetic regimes differ.

Trumpian hypervisibility is closely associated with:

- monumentality;
- stable symbolic repetition;
- celebrity culture;
- patriotic iconography;
- centralized leadership;
- recognizable objects.

Mileian hypervisibility is closely associated with:

- excess;
- provocation;
- bodily intensity;
- symbolic rupture;
- controversy;
- accelerated media circulation.

The distinction can be summarized as:

TRUMP

BE VISIBLE BY BECOMING MONUMENTAL AND RECOGNIZABLE.

MILEI

BE VISIBLE BY BECOMING DISRUPTIVE AND DIFFICULT TO IGNORE.

Both strategies solve the same basic problem of contemporary political communication:

HOW DOES A POLITICAL SUBJECT REMAIN VISIBLE WITHIN

AN ENVIRONMENT OF CONSTANT COMPETITION FOR ATTENTION?

The answer is not simply “appear more often”. Visibility requires a **recognizable form**.

Repeated exposure without identity may generate little symbolic accumulation.

The leader must be identifiable across different appearances.

Trump achieves this through a highly stabilized repertoire:

- MAGA;
- the red cap;
- flags;
- the fist;
- luxury;
- centrality;
- characteristic gestures.

Milei achieves it through another repertoire;

- chainsaw;

- hair;
- anger;
- shouting;
- anti-caste confrontation;
- economic graphs;
- productive chaos.

The signs differ, but the function is comparable. Each appearance can reactivate the larger political persona. Visibility therefore becomes cumulative.

The process can be represented as:

FIRST APPEARANCE → RECOGNITION

↓

REPETITION → STABILIZATION

↓

STABILIZATION → RAPID IDENTIFICATION

↓

RAPID IDENTIFICATION → STRONGER POLITICAL PRESENCE

The leader becomes easier to recognize even under conditions of fragmentation. This is particularly important in social media feeds, where content competes for attention at high speed.

A recognizable sign can interrupt scrolling. The user may identify the political universe before reading the accompanying text. Political visibility therefore depends increasingly upon **pre-discursive recognizability**.

This does not mean meaning exists before discourse. It means that previous discourse has stabilized signs sufficiently for subsequent encounters to activate them almost instantaneously.

The political persona becomes visually **pre-coded**. The spectator already knows what kind of meanings may follow. This process also creates strong relations between visibility and memory.

What is repeatedly visible becomes easier to remember. What is easier to remember becomes easier to mobilize in subsequent interpretation. The political sign therefore acquires mnemonic power.

The red cap becomes memory of MAGA. The fist becomes memory of resistance. The chainsaw becomes memory of rupture. The graph becomes memory of Milei's economist identity.

Visibility contributes to the construction of **political memory**. This is especially important because political communication does not operate only in the immediate present.

Each new text enters a history of previous representations. The audience sees the current image through the memory of earlier ones. The leader's identity is therefore cumulative and intertextual.

Trump's latest dominant posture can be interpreted through previous dominant postures. Milei's latest confrontation can be interpreted through previous confrontations. The sign carries a history. This cumulative memory also contributes to credibility: a single gesture may appear accidental, a repeated pattern appears characteristic.

The movement becomes:

EVENT → REPETITION → TRAIT → ETHOS

Centrality is thus stabilized temporally as well as spatially. The leader becomes the center because he repeatedly returns to it.

The corpus also reveals a significant asymmetry between the visibility of leaders and the visibility of collective actors. Trump and Milei are highly individualized. Their supporters are more often presented through crowds, categories, symbols, or generalized social positions.

This produces:

VISIBLE INDIVIDUAL LEADER

versus

COLLECTIVE / DISTRIBUTED PEOPLE.

The asymmetry concentrates agency. The public appears plural. The transformative subject appears singular. This structure strengthens personalization because the leader becomes the principal face through which the collective project is represented: the people provide numerical or symbolic legitimacy, the leader provides individuality.

The relation can be represented as:

MANY → ONE

and simultaneously:

ONE → MANY.

Many supporters legitimate one leader. One leader represents many supporters. This circular relation is particularly evident in populist communication.

The crowd says:

HE REPRESENTS US.

The leader says:

I REPRESENT YOU.

Each claim reinforces the other. Political visibility therefore becomes a mechanism connecting individual and collective. The same asymmetry affects antagonists.

Opponents can be either strongly individualized or radically collectivized. An electoral adversary may be given a face. But broader antagonistic categories —immigrants, establishment, media, caste— can become relatively anonymous.

This creates a potentially powerful political asymmetry:

OUR LEADER HAS A FACE.

THEIR SYSTEM HAS A CATEGORY.

The individualized protagonist facilitates emotional attachment. The generalized antagonist facilitates expansive blame.

The antagonist can absorb multiple actors. This does not mean opponents never become individualized. Rather, the corpus demonstrates how collective categories provide flexibility to antagonistic narratives.

The category can survive the disappearance of a particular adversary. The “casta” remains even when individual politicians change. The threatening outsider remains even when one specific image is debunked.

The political margin is therefore **replaceable**. The center remains comparatively stable. This difference contributes to the durability of personalized antagonistic communication.

A stable protagonist confronts a rotating series of opponents. The narrative can continue indefinitely. Visibility thus participates in political seriality. Each new antagonist generates another episode.

The leader returns. The conflict changes. The central identity remains.

Digital platforms amplify this structure because they create a political environment characterized by **continuous visibility rather than episodic visibility**.

Traditional electoral campaigns certainly sought media attention, but platform communication allows the leader to remain present between major events.

A post, a controversy, a short video, a repost, a meme, a reaction, a graph, a photograph: each becomes another unit of political presence. The leader can therefore occupy public attention through a **continuous sequence of micro-events**.

This changes the relation between center and margin. Centrality no longer depends exclusively on controlling major institutional stages. It also depends on the capacity to repeatedly enter everyday attention.

The feed becomes a space in which political hierarchy is constantly reconstructed. What appears first? What appears repeatedly? What generates engagement? What becomes a trend? What is reposted?

These are not simply technical questions. They influence **attentional centrality**.

Political visibility becomes partly algorithmically mediated. The spatial metaphor of the center therefore expands.

There is:

- the center of the photograph;
- the center of the rally;
- the center of the narrative;
- the center of controversy;
- the center of the feed;
- the center of collective attention.

These centers do not always coincide. Successful platformized leadership attempts to connect them. The iconic photograph moves the bodily center into the attentional center. The viral symbol moves the campaign center into the feed. The controversy moves the antagonistic center into media coverage. The leader's political presence becomes a process of **cross-spatial centralization**.

Trump and Milei demonstrate different ways of achieving this:

- **Trump** relies heavily on a repertoire whose recognizability is stabilized through repetition;
- **Milei** relies heavily on performances whose intensity generates reaction.

One accumulates centrality through **iconic recurrence**. The other through **disruptive recurrence**. Both require the continuous reproduction of difference.

If Trump ceased to appear recognizably Trumpian, the symbolic system would weaken.

If Milei ceased to appear disruptively Mileian, the anti-system system of recognition could weaken.

Political visibility therefore produces a paradoxical demand:

CHANGE EVENTS, PRESERVE IDENTITY.

The content must remain new enough to attract attention. The persona must remain stable enough to be recognized. This tension is fundamental to mediatized political leadership.

The corpus demonstrates how the solution can be achieved through recurring forms:

- new event, same fist logic;
- new rally, same dominance;
- new controversy, same MAGA world;
- new confrontation, same anger;
- new economic moment, same graph-based expertise;
- new institutional conflict, same anti-caste rupture.

The political identity becomes a **generative template** capable of incorporating new events. This helps explain why the center is more than a static position. It is a mechanism for **absorbing novelty**.

Events enter the political universe and are reorganized around the leader. The leader's identity provides continuity.

This process is particularly visible in **IMG 1a**. The assassination attempt was not part of a predictable campaign script. Its visual aftermath could rapidly be integrated into the pre-existing ethos of strength. The event becomes Trumpian.

The same structural capacity is visible in Mileian productive chaos. New controversies can continually enter an already recognizable disruptive style. The content changes. The operation remains.

This ability to transform unexpected events into confirmation of identity is one of the strongest forms of symbolic centrality.

The leader becomes the interpretive center even of circumstances he did not create. The comparison between center and margin also reveals different relationships with **normality**.

Trump's center tends to construct itself as the center of the **authentic nation**.

The political claim is not merely:

I AM CENTRAL.

It is:

WHAT I REPRESENT SHOULD BE CENTRAL.

MAGA therefore seeks to reposition a particular representation of America as the normative national center.

The margin contains those represented as having displaced, threatened, or abandoned that authentic center. Trumpian restoration can consequently be interpreted as a project of **normative recentering**.

Milei's relation to normality is almost inverse. His political identity initially gains strength by occupying the position of **deviance from conventional politics**.

The anti-system subject becomes valuable because he is not normal according to the established political code. The political project therefore begins by valorizing marginality. But this marginality seeks institutional power.

The disruptive subject wants to make what was peripheral into a **new center**.

The Mileian transformation can therefore be expressed as:

OLD NORMALITY → DELEGITIMATION

↓

DISRUPTIVE MARGIN → LEGITIMATION

↓

MARGIN ENTERS CENTER

↓

NEW NORMALITY

This movement reveals the intrinsically unstable nature of disruptive leadership.

Successful disruption creates the conditions for its own institutionalization. What was anti-system can become system. What was marginal can become central. What was transgressive can become normalized.

The leader must therefore continually regenerate signs of exteriority if disruption remains essential to identity. Productive chaos performs precisely this function. It prevents complete normalization.

The style continues to signal:

I MAY OCCUPY THE CENTER, BUT I HAVE NOT BECOME THE OLD CENTER.

This distinction becomes one of the most significant semiotic challenges of Mileian leadership.

Trump faces a different challenge. Because his project is restorative, centrality itself is positively valorized. Occupying executive power can therefore appear compatible with his self-representation as the subject who restores legitimate order. His anti-establishment dimension still requires the persistence of hostile centers elsewhere. Thus both leaders can occupy institutional centrality while continuing to construct **alternative centers of antagonistic power**.

Political space becomes polycentric, the leader says:

I AM THE LEGITIMATE CENTER.

while opponents are represented as:

ILLEGITIMATE CENTERS OF POWER.

This is important because populist politics does not always oppose center and margin in a simple way. It may instead involve a struggle among **competing claims to centrality**.

Who truly represents the people? Who truly interprets reality? Who legitimately occupies the institutional center? Who has captured it? Who should be displaced?

The center therefore becomes an object of political conflict.

The Trumpian answer is restorative:

RETURN THE CENTER TO THE AUTHENTIC NATION.

The Mileian answer is disruptive:

DESTROY OLD CENTER AND RECONSTRUCT THE SYSTEM AROUND DIFFERENT VALUES.

The distinction returns us to the fundamental opposition organizing the corpus. The analysis of visibility adds a further dimension: the struggle over political order is also a struggle over who and what deserves to be seen as central.

The visual and digital environment makes this struggle immediately perceptible.

Trump's body becomes central. Milei's body becomes central. Their symbolic objects become central. Their antagonists become visible through relation to them. Their supporters become recognizable through signs associated with them. Political communication consequently produces a hierarchy of attention. This hierarchy can affect what appears politically real.

An issue that becomes highly visible may appear more socially central. A leader who dominates media attention may appear more politically consequential. A controversy that circulates widely can appear representative of a broader reality.

Visibility therefore produces a potential **metonymic effect**:

WHAT IS MOST VISIBLE → APPEARS TO REPRESENT THE WHOLE.

This mechanism requires particular caution. The most visible political phenomenon is not necessarily the most widespread. The most viral image is not necessarily the most representative.

The loudest political actor is not necessarily the majority. Platform communication can blur these distinctions because visibility provides an immediate perceptual index of importance.

The political scene can therefore be distorted by **attentional concentration**.

This is especially relevant to populist leaders whose communication relies heavily on conflict, recognizable symbols, and emotionally intense imagery.

The more efficiently these signs attract attention, the greater the possibility that the political field will be interpreted through them.

Political centrality can thus become partly self-reinforcing:

ATTENTION → VISIBILITY

↓

VISIBILITY → PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE

↓

PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE → FURTHER COVERAGE / REACTION

↓

FURTHER COVERAGE → MORE ATTENTION

This recursive mechanism is structurally compatible with both corpora. Trumpian spectacle generates coverage. Mileian disruption generates reaction. Coverage and reaction return visibility to the leader.

The political center is reproduced through circulation. The margin, meanwhile, may disappear not because it lacks social existence but because it lacks equivalent representational power.

This creates an important distinction between **social centrality and media centrality**. The corpus primarily allows analysis of the second. It shows how political actors are made central within visual and media texts. It does not by itself demonstrate that the same hierarchy exists in the broader society.

Maintaining this distinction is methodologically essential. Semiotic centrality is not statistical representativeness. A highly visible political sign may represent a minority position. A relatively invisible social group may be numerically large.

The analysis therefore concerns the **organization of visibility**, not the measurement of social prevalence. Within that organization, however, center and margin perform powerful political work.

They determine what is immediately recognizable. What is remembered. What receives a face. What becomes a category. What is represented as legitimate. What is represented as threatening. What appears to possess agency.

The comparison can therefore be summarized through two distinct regimes of centrality.

TRUMP → MONUMENTAL CENTRALITY

- The leader is constructed as a stable, dominant, and recognizable center.
- His body organizes the scene.
- His symbols organize the community.
- His wealth organizes the mythology of success.
- His antagonists are positioned relative to the national center he claims to represent.
- His visibility supports a restorative project in which legitimate order is imagined through recentering.

MILEI → DISRUPTIVE CENTRALITY

- The leader is constructed as the point from which conflict, movement, diagnosis, and transformation radiate.
- His body activates the scene.
- The chainsaw gives direction to action.
- The "casta" defines the center that must be delegitimized.
- Productive chaos generates attentional centrality.
- Economic graphs support epistemic centrality.
- His visibility supports a disruptive project in which the old center must be displaced and a different order produced.

The difference can be condensed as:

TRUMP → THE CENTER MUST BE RECOVERED AND OCCUPIED;

MILEI → THE OLD CENTER MUST BE CHALLENGED AND RECONFIGURED.

Despite this opposition, both models reveal the increasing importance of **visibility as political capital**. The contemporary leader must not simply possess a position; he must remain capable of continuously making that position visible across heterogeneous media environments.

This requirement transforms political leadership into a permanent process of **self-iconization**. The leader's body becomes recognizable. The symbolic repertoire becomes condensed. The preferred gestures become repeatable. The antagonists become legible. The community acquires visible markers. The political world becomes increasingly organized through a limited number of high-intensity signs.

The result is a significant compression of political complexity. The viewer can recognize the protagonist before understanding the event. Recognize the conflict before knowing all the actors. Recognize the ideological universe before reading the argument.

Visibility therefore becomes a shortcut to political intelligibility. This shortcut is especially effective because it operates through accumulated memory. The center has been seen before. It is recognized again. Repeated recognition produces stability. The political persona consequently begins to precede the individual text.

The viewer encounters not only Trump in an image but **Trump as already known through previous Trumpian images**.

Not only Milei in a confrontation but **Milei as already coded through previous performances of rupture**.

The center therefore carries its own interpretive history. This cumulative centrality gives personalized leadership significant semiotic resilience.

A new sign does not begin from zero. It enters a network of previous signs. It inherits their meanings. It may modify them, but it rarely escapes them entirely.

The political leader becomes increasingly difficult to separate from the symbolic system accumulated around him. In this sense, center and margin should ultimately be understood not simply as positions inside individual images but as **dynamic regimes of political visibility**. Trump and Milei construct different ways of occupying the center, but both rely on the continuous conversion of visibility into recognizability and recognizability into political identity.

Trump's center stabilizes and monumentalizes. Milei's center activates and destabilizes.

Trump's margins are predominantly constructed through distance from the authentic national community or from the restorative program.

Milei's margins are reorganized through a struggle to displace the institutional actors previously occupying the legitimate center.

In both cases, however, political space becomes a hierarchy of perceptibility in which the leader is granted the greatest degree of semiotic density.

The leader has the most recognizable body. The most coherent narrative. The most stable symbolic repertoire. The greatest capacity to absorb events. The strongest connection among values, passions, objects, and actions.

The center therefore becomes the point at which the different analytical levels of the corpus converge.

At this level, visibility is no longer merely the condition for being represented. It becomes **one of the principal mechanisms through which leadership is produced**. The political subject who repeatedly occupies the center of images, narratives, conflicts, circulation, and collective attention gradually acquires the capacity to present himself not simply as one actor within the political world, but as the privileged figure through whom that world should be interpreted.

Trump and Milei ultimately produce two contrasting versions of this same process: **Trump turns centrality into evidence of order, authority, and restorative competence; Milei turns centrality into evidence of intensity, rupture, and transformative agency.** The political center thus ceases to be only a location. It becomes an ideological and performative position from which the leader claims the right to define the crisis, identify the antagonist, represent the collective, and determine the direction of change.

6.5. COLLECTIVE SPACES AND FORMS OF BELONGING

The spatial configurations reconstructed thus far do not concern the leader alone. They also determine the ways in which **collective subjects become visible, recognizable, and capable of inhabiting the political world**. Political space is therefore not merely the setting in which the

leader displays authority or confronts opponents. It is also the environment through which supporters are invited to experience themselves as members of a community.

Belonging requires a form. A collective subject must be able to recognize itself. It requires signs through which individuals can understand their relation to others, distinguish members from non-members, and transform dispersed social subjects into a politically meaningful "we".

Space contributes directly to this process. The political collective therefore becomes perceptible through a combination of **co-presence, symbolic recurrence, spatial proximity, and mediated circulation**.

The corpus shows that Trump and Milei construct different forms of collective inhabitation.

Trump's political space is predominantly organized around **belonging, ritual affirmation, patriotic recognition, and the restoration of a shared national identity**.

Milei's is more strongly organized around **shared dissatisfaction, antagonistic alignment, mobilization, and participation in a process of rupture**.

The distinction can initially be represented as:

TRUMP → COMMUNITY AS BELONGING;

MILEI → COMMUNITY AS MOBILIZATION.

This does not mean that Trumpian politics lacks mobilization or that Mileian politics lacks belonging. Both dimensions are present in both cases. The distinction concerns the dominant semiotic logic through which the collective is spatially constructed.

In the Trumpian corpus, **IMG 1d** provides the clearest entry point into the spatial construction of community.

The MAGA symbolic universe transforms political affiliation into an environment that can be physically and visually inhabited.

The red cap, the flag, the slogan, the rally, the crowd, the repeated chromatic repertoire, the leader's recognizable body: together, these elements create a spatially dense political world.

The individual supporter enters a scene in which the same signs are reproduced across many bodies. This repetition has an important effect. It reduces the perceived distance between individual and collective.

A supporter wearing a MAGA cap sees other supporters wearing the same sign. The individual body therefore becomes simultaneously unique and serial.

The relation can be represented as:

ONE BODY + SIGN

↓

MANY BODIES + SAME SIGN

↓

RECOGNIZABLE COLLECTIVE

The political community emerges through **visual equivalence**. Bodies remain different. The symbol creates commonality. This process is especially powerful because collective identity does not need to remain abstract. It becomes materially perceptible.

The political subject can look around and see signs of belonging repeated in the surrounding environment. Political identity therefore acquires a spatial dimension of **confirmation**.

The individual thinks, in semiotic terms:

I AM HERE

and

OTHERS LIKE ME ARE HERE

and therefore

THIS COMMUNITY EXISTS.

The rally becomes a device through which symbolic belonging is converted into social presence.

This is one of the principal functions of political assembly. The crowd gives body to an otherwise dispersed collective. A movement composed of geographically distant individuals temporarily becomes one physically perceptible organism.

The space therefore produces a transition:

DISPERSED SUPPORTERS

↓

ASSEMBLY

↓

VISIBLE COLLECTIVE BODY

↓

INTENSIFIED IDENTITY

This collective body is not homogeneous in a sociological sense. Participants may possess different motivations, social positions, beliefs, and political expectations. The semiotic organization of the rally temporarily reduces those differences by foregrounding shared signs.

The relevant unity is therefore **performative rather than empirical**. The crowd performs coherence. The space produces the conditions under which that coherence can be experienced.

This distinction is important because political unity is never simply given. It must be represented.

The rally represents it through density. The cap represents it through repetition. The slogan represents it through verbal recurrence. The flag represents it through national symbolism. The leader represents it through personalization. The collective space thus emerges from the convergence of multiple semiotic systems.

Trumpian belonging is therefore strongly **ritualized**. A ritual depends upon recurrence. Repeated gestures. Repeated phrases. Repeated objects. Repeated spatial arrangements. Repeated relations between leader and audience.

The rally reproduces a recognizable structure:

LEADER AT FOCAL POINT

↓

CROWD ORIENTED TOWARD LEADER

↓

SHARED SYMBOLS

↓

CALL AND RESPONSE

↓

COLLECTIVE REAFFIRMATION

The political meeting consequently does more than communicate new information. It renews an already established relationship. Supporters do not attend merely to learn what Trump thinks. They can also attend to **experience the political community as present**.

The informational function and the ritual function therefore coexist. This is especially important for highly personalized political movements. A political program can be read individually. A collective identity must be socially experienced. The rally supplies that experience. The leader becomes the focal point through which the collective sees itself.

This can be expressed as:

THE CROWD LOOKS AT TRUMP

while simultaneously:

THE CROWD SEES ITSELF AS A CROWD AROUND TRUMP.

The second relation is crucial. The leader becomes a mirror of collective existence. His centrality allows supporters to experience their own peripheral multiplicity as part of a coherent whole.

The political community therefore depends on a spatial structure of **centralized reciprocity**. Trump needs the crowd. The crowd needs the focal leader. The crowd validates the leader numerically and visually. The leader gives the crowd symbolic unity. Neither term is sufficient alone.

The relation can be represented as:

LEADER ↔ COLLECTIVE

rather than simply:

LEADER → COLLECTIVE.

This reciprocity also explains the importance of crowd images in political communication. A photograph of supporters does not merely document attendance. It can function as evidence of:

- strength;
- momentum;
- enthusiasm;
- legitimacy;
- collective identification;
- social expansion.

The crowd becomes a **visual argument**.

Its density says:

WE ARE MANY.

Its symbolic uniformity says:

WE BELONG TOGETHER.

Its orientation toward the leader says:

WE RECOGNIZE THIS LEADERSHIP.

Political space therefore performs a veridictory function. The collective appears real because it occupies visible space.

This is particularly important in an era of digitally mediated politics because physical assembly provides a form of material confirmation that can then be circulated far beyond the original event.

The rally becomes an image. The image becomes a post. The post becomes evidence of the rally. The physical community is transformed into a **digitally reproducible collective presence**.

The sequence becomes:

CO-PRESENCE

↓

REPRESENTATION

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

REMOTE RECOGNITION

↓

EXPANDED SENSE OF COMMUNITY

A supporter who was not physically present can therefore participate symbolically in the event.

This creates a distinction between:

PHYSICAL CO-PRESENCE

and

MEDIATED CO-PRESENCE.

The first depends on sharing the same location. The second depends on sharing the same symbolic event through media.

Trumpian political space thus expands beyond the rally. The political community can be inhabited remotely. A supporter watching a rally online may recognize the same signs, respond emotionally, repost images, and participate in the interpretive community.

The distinction between “inside” and “outside” the event becomes partially permeable. The media create a second threshold. One can enter the collective experience without entering the physical venue.

This process increases the spatial reach of political ritual. The event becomes simultaneously **localized and distributed**. Localized because it occurs somewhere. Distributed because its symbolic effects circulate elsewhere.

The MAGA community can therefore be understood as a **multi-sited symbolic space**. It exists:

- in rallies;
- in campaign offices;
- on clothing;
- in social media feeds;
- in profile photographs;
- in comments;
- in images of flags;
- in memes;
- in repeated slogans.

The political community is not located in one place. It is reproduced across a network of places connected by common signs. This is a crucial characteristic of contemporary collective belonging. The group is simultaneously territorial and networked.

Trump's political space also connects belonging strongly to the **nation**. This introduces another scale. The rally is local. MAGA is distributed. "America" is national.

The political discourse connects these levels:

INDIVIDUAL BODY

↓

RALLY COMMUNITY

↓

MAGA MOVEMENT

↓

AMERICAN NATION

The supporter can therefore experience a progression of belonging. The individual is part of the crowd. The crowd is part of the movement. The movement claims to represent the nation.

This creates a powerful metonymic mechanism. A politically specific community can present itself as the authentic expression of a much larger national collective.

The transition can be represented as:

MAGA SUPPORTERS

↓

"THE PEOPLE"

↓

"AMERICA"

This movement is politically consequential because it reduces the distinction between partisan identity and national identity.

The political movement no longer appears merely as one competing part of the nation. It can present itself as the **authentic national center**.

Opponents then risk being positioned not simply as alternative political actors but as actors at a greater distance from the "real" nation.

Space therefore becomes ideological through **scaling**. A rally can symbolically stand for a movement. A movement can claim to stand for a people. A people can claim to stand for the nation.

The spatially limited scene acquires national meaning. **IMG 1e** clarifies the exclusionary side of this process. Every space of belonging also implies a boundary.

If the political community is defined through identity, an outside necessarily emerges. The threatening immigrant imagery makes the outside particularly visible.

The collective becomes more coherent because alterity is represented as external to, or potentially disruptive of, the legitimate space.

The construction of belonging therefore involves a double operation:

INCLUSION

and

EXCLUSION.

The first says:

YOU BELONG HERE.

The second says:

THEY DO NOT BELONG IN THE SAME WAY.

The two operations reinforce one another. The boundary makes membership meaningful. Membership gives the boundary value.

This does not mean that every form of national belonging necessarily requires hostility toward outsiders. The analytical claim is specifically that within the selected Trumpian corpus, **IMG 1e** demonstrates how anti-immigration imagery can contribute to a political identity organized through a strongly differentiated inside/outside relation.

The spatial community therefore becomes **protective**. Belonging is experienced not only as participation but as something exposed to possible threat.

The crowd is no longer merely together. It is together against something. This modifies the emotional structure of collective space. Patriotic pride and fear can coexist. Belonging becomes more intense because it is represented as vulnerable.

The resulting relation is:

WE BELONG

↓

WHAT WE SHARE IS VALUABLE

↓

WHAT WE SHARE IS THREATENED

↓

WE MUST DEFEND IT

Collective space becomes defensive space. This is fully coherent with Trump's restorative leadership. The leader does not merely represent the community. He becomes the subject capable of preserving the conditions under which that community can continue to exist according to its preferred self-image.

The Mileian corpus constructs collective space differently. Here belonging is less strongly organized around ritualized national continuity and more strongly around **shared dissatisfaction and antagonistic positioning**. The collective is constituted by recognizing a common obstacle.

The structure begins not with:

WE SHARE THE SAME NATIONAL SYMBOLS

but more strongly with:

WE ARE SUBJECTED TO THE SAME DYSFUNCTIONAL SYSTEM.

This is particularly evident in **IMG 2c**.

The "casta" functions as a powerful mechanism for spatially and socially organizing collective identity.

Once the political system is divided between:

CASTA

and

THOSE WHO BEAR ITS COSTS.

The second category can become a collective subject. The people are constructed through a shared relation to an antagonist.

The sequence becomes:

INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES OF DISSATISFACTION

↓

COMMON ATTRIBUTION OF CAUSE

↓

RECOGNITION OF SHARED OPPONENT

↓

FORMATION OF COLLECTIVE "WE"

This is a different route toward political community.

Trumpian belonging moves substantially from **identity toward conflict**.

Mileian belonging moves substantially from **conflict toward identity**.

The distinction can be represented as:

TRUMP

WE ARE A COMMUNITY → THEREFORE WE MUST DEFEND OURSELVES

MILEI

WE CONFRONT THE SAME SYSTEM → THEREFORE WE BECOME A COMMUNITY

Again, neither process is exclusive. They overlap. But the distinction helps clarify the dominant architecture of the two corpora.

The Mileian collective therefore possesses a strongly **antagonistic foundation**.

The “we” becomes visible because there is a “they”.

The shared object is initially negative:

- the system;
- the caste;
- inflation;
- bureaucracy;
- state inefficiency;
- political privilege.

The collective becomes organized through opposition.

This opposition is then positively reoriented toward freedom and refoundation.

The sequence can be expressed as:

WHAT WE REJECT

↓

WHO WE ARE AGAINST

↓

WHAT WE DESIRE

↓

WHO WE MAY BECOME

Political belonging therefore develops dynamically. The collective is not simply represented as possessing a finished identity. It is engaged in transformation.

This is particularly coherent with Milei's broader narrative. The people are subjects to be liberated. Their full political identity belongs partly to the future. The collective space is therefore a space of **becoming**.

Trump's community says:

WE MUST BECOME AGAIN WHAT WE AUTHENTICALLY ARE.

Milei's community says:

WE CAN BECOME SOMETHING DIFFERENT ONCE THE OLD SYSTEM IS BROKEN.

The temporal difference affects spatial belonging. Trump's community inhabits an identity that must be restored. Milei's inhabits a process that must be completed. This gives Mileian space a more pronounced **transitional character**.

The political collective does not simply gather around stable symbols. It gathers around transformative energy. **IMG 2a** makes this especially visible through the chainsaw.

The object can become a collective sign not only because it identifies Milei but because supporters can adopt its political meaning. The action represented by the chainsaw can be shared symbolically.

The leader holds the object. But the desire to "cut" the old system can become collective.

The sequence is:

LEADER PERFORMS RUPTURE

↓

SUPPORTERS RECOGNIZE RUPTURE

↓

RUPTURE BECOMES SHARED VALUE

↓

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY FORMS AROUND TRANSFORMATION

The chainsaw therefore produces a different form of community from the MAGA cap:

- the MAGA cap allows the supporter to **wear belonging**;
- the chainsaw allows the supporter to **identify with an action**.

The contrast can be summarized as:

- *MAGA CAP → "I BELONG".*
- *CHAINSAW → "I WANT THIS SYSTEM CUT".*

The first is predominantly identificatory. The second predominantly programmatic and performative.

This does not mean the chainsaw cannot become an identity symbol. It clearly can. The distinction concerns the semantic operation from which that identity derives.

The chainsaw first signifies doing. Identity is subsequently organized around that doing.

IMG 2b similarly constructs community through **affective correspondence**.

Milei's anger becomes collective when supporters interpret his emotional intensity as compatible with their own frustration.

The political space therefore produces a form of emotional co-presence even when physical co-presence is absent.

The leader is angry. The supporter recognizes the anger. The supporter identifies the object of anger. Affective alignment emerges.

The sequence becomes:

LEADER'S PASSION

↓

RECOGNITION

↓

SHARED OBJECT OF PASSION

↓

AFFECTIVE COMMUNITY

This can be described as a form of **passional belonging**. The community is united not only by ideas or symbols but by a shared emotional orientation.

The relevant political statement is:

WE FEEL THE SAME WAY ABOUT THE SAME THING.

This is particularly important in Milei's communication because anger itself becomes legitimating. The intensity of the leader can authorize intensity in the public. The community therefore forms around a shared permission to reject restraint.

Affective excess ceases to be purely individual. It becomes socially recognizable.

IMG 2d extends this process by constructing **productive chaos as a collective environment**.

If Trumpian ritual tends toward repetition and stabilization, Mileian collective space can derive energy from acceleration and unpredictability.

The public is not simply invited to observe conflict. It may become part of the circulation that sustains conflict. The political community exists within a field of continuous interaction.

The space is therefore less strongly organized as a closed ritual environment and more as an **open field of contestation**.

The distinction can be represented as:

- **TRUMP → COLLECTIVE SPACE AS RITUAL CONVERGENCE;**
- **MILEI → COLLECTIVE SPACE AS CONFLICTUAL CIRCULATION.**

In the Trumpian rally, many bodies orient toward one focal leader. In Mileian productive chaos, multiple communicative acts can circulate outward and collide. This difference corresponds closely to the centripetal/centrifugal opposition previously identified.

Trumpian collective space tends to be **centripetal**:

- attention converges;
- symbols stabilize;
- the community recognizes itself around a center.

Mileian collective space tends to be comparatively **centrifugal**:

- intensity travels;
- fragments circulate;
- conflict expands.

The political identity reproduces itself through dissemination of disruption.

The two models therefore construct different relations between unity and multiplicity.

Trumpian multiplicity becomes unified through recurrent symbols.

Mileian multiplicity becomes connected through recurrent disruptive operations.

The first can be represented as:

MANY SUPPORTERS → ONE SYMBOLIC CENTER

The second as:

ONE DISRUPTIVE CENTER → MANY CIRCULATING INTERVENTIONS

The difference is subtle but important.

Trump's community continually returns to MAGA as a stable symbolic home.

Milei's community continually reproduces rupture across changing communicative situations.

IMG 2e adds another dimension: **epistemic community**.

Economic charts do not merely construct the leader as expert.

They can also construct supporters as a community of subjects who believe they have understood the "real" causes of the crisis.

This creates a form of collective distinction. There are those who supposedly understand. And those who remain trapped in the explanations of the old system.

The graph can therefore participate in an epistemic boundary:

THOSE WHO SEE THE ECONOMIC TRUTH

versus

THOSE WHO DENY / MISUNDERSTAND IT

This structure is politically powerful because knowledge itself becomes a form of belonging.

The supporter is not only someone who agrees with Milei.

The supporter can be constructed as someone who has **seen through the system**.

This introduces a quasi-revelatory dimension:

I NOW UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS REALLY HAPPENING.

Such a position produces satisfaction beyond ordinary policy agreement. It gives the subject an epistemic identity.

The supporter becomes:

- informed;
- awakened;
- capable of seeing;
- outside conventional error.

The political collective can therefore become a community of **shared interpretation**.

This is especially important in anti-establishment discourse because institutional disagreement can then be reframed as evidence that others remain trapped within an obsolete or deceptive framework.

The relation becomes:

WE KNOW

while

THEY MISUNDERSTAND / CONCEAL / DEFEND THE OLD MODEL.

This epistemic community reinforces the antagonistic one. Knowledge and identity converge.

Trumpian communication can produce comparable epistemic boundaries through distrust of mainstream media or claims to reveal concealed threats, but Milei's corpus gives the mechanism a distinctive technical-economic form through **IMG 2e**.

The graph provides an object around which collective interpretation can organize itself.

The Mileian community therefore emerges across several dimensions:

- **ANTAGONISTIC COMMUNITY**
  united against the "casta";

- **AFFECTIVE COMMUNITY**
  united through anger and indignation;
- **PROGRAMMATIC COMMUNITY**
  united around rupture and libertarian transformation;
- **EPISTEMIC COMMUNITY**
  united through acceptance of a shared diagnosis.

These dimensions reinforce one another. The subject who accepts the economic diagnosis has reasons to become angry. The subject who becomes angry has reasons to identify the caste. The subject who identifies the caste has reasons to accept rupture. The subject who accepts rupture has reasons to identify with Milei. The collective therefore develops through **semiotic accumulation**.

A comparable accumulation occurs in Trump's corpus:

- **PATRIOTIC COMMUNITY**
  united through national symbols;
- **AFFECTIVE COMMUNITY**
  united through pride, fear, and restorative hope;
- **PROTECTIVE COMMUNITY**
  united against perceived threats;
- **ASPIRATIONAL COMMUNITY**
  united around success and greatness.

The comparison thus reveals that political belonging is multidimensional in both models.

It is never merely ideological. It involves:

- space;
- body;
- objects;

- emotion;
- narrative;
- memory;
- knowledge;
- antagonism;
- circulation.

The political community exists when these dimensions become sufficiently coherent to allow subjects to recognize one another as participants in the same symbolic world.

This recognition is especially important because populist discourse claims to produce **"the people"** as a central political subject. The people cannot simply be assumed. They must be semiotically constituted.

The process involves selection. Certain traits become central. Others become secondary. Some grievances are emphasized. Others remain outside the representation. Some actors are included. Others excluded.

The political "people" are therefore a **constructed collective position**, not the transparent reproduction of an entire empirical population.

The Trumpian people are constructed predominantly through:

- patriotism;
- MAGA;
- restoration;
- national identity;
- threat;
- strength.

The Mileian people through:

- anti-caste antagonism;
- economic suffering;
- libertarian freedom;
- anger;
- rupture;
- transformation.

These selections produce different collective subjects. The two leaders therefore do not simply compete for the same pre-existing "people". They participate in constructing **different ways of being the people**.

This distinction is crucial. Political competition concerns not only which leader should represent the collective. It also concerns what the collective is.

Trump's political world asks:

WHO BELONGS TO THE AUTHENTIC AMERICAN

COMMUNITY, AND WHAT MUST IT RECOVER?

Milei's asks:

WHO SUFFERS UNDER THE OLD SYSTEM,

AND WHAT MUST THEY BECOME FREE FROM?

The people are consequently defined through different spatial and narrative relations.

Trumpian peoplehood is more strongly **territorial-identitarian**.

Mileian peoplehood more strongly **relational-antagonistic**.

Again, these are dominant tendencies rather than exclusive categories.

The comparison becomes particularly interesting when we consider the leader's position relative to these collectives.

Trump stands above and within. Milei stands outside and ahead. The formulations are deliberately spatial.

Trump is "within" because he claims membership in the same patriotic world. He is "above" because his strength, wealth, visibility, and centrality construct exceptional leadership.

The Trumpian relationship can therefore be represented as:

SAME COMMUNITY + SUPERIOR COMPETENCE.

Milei is "outside" because his anti-caste identity requires symbolic exteriority to the old system. He is "ahead" because his disruptive program claims to lead the collective toward a new political-economic order.

The Mileian relation becomes:

SAME ANTAGONISM + ADVANCED TRANSFORMATIVE COMPETENCE.

Both structures combine proximity and exceptionality. Neither leader is simply equal to the collective. Populist identification does not eliminate leadership asymmetry. Instead, it legitimizes asymmetry through shared values.

Trump is exceptional **for us**.

Milei disrupts **for us**.

The political collective therefore delegates transformative competence to an individual while retaining symbolic ownership of the desired outcome.

The nation belongs to the people. Trump restores it.

Freedom belongs to the people. Milei liberates it.

This relation creates a form of **delegated heroism**.

The leader performs what the collective desires but cannot perform as a single unified actor.

The collective participates symbolically in the leader's actions.

Trump's resistance becomes "our" resistance.

Milei's cutting becomes "our" rupture.

The leader's body therefore becomes a **proxy collective body**. This process is especially visible in iconic images.

The raised fist belongs physically to Trump but can become symbolically available to supporters.

The chainsaw belongs materially to the performance but can become a sign of collective anti-caste desire.

Political symbols therefore allow individual actions to acquire collective ownership.

This movement can be represented as:

INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE

↓

MEDIA CIRCULATION

↓

COLLECTIVE RECOGNITION

↓

SYMBOLIC APPROPRIATION

↓

COMMUNITY SIGN

The political community thus expands through appropriation. The leader produces signs. The public reuses them. Repetition transforms personal signs into collective ones. This process complicates the distinction between leader-centered and participatory communication.

The sign may originate from a highly personalized political system but become distributed through collective practice. Personalization and participation are therefore not opposites. They can support one another. The more recognizable the leader, the easier it becomes to reproduce signs associated with him. The more those signs are reproduced, the stronger the leader's centrality becomes.

The resulting circularity is:

LEADER → SYMBOL → COMMUNITY → SYMBOLIC REPETITION → LEADER

This loop is central to both Trumpian and Mileian political spaces. Digital platforms amplify it dramatically. The collective does not merely gather. It circulates.

A supporter can participate without attending an event. Participation can consist in sharing. Commenting. Using a hashtag. Creating a meme. Responding to criticism. Displaying merchandise. Editing a video. Recirculating a chart. The collective body therefore becomes partly **datafied**.

Its presence is measurable through likes, shares, comments, views, followers, trends, and engagement metrics. This introduces a new spatial and symbolic dimension. The political crowd no longer exists only in physical density.

It also exists in **digital visibility**. A million views can function rhetorically like a large crowd. A trending topic can function like occupation of a public square. A viral meme can function like repeated chanting. These analogies should not be treated as exact equivalences, but they reveal comparable semiotic functions.

Both physical and digital concentration can produce the perception:

MANY PEOPLE ARE HERE,

but the meaning of "here" changes:

in **physical** politics → HERE = **venue / street / rally**;

in **platform** politics → HERE = **feed / thread / hashtag / viral circulation**.

Collective space becomes increasingly **hybrid**. The same political community inhabits physical and digital environments.

A rally generates digital content. Digital mobilization can generate physical attendance. A meme anticipates a speech. A speech produces a meme. The two spatial regimes continually feed one another.

This can be represented as:

PHYSICAL COLLECTIVE

↓

DIGITAL REPRESENTATION

↓

NETWORKED COLLECTIVE

↓

RENEWED MOBILIZATION

↓

PHYSICAL / DIGITAL RECOMBINATION

The political community therefore cannot be fully understood by separating offline and online spaces. The relevant space is a continuum of **mediated collective presence**.

Trump and Milei both operate within this continuum, but the dominant semiotic forms differ:

- Trumpian community tends toward **ritualized repetition and recognizability**;
- Mileian community tends toward **intensified circulation and antagonistic activation**.

Trump's signs **stabilize**.

Milei's signs **accelerate**.

Trump's community repeatedly reaffirms:

WE ARE HERE.

Milei's repeatedly performs:

WE WANT THIS TO CHANGE.

The distinction can be summarized as:

TRUMP

COLLECTIVE SPACE OF RECOGNITION

(identity is strengthened through repetition, patriotic

symbolism, ritual gathering, and visible continuity);

MILEI

COLLECTIVE SPACE OF ACTIVATION

(identity is strengthened through antagonism, emotional correspondence,

circulation, rupture, and the expectation of transformation).

The temporal orientation differs accordingly.

Trumpian community is strongly connected to **memory**. MAGA activates an imagined continuity between political community and national past. The collective gathers to recover.

Mileian community is strongly connected to **anticipation**. Rupture activates a future that does not exist. The collective mobilizes to transform.

The first is predominantly oriented toward:

WHAT WE WERE / SHOULD BE AGAIN.

The second toward:

WHAT WE COULD BECOME AFTER THE BREAK.

Collective space therefore contains a temporal horizon. The community does not simply inhabit the present. It inhabits a relationship between present and desired future.

This relationship gives political gathering direction. Trump's crowd is narratively moving toward restoration. Milei's toward refoundation. The public therefore inhabits not only space but a **political trajectory**. This leads to another important distinction between **community as state and community as process**:

- Trumpian belonging tends to represent the authentic community as already existing at the level of identity, although weakened or threatened, and the central question is how to restore its proper condition.
- Mileian belonging tends more strongly to represent the political community as something whose liberated form must still emerge through transformation.

The distinction can be represented as:

- TRUMP → COMMUNITY PRECEDES TRANSFORMATION;
- MILEI → TRANSFORMATION COMPLETES COMMUNITY.

This difference helps explain the divergent symbolic roles of MAGA and the chainsaw. MAGA names and visualizes the community. The chainsaw visualizes what must happen for the desired community to emerge. The first is predominantly a sign of **collective identity**, the second predominantly a sign of **collective becoming**.

Political space consequently performs a different function.

Trump's space says:

THIS IS WHERE THE AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY RECOGNIZES ITSELF.

Milei's says:

THIS IS WHERE SUBJECTS ALIGN AROUND THE TRANSFORMATION THAT WILL FREE THEM.

The comparison also reveals that collective belonging necessarily produces **internal hierarchies**. Not all members occupy the same position. The leader remains central. Activists may possess more symbolic visibility than ordinary supporters. Influencers or media actors may amplify messages more effectively.

Certain images or voices may become representative of the collective while others remain invisible. The political community is therefore not a perfectly horizontal space. Even digital participation does not eliminate asymmetry. Visibility is unevenly distributed. Access to audiences differs. Accounts have different reach. Platform mechanisms privilege certain content.

The leader retains enormous communicative advantages. Collective participation must therefore be distinguished from **equal enunciative power**. The supporter can reproduce the sign, but the leader remains the principal source of symbolic authority.

This produces a structure of **participatory hierarchy**. Many speak. But not all speech has equal weight. The leader's message can organize the meanings reproduced by others. The collective therefore participates within a space whose symbolic center remains strongly personalized.

This observation is important because it prevents an overly celebratory interpretation of digital participation. Networked communication increases opportunities for re-enunciation, but it does not necessarily eliminate concentrations of visibility.

Indeed, personalization and platformization can reinforce one another. A leader with high visibility produces signs that receive immediate circulation. Circulation increases visibility. Visibility attracts further participation. Participation reinforces centrality.

The relation becomes:

LEADER VISIBILITY

↓

PUBLIC INTERACTION

↓

GREATER CIRCULATION

↓

GREATER LEADER VISIBILITY

The collective space can therefore become a mechanism of **centrality amplification**.

This is visible in both corpora. MAGA supporters distribute Trumpian identity. Memetic communities distribute Mileian disruption. The community participates actively while simultaneously increasing the symbolic centrality of the leader.

Political belonging thus involves a paradox:

THE MORE THE SIGN IS COLLECTIVIZED, THE MORE

THE LEADER ASSOCIATED WITH IT MAY BECOME CENTRAL.

The symbolic repertoire spreads. The reference point concentrates. This dynamic is especially important to contemporary populist personalization. The political collective does not disappear beneath the leader.

Instead, it becomes one of the principal mechanisms through which leader-centered identity is socially reproduced.

The corpus therefore suggests that the political relationship should not be represented simply as:

LEADER → PASSIVE MASS

nor as:

HORIZONTAL NETWORK WITHOUT CENTER.

A more appropriate model is:

CENTRAL LEADER ↔ PARTICIPATORY COLLECTIVE ↔ DISTRIBUTED CIRCULATION

The relations are reciprocal but asymmetrical. The leader influences the symbolic repertoire. The collective reproduces and transforms it. Circulation returns modified signs to both leader and public. The political space is therefore **recursive**.

Meaning moves. The collective changes the sign. The transformed sign can return to official political communication. Memetic culture becomes campaign culture. Supporter language becomes leader language. Journalistic labels are appropriated. Criticism is resemanticized. Political identity emerges through continuous exchange.

This is especially visible in Milei's productive chaos, where the boundary between official performance and participatory amplification becomes porous.

But it also operates in the MAGA universe, where supporter-produced material can reinforce the movement's broader symbolic ecology. Collective space is consequently not merely occupied. It is productive.

The public produces political meaning. This production can support, challenge, exaggerate, parody, or mutate the original political identity. The community therefore possesses a degree of semiotic autonomy even within highly personalized leadership. This autonomy is particularly evident when signs acquire meanings not fully controlled by the leader.

A meme may be created by opponents. A slogan may be reinterpreted. A gesture may become iconic for reasons that exceed the original intention. The political sign enters collective circulation and becomes partly unpredictable. Strong symbolic systems can absorb this unpredictability. Parody can increase recognizability.

Criticism can increase visibility. Counter-memes can reinforce group solidarity. Political space thus becomes an arena in which collective identity is produced through **both agreement and conflict**.

This is perhaps the deepest similarity between Trump and Milei. Their communities differ in dominant values and spatial organization, but both depend heavily on **antagonistic differentiation**.

A political "we" becomes stronger when there is a recognizable "they":

- Trumpian belonging becomes meaningful in contrast to figures represented as threatening the authentic nation;
- Mileian belonging becomes meaningful in contrast to the caste and structures represented as constraining freedom.

The collective space therefore has a double architecture:

INTERNAL COHESION

and

EXTERNAL DIFFERENTIATION.

The stronger the external distinction, the more easily internal differences can be temporarily subordinated. This is one of the classic mechanisms of political identity. The community does not need complete internal sameness. It requires sufficient agreement about the boundary.

The collective therefore becomes coherent through a shared answer to:

WHO ARE WE NOT?

Trumpian and Mileian political spaces answer this question differently.

Trump:

- **WE ARE NOT THE FORCES THREATENING OR DILUTING THE AUTHENTIC NATION;**

Milei:

- **WE ARE NOT THE CASTA OR THE SYSTEM THAT LIVES FROM AND reproduces political constraint.**

The external negative term helps stabilize the positive identity. The comparison also shows that these collective spaces are not permanently closed.

They seek expansion. Political movements require new adherents. The boundary must therefore distinguish while remaining traversable. An individual must be able to become “one of us”.

This creates another threshold:

NON-SUPPORTER → POTENTIAL SUPPORTER → MEMBER OF POLITICAL COMMUNITY

Political communication attempts to facilitate this passage by offering recognizable signs, narratives, emotions, and identities.

MAGA offers a ready-made symbolic repertoire.

Mileian anti-caste discourse offers a ready-made interpretive structure.

The prospective supporter can enter by accepting the code. The political community therefore has an **initiatory dimension**.

To enter is to learn how to read. Which actors are trustworthy. Which threats matter. Which symbols deserve positive value. Which emotions are appropriate. Which future should be desired.

Collective belonging thus requires acquisition of **interpretive competence**. This connects the spatial analysis directly to the enunciative contract examined in Chapter V.

The political subject belongs when he or she can interpret the political world according to the community's dominant code.

Space and interpretation converge:

- to inhabit MAGA symbolically is to know what MAGA means;
- to inhabit Mileian disruption is to know why the chainsaw, anger, caste, and inflation chart belong to the same political narrative.

The political community can therefore be understood as an **interpretive space**. Its boundaries are maintained not only through bodies and objects but through shared meanings.

This is especially evident online. Members may never meet physically. They nonetheless recognize the same signs. Respond to the same antagonists. Share the same interpretations. Circulate the same narratives.

The community exists through **semiotic coordination**. This leads to a broader understanding of contemporary political space. Political collectives are neither purely territorial nor purely virtual.

They are **symbolically synchronized formations** capable of connecting bodies, places, screens, objects, memories, emotions, and narratives.

The physical rally and the digital feed are different environments, but shared signs can establish continuity between them.

The supporter moves from one to the other without necessarily leaving the political world.

The red cap appears in both. The chainsaw appears in both. The leader's body appears in both. The antagonist appears in both.

Political identity therefore survives spatial transition. This continuity is one of the conditions of platformized populism. The political community becomes portable. The individual can carry it through the smartphone.

Political belonging accompanies everyday media consumption. The distinction between “being at a political event” and “being inside political communication” consequently weakens.

The user can enter and exit the political world repeatedly during the day. Political space becomes **intermittent** but **persistent**.

Intermittent because attention shifts constantly. Persistent because the symbolic repertoire remains available for reactivation.

This creates a novel regime of belonging. The supporter need not remain permanently mobilized. The political identity can be called back almost instantaneously by a recognizable sign. The political community therefore exists partly as a **latent interpretive structure**.

A sign activates it. The subject re-enters the collective position. This is one of the reasons visual condensation is so powerful. The political community does not need to reconstruct itself from zero at every encounter. Its symbols preserve memory.

The corpus thus reveals two distinct but structurally related collective spatialities:

TRUMP → RESTORATIVE COLLECTIVE SPACE

- The political community is organized through patriotic symbols, ritual repetition, visible co-presence, national belonging, protective boundaries, and a central leader who embodies restorative competence. The collective primarily recognizes itself as an already legitimate community whose proper condition must be recovered and defended.

MILEI → DISRUPTIVE COLLECTIVE SPACE

- The political community is organized through shared crisis, anti-caste antagonism, emotional intensity, transformative symbols, epistemic alignment, memetic circulation, and a leader who embodies the capacity to break with the existing order. The collective primarily recognizes itself as a set of constrained subjects whose desired political condition must emerge through rupture.

The difference can be summarized as:

TRUMP:

WE ARE TOGETHER BECAUSE WE BELONG

TO SOMETHING THAT MUST BE RESTORED;

MILEI:

WE ARE TOGETHER BECAUSE WE OPPOSE

SOMETHING THAT MUST BE DISMANTLED.

The first emphasizes a pre-existing symbolic home. The second a shared passage away from an intolerable condition. Both transform spatial belonging into political agency.

The community is not simply located. It is given a mission. Trump's collective must defend and restore. Milei's collective must reject and transform.

Political space therefore becomes **teleological**: it is organized around an anticipated transformation.

This final point connects collective spatiality with the deeper architecture of the entire corpus. Trump and Milei do not merely create spaces in which followers can gather or recognize one another.

They construct spaces in which **belonging already contains a theory of political action**. To inhabit the Trumpian space is to enter a community oriented toward restoration; to inhabit the Mileian space is to enter a community oriented toward rupture.

Collective space thus becomes one of the mechanisms through which values, passions, narratives, and political identities are translated into lived or mediated forms of participation.

The supporter does not simply receive the political world from outside but is invited to **take up a position within it**, recognize others occupying compatible positions, identify the boundaries separating the collective from its antagonists, and participate in the transformation toward which the entire space is oriented.

6.6. POLITICAL SPACE AS A FIELD OF CONFLICT AND TRANSFORMATION

The political spaces reconstructed in the corpus are not static environments.

They are **fields of forces** in which actors confront one another, positions are defended or challenged, boundaries are reinforced or crossed, and political identities are continuously redefined through interaction.

Space therefore does not merely contain conflict. It makes conflict visible. It gives conflict direction. It establishes the distance between subjects. It creates the possibility of collision. It determines what can be occupied, defended, crossed, invaded, abandoned, or transformed.

The political scene is consequently better understood as a **dynamic topology** rather than as a stable arrangement.

Trump and Milei both construct political spaces organized around conflict, but the nature of transformation within those spaces differs substantially.

Trump's spatial program tends toward **recomposition**.

Milei's tends toward **dislocation and reconfiguration**.

The distinction can initially be represented as:

TRUMP → DISORDERED SPACE → CONTROL → RECOMPOSED SPACE;

MILEI → CONSTRAINING SPACE → COLLISION → RECONFIGURED SPACE.

This difference corresponds to the restorative and disruptive logics identified throughout the study.

In Trump's political universe, conflict frequently appears as something that has destabilized a legitimate or desirable order.

The nation has lost control. The border has become too permeable. The political establishment has weakened the country. External or internal actors have occupied spaces they should not occupy. The collective subject has been displaced from the center of national legitimacy.

The spatial transformation therefore aims at **putting things back in their proper place**.

This formulation is analytically significant.

Trumpian restoration does not concern values in abstraction. It also constructs a political world in which actors are imagined as possessing legitimate positions.

The nation should occupy a position of strength. The authentic people should occupy the symbolic center.

Borders should separate legitimate interior from threatening exterior. The leader should occupy the position of authority. Opponents should be defeated or marginalized.

Political transformation can therefore be understood as a process of **spatial reordering**.

The underlying structure is:

DISPLACEMENT

↓

CONFLICT

↓

REASSERTION OF HIERARCHY

↓

RESTORED ORDER

In this configuration, conflict is necessary because the correct spatial relation has allegedly been disrupted. The restorative subject must confront the forces responsible for that disruption.

IMG 1e is especially important because the anti-immigration imagery transforms political conflict into an explicit spatial problem.

The imagined threat involves movement. Someone crosses. Someone enters. Someone appears within a space where the political narrative positions them as illegitimate or dangerous.

The relation becomes:

EXTERIOR SUBJECT

↓

MOVEMENT TOWARD INTERIOR

↓

PERCEIVED THREAT TO COMMUNITY

↓

POLITICAL DEMAND FOR CONTROL

The conflict is therefore generated by the crossing of a boundary.

The desired transformation reverses that crossing:

- **PERMEABILITY → CONTROL**
- **THREAT → CONTAINMENT**
- **UNCERTAINTY → BOUNDARY STABILIZATION**

The political action is spatially conservative in the precise semiotic sense that it seeks to preserve or reconstruct a distinction.

This does not mean that Trumpian politics lacks aggressive transformation. It means that the transformation is frequently legitimated as a way of restoring a spatial and symbolic order imagined as more appropriate than the present one.

The politics of the border thus becomes part of a broader politics of **placement**. Who should be inside? Who should be outside? Who has the authority to decide? What actors legitimately occupy the national space? The political conflict is organized through these questions.

IMG 1d provides the complementary internal dimension. If **IMG 1e** constructs the boundary against threatening alterity, the MAGA universe constructs the space that must be consolidated **within** that boundary.

The political collective occupies rally spaces, symbolic environments, media images, and digital networks. This occupation is not incidental. It demonstrates that the movement possesses social presence.

The crowd becomes a form of territorial claim:

WE ARE HERE.

The repetition of flags, caps, slogans, and bodies transforms political support into visible occupation. The political community appears not only numerically but spatially.

It fills, surrounds, converges, orients. The rally therefore becomes a temporary **territory of ideological density**.

Within this territory, competing signs can be reduced and shared signs amplified. The space becomes more homogeneous than everyday political life.

This allows the collective to experience a momentary correspondence between:

POLITICAL IDENTITY

and

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT.

The surrounding space reflects the values of the group. The participant therefore experiences political belonging as something externally confirmed. This process is important because the political world is ordinarily plural.

Competing signs coexist. Disagreement is visible. The rally temporarily suspends part of this heterogeneity. It creates an environment in which the collective can experience itself as central.

Trumpian space therefore alternates between two political conditions:

- EXTERNAL WORLD → CONTESTED / THREATENED
- INTERNAL RITUAL SPACE → COHERENT / AFFIRMATIVE

The rally becomes a **model of the desired political order**.

Leader at center. Patriotic community visible. Shared symbols dominant. Antagonists absent or rhetorically externalized. The event therefore does not merely support the political project. It prefigures it spatially.

The desired political order is temporarily enacted at a smaller scale. This is one of the key functions of political ritual. It makes the future —or the restored past— experientially present. The supporter does not only hear what America should become. The supporter temporarily enters a space organized according to that vision.

This gives the political promise a **prefigurative spatial dimension**. The rally is not America. But it can symbolically perform an image of America. The movement therefore transforms a local space into a miniature political cosmos.

IMG 1b reinforces this structure through the relation between leader and scene. Trump's dominant posture and visual centrality make the individual body function as a **principle of spatial organization**.

The leader does not simply occupy the space produced by the movement. He concentrates it. This creates a relationship between collective order and personal order. The rally is organized around Trump. The political project is organized around Trump. The image makes these two structures appear homologous. The leader's control of the scene can become a symbolic preview of his promised control of political reality.

The relation can be represented as:

CONTROL OF VISUAL SPACE

↓

CONTROL OF POLITICAL INTERACTION

↓

IMAGINED CAPACITY TO CONTROL NATIONAL DISORDER

This inference is not logically necessary, but it is semiotically available. The visual space becomes a field in which competence is rehearsed. Trump's body makes political mastery perceptible.

IMG 1a adds another dimension: conflict can violently disrupt political space, the leader's body can **reconstitute coherence after rupture**.

The assassination attempt destroys the ordinary organization of the rally. Security intervenes. Bodies move. Attention fragments. The scene becomes unstable. The raised fist then provides a new focal point. The disrupted field becomes reorganized around an iconic gesture.

The sequence is:

STABLE CAMPAIGN SPACE

↓

VIOLENT INTERRUPTION

↓

CHAOTIC REACTION

↓

VISIBLE LEADER

↓

SYMBOLIC RECENTERING

This structure is particularly relevant to Trump's restorative ethos because it provides an almost literal enactment of restoration at the micro-level of the event.

Order is broken. The leader reappears. The leader supplies a sign. The sign reorganizes collective attention. The event therefore provides a spatial analogy for the larger political narrative. America has been destabilized. Trump returns it to a center.

Again, the analysis does not claim that the event was deliberately constructed for this purpose. The point concerns the subsequent **semiotic availability of the image**. An unexpected event can become meaningful because it is absorbed into an existing spatial and narrative grammar.

The leader's relation to political conflict is therefore partly one of **recentralization**.

Even hostile events can be reorganized around his persona. This capacity gives Trumpian political space a strong **centripetal resilience**.

Conflict disperses. The leader recenters. Controversy expands. The political identity pulls interpretation back toward itself. This pattern becomes even more significant in media circulation. A controversy involving many actors may eventually be remembered through one highly recognizable Trumpian image.

Complexity is condensed into the protagonist. The space of conflict becomes personalized. The Mileian political field operates differently. Here conflict is not primarily represented as an interruption of a legitimate order.

It is frequently constructed as the **necessary mechanism through which an illegitimate order can be transformed**. Conflict therefore acquires a more positive transitional function.

The structure becomes:

DYSFUNCTIONAL STABILITY

↓

CONFRONTATION

↓

DISRUPTION

↓

RECONFIGURATION

The key inversion is that initial stability itself may be negatively valorized. If the existing political-economic order reproduces crisis, maintaining stability becomes equivalent to maintaining failure.

The disruptive leader must therefore introduce instability. This makes the Mileian political field fundamentally **agonistic and transformative**.

IMG 2a provides the most immediate spatial representation of this logic.

The chainsaw creates a field of conflict between:

ACTING SUBJECT

and

RESISTANT MATERIAL.

A chainsaw is meaningful only because something resists being cut. Its symbolism therefore presupposes an obstacle.

The political metaphor similarly constructs the state, bureaucracy, public expenditure, or old institutional order as material that must be acted upon.

The political field becomes an environment of **resistance to transformation**. The leader's competence is measured by the capacity to overcome that resistance.

The spatial structure is:

SUBJECT → TOOL → OBSTACLE

followed by:

OBSTACLE → CUT → NEW CONFIGURATION

The political field therefore contains action within its very visual grammar. Unlike the MAGA cap, whose principal operation is identification, the chainsaw points toward a **target**.

The sign is directional. It makes political space immediately conflictual. There must be something to cut. Something to reduce. Something to separate. Something to remove. The symbol therefore cannot remain self-contained.

It establishes a relation between protagonist and structure.

IMG 2c names that structure politically. The "casta" gives the resistant space an actor.

The system is no longer merely an abstract architecture. It is inhabited by subjects whose interests are represented as opposed to transformation.

The political field thus becomes doubly conflictual:

MILEI vs. CASTA

and

TRANSFORMATION vs. INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUITY

The first is actorial. The second structural. The two reinforce one another. The “casta” becomes the human face of a system. The system becomes the institutional extension of the caste.

The relation can be expressed as:

ACTOR ↔ STRUCTURE

The antagonist occupies and reproduces the space that must be transformed. This connection is important because it gives institutional conflict a spatial logic. The political opponent is not simply someone who disagrees.

The opponent becomes someone who **occupies the structure preventing movement**. Milei’s disruptive program consequently transforms political action into displacement. The actors occupying the old system must lose their privileged position. The institutional architecture must be reduced or reorganized. The collective subject must gain freedom of movement.

The political transformation can therefore be represented spatially as:

BLOCKED SUBJECT

↓

CONFRONTATION WITH OBSTACLE

↓

REMOVAL / REDUCTION OF OBSTACLE

↓

EXPANDED SPACE OF ACTION

Freedom itself acquires a spatial meaning. To be free is to have room to act. Constraint is enclosure. Bureaucracy is obstruction. State intervention is limitation. Libertarianism can therefore be translated into a topology of **opening**.

This helps explain why the chainsaw possesses such strong semiotic compatibility with Milei's ideology. It does not merely represent destruction. It represents the production of space through removal.

IMG 2b converts this structural conflict into bodily form.

Milei's body appears to confront the limits of the communicative space:

- the gestures extend;
- the voice intensifies;
- the body pushes outward;
- the political actor appears to test the boundaries of acceptable behavior;
- the space therefore becomes a **field of pressure**;
- the body presses against convention.

Convention presses back through criticism, institutional norms, media reactions, or expectations of decorum. The conflict becomes somatic.

This can be represented as:

BODY → NORMATIVE LIMIT

and

NORMATIVE LIMIT → BODY

The political meaning emerges from the tension between the two.

If the body remained entirely within conventional limits, the anti-system identity would lose a crucial visible component.

If the body exceeded all intelligible limits, communication could cease to function.

The political performance therefore operates near the boundary. It requires **controlled transgression**. This apparent paradox is essential. Mileian disruption is most effective when it appears uncontrolled enough to signify authenticity but controlled enough to remain politically legible.

The political body produces an effect of excess while preserving identity. The actor remains recognizable as the subject generating the excess. Chaos does not eliminate authorship. It reinforces it.

IMG 2d expands this tension to the entire communicative field. Productive chaos transforms political space into a field of **continuous interactional collision**.

Statements provoke. Opponents react. Journalists intervene. Users comment. Memes circulate. Supporters amplify. Critics counter-amplify. The political text no longer has one stable perimeter. Its boundaries are continually expanded through reaction.

The field behaves almost like a chain reaction:

INITIAL PROVOCATION

↓

REACTION

↓

NEW CONTENT

↓

COUNTER-REACTION

↓

EXPANDED VISIBILITY

↓

FURTHER CONFLICT

The political space grows through conflict. This is one of the central differences from Trumpian spatial stabilization. Trump also benefits from controversy and conflict, but Mileian productive chaos makes **expansion through collision** especially central to the aesthetic itself.

The political field becomes larger precisely because more actors enter the conflict. Opponents become participants in the circulation. The boundary between political actor and media environment becomes increasingly difficult to maintain.

The controversy is no longer "about" Milei from outside. It becomes part of Milei's political performance. The environment is absorbed.

This produces a powerful form of **conflictual incorporation**. Criticism can be incorporated as evidence of resistance. Mockery can be incorporated into memetic circulation. Institutional opposition can be incorporated as evidence that the old system is defending itself.

The field of conflict therefore provides the material through which the leader's identity continues to reproduce itself. The political subject needs a resistant environment. Without resistance, rupture would lose visibility.

The opponent therefore performs a structural function comparable to resistant material before a chainsaw.

The metaphorical relation is revealing:

NO RESISTANCE → NO VISIBLE CUT

Similarly:

NO OPPONENT → NO VISIBLE DISRUPTION

The conflict is necessary to demonstrate the competence of the disruptor. This helps explain the persistence of antagonism even after electoral success. The protagonist may gain institutional power, but the narrative requires continued resistance somewhere else.

The conflict therefore migrates. The spatial field is reconfigured so that there remains something to confront. This migration preserves the disruptive identity.

The political system becomes a **multi-front conflict space**.

IMG 2e introduces another type of transformation within this field: **the transformation of informational space**.

Economic reality is complex and dispersed. Inflation involves innumerable transactions, prices, expectations, monetary dynamics, institutional decisions, and temporal sequences.

The graph condenses this complexity into a bounded visual field. The political actor can then intervene within that field by pointing, comparing, explaining, and assigning responsibility.

The chart therefore creates an informational territory capable of being politically occupied.

The sequence is:

DISPERSED ECONOMIC REALITY

↓

VISUAL CONDENSATION

↓

INTERPRETABLE SPACE

↓

POLITICAL OCCUPATION BY EXPLANATION

The leader gains authority by organizing the space of information. This is a form of **epistemic territorialization**.

Milei claims the right to map economic reality. The graph becomes a map. It identifies trajectories. Before and after. High and low. Failure and improvement. The speaker then places political actors within that mapped space.

Previous governments become associated with one trajectory. The libertarian program with another.

Economic visualization therefore becomes a field in which political differences are spatially arranged. This shows that conflict does not require bodies facing one another physically.

It can occur through the organization of representations. A graph can become a battlefield. The axes replace territorial coordinates. Data points replace positions. Political interpretation determines which trajectory is legitimate.

The corpus therefore reveals several distinct forms of political conflict space:

- **TERRITORIAL CONFLICT**
  around national boundaries and immigration;
- **RITUAL CONFLICT**
  between collective belonging and excluded antagonists;
- **BODILY CONFLICT**
  through posture, gesture, resistance, and transgression;
- **INSTITUTIONAL CONFLICT**
  between leader and political system;
- **COMMUNICATIVE CONFLICT**
  through provocation and reaction;
- **EPISTEMIC CONFLICT**
  through competing interpretations of reality.

Trump and Milei participate in all these domains to varying degrees, but the dominant spatial orientations remain distinct.

Trumpian conflict tends to ask:

HOW CAN LEGITIMATE ORDER

BE RECOVERED AND DEFENDED?

Mileian conflict tends to ask:

HOW CAN AN ILLEGITIMATE ORDER

BE BROKEN AND RECONFIGURED?

The spatial transformations are therefore different.

Trump:

- **REPOSITION**
- **RECENTER**
- **REBOUND**
- **RECONSOLIDATE**

Milei:

- **CUT**
- **DISPLACE**
- **OPEN**
- **RECONFIGURE**

This distinction also affects the relation between leader and **chaos**.

For Trump, chaos tends predominantly to be something that the leader must stand against. It establishes the need for a stable center. The stronger the representation of disorder, the more valuable control becomes. The Trumpian leader therefore derives political competence from the ability to remain coherent under conditions of instability.

The structure is:

CHAOS AROUND LEADER

↓

LEADER REMAINS STABLE

↓

STABILITY BECOMES COMPETENCE

Milei's relation to chaos is different. Certain forms of instability can become evidence that transformation is occurring.

The structure becomes:

STABILITY OF OLD SYSTEM

↓

LEADER INTRODUCES DISRUPTION

↓

CHAOS BECOMES TRANSITION

↓

TRANSITION PROMISES NEW ORDER

The contrast can be expressed simply:

- **TRUMP → ORDER AGAINST CHAOS**
- **MILEI → CHAOS AGAINST THE OLD ORDER**

This formulation requires an important qualification. Milei does not construct permanent chaos as the final desired state. The desired endpoint remains a different order.

Chaos functions as a **threshold condition**. It is politically valuable because it indicates that the old structure has ceased to reproduce itself unchanged.

This produces a three-stage spatial logic:

OLD ORDER → DESTABILIZED INTERVAL → NEW ORDER

The intermediate phase becomes one of the most distinctive features of the Mileian corpus. Trump's restorative narrative, by contrast, tends to minimize the positive value of such an interval. Instability is something to be overcome.

The desired transformation seeks a more direct movement from disorder toward controlled order.

This difference corresponds to two different theories of political change implicit in the images:

- Trumpian change is **corrective;**
- Mileian change is **ruptural**.

Corrective change repairs or restores relations. Ruptural change first breaks relations and then reorganizes them. The distinction is visible spatially before it is formulated ideologically.

A fist resists. A chainsaw cuts. The two central objects of the corpus thus condense two different political spatialities. The fist preserves the subject against an external force. The chainsaw transforms an external structure through force.

The comparison can be represented as:

IMG 1a

PRESSURE → RESISTANCE → PERSISTENCE

IMG 2a

OBSTACLE → INTERVENTION → DISCONTINUITY

Both communicate strength. But strength is spatialized differently:

- Trumpian strength is the power **not to be displaced**. Mileian strength is the power **to displace**.
- This is one of the clearest comparative findings emerging from the corpus.

The distinction extends to collective agency. Trump's supporters are invited to occupy and defend a symbolic space. Milei's supporters are invited to participate in the symbolic transformation of a political space.

The first collective operation is predominantly:

HOLD / RECLAIM

The second:

BREAK / OPEN

Again, these are dominant tendencies, not mutually exclusive categories:

- Trumpian politics can seek radical changes;
- Mileian politics can defend certain boundaries.

The analytical point concerns the deeper semiotic orientation of the selected images. Political space also becomes a field of **visibility competition**. Actors struggle not only over territory, institutions, or policy but over the right to define what the conflict itself is about:

- Trump attempts to define political disorder through categories such as national decline, threat, sovereignty, and restoration;
- Milei attempts to define it through crisis, caste, bureaucracy, freedom, and rupture.

The ability to impose a spatial interpretation is therefore a form of political power.

If the audience accepts that the nation is an endangered interior, protective policies become more intelligible.

If the audience accepts that the state is an obstructive enclosure, disruptive policies become more intelligible.

Space therefore participates in **problem definition**.

The political question:

WHAT IS WRONG?

is partly answered spatially.

Trump:

THE BOUNDARIES, CENTER, AND HIERARCHIES

OF THE NATION HAVE BEEN WEAKENED.

Milei:

THE POLITICAL-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE HAS BECOME

TOO CLOSED, LARGE, OR CONSTRAINING.

The proposed solution follows from the spatial diagnosis:

- Trump strengthens boundaries and center;
- Milei opens or removes constraining structures.

This correspondence contributes to narrative coherence. The solution looks appropriate because the problem has been spatially described in a way that demands precisely that solution.

The same mechanism operates emotionally. A threatened boundary generates fear. A constraining enclosure generates frustration. Fear seeks protection. Frustration seeks release. Spatial structure therefore produces **passional direction**.

The relation can be expressed as:

TRUMP

THREAT TO INTERIOR → FEAR → PROTECTION → RESTORATION

MILEI

CONFINEMENT → ANGER → RUPTURE → LIBERATION

Space, passion, and narrative converge once again. The political scene becomes effective because different analytical levels point toward the same transformation.

This convergence also helps construct credibility:

- Trump's central posture appears credible within a world defined as requiring a center;
- Milei's disruptive body appears credible within a world defined as requiring rupture.

The leader's spatial performance matches the spatial diagnosis. This can be described as **topological coherence**.

A political subject becomes credible when the way he inhabits space corresponds to the transformation he promises to perform upon space: **Trump** inhabits the scene as if order depends on central control, **Milei** inhabits it as if change depends on breaking containment.

The body becomes a micro-model of the proposed political action. This is one of the strongest connections between kinesic-proxemic analysis and the analysis of political space.mThe individual body and collective topology mirror one another:

- Trump's controlled body corresponds to controlled national space;
- Milei's expanding body corresponds to the desire to expand political and economic freedom beyond institutional constraints.

The relation is not literal. It is semi-symbolic and structural. The body makes the political topology sensible. Digital platforms transform this conflictual space further because they allow **multiple political fields to overlap**.

A physical rally exists in one location. Its image enters journalistic space, then platform space, then meme space, then comment space, then adversarial interpretation. Each recontextualization creates another field of conflict. This can be represented as:

PHYSICAL CONFLICT

↓

MEDIA REPRESENTATION

↓

DIGITAL REFRAMING

↓

INTERPRETIVE CONFLICT

↓

NEW POLITICAL MEANING

The conflict does not end when the physical event ends. It migrates into representation. This means political space has become **temporally extended through media**.

The Butler assassination attempt occurred at a specific place and time, but its image continues to inhabit political space long after the event.

The chainsaw performance similarly exceeds its original event through repeated circulation.

The political field therefore develops an archive. Past conflicts remain available for present reactivation. This archived visibility contributes to the construction of leader identity:

- Trump can be repeatedly returned to the resistant fist,
- Milei to the chainsaw.

Political space is therefore also a **memory space**. Events become reusable symbolic locations. The viewer can be returned to them through images. This allows political narratives to establish continuity across otherwise disconnected moments.

The leader's identity acquires a history composed of recognizable scenes. This historicization is especially important to Trump's restorative politics because memory is already central to the narrative of return.

But it also matters to Milei, whose political identity can accumulate a sequence of ruptures that retrospectively demonstrate consistency.

The political field therefore has a longitudinal dimension. Space is layered with previous events. The current image activates older images. The current conflict recalls earlier conflicts. The scene becomes intertextual.

The corpus therefore suggests that contemporary political space should be understood through at least four dimensions:

- **PHYSICAL SPACE**
  where bodies and events are located;
- **SYMBOLIC SPACE**
  where values and identities are organized;

- **MEDIA SPACE**

  where events are framed and represented;

- **PLATFORM SPACE**

  where representations circulate, collide, and acquire new contexts.

Political leadership must operate across all four.

Trump must remain Trumpian at the rally, in the photograph, in news coverage, and in the meme.

Milei must remain Mileian in the television confrontation, the chart, the chainsaw image, the social media clip, and the institutional scene.

The capacity to maintain identity across these spatial transitions is a form of **trans-spatial coherence**. It allows the leader's persona to survive movement.

This is particularly important because different spaces impose different conventions.

Institutional space rewards one kind of behavior. Rally space another. Television another. Social media another. A highly mediatized leader must adapt without becoming unrecognizable:

- Trump solves this partly through stable symbolic repetition;
- Milei through stable disruptive intensity.

The styles differ. The strategic problem is shared. Political space therefore becomes a field not only of ideological conflict but of **identity maintenance**.

The leader continually enters new spaces and must reorganize them around a coherent persona.

Trump tends to **Trumpianize** heterogeneous spaces by making them extensions of a stable central figure.

Milei tends to **Mileianize** them by introducing a recognizable mode of confrontation and disruption.

The environment changes. The operative signature remains. This is precisely why the selected corpus can be treated comparatively even though the individual images originate from different contexts. Their deeper spatial operations recur.

Trumpian space repeatedly returns to:

- **CENTER**
- **BOUNDARY**
- **VERTICALITY**
- **PROTECTION**
- **RECOMPOSITION**

Mileian space repeatedly returns to:

- **OBSTACLE**
- **COLLISION**
- **EXPANSION**
- **BREACH**
- **RECONFIGURATION**

These recurrent relations function as a spatial isotopy. They provide coherence across visually heterogeneous texts.

The analysis of political space thus contributes directly to the broader objective of identifying the deep structures organizing contemporary populist aesthetics.

The comparison ultimately suggests that the difference between Trump and Milei can be formulated as two distinct **politics of spatial transformation**.

Trump's political subject acts upon a world represented as displaced from its proper configuration. The transformation promises to **recenter, defend, restore, and stabilize**.

Milei's political subject acts upon a world represented as immobilized by an illegitimate configuration. The transformation promises to **cut, displace, open, and reorganize**.

The first seeks to restore a legitimate topology.

The second seeks to produce a new topology through rupture.

Both models share a fundamental principle: political leadership becomes intelligible through the capacity to **change the relation among actors and spaces**.

The leader is not merely someone who speaks from within the political field. He is represented as someone capable of **restructuring the field itself**.

Trump claims the capacity to return the center to the authentic nation and restore the boundaries of political order.

Milei claims the capacity to break the institutional architecture that prevents freedom and reconstruct political relations on different foundations.

In both cases, therefore, the political space contains an implicit before and after:

SPACE AS IT IS

versus

SPACE AS THE LEADER PROMISES IT WILL BECOME.

This temporalization of space is essential. The political image does not simply represent a present condition. It anticipates transformation.

The leader's current body provides a visible sign of the future political arrangement. **Trump**'s centrality prefigures restored order. **Milei**'s rupture prefigures liberated movement.

Political space thus functions as a **projective device** through which an imagined future becomes partially visible in the present.

This is one of the deepest functions of the corpus: its images do not merely show Trump and Milei occupying political scenes. They construct two different models for how the political world itself should be occupied, bounded, traversed, and transformed. In the Trumpian model, conflict culminates ideally in **recomposition around a legitimate center**; in the Mileian model, conflict becomes the necessary force through which **an obstructive spatial order is dismantled and replaced by a new configuration**.

6.7. REGIMES OF SPATIAL FRUITION

The corpus ultimately reveals not only different political spaces, but also different **regimes through which those spaces are offered to the spectator for perception, interpretation, and symbolic participation**. Space is never simply present before the viewer. It is organized according to particular modes of access, attention, immersion, distance, movement, and involvement.

The question therefore becomes:

HOW IS THE POLITICAL SPACE MEANT TO BE EXPERIENCED?

Does the spectator contemplate it from a distance? Enter it imaginatively? Identify with those who inhabit it? Move through it? Feel protected within it? Experience its instability? Participate in its conflict? Recognize a fixed center? Or become involved in a process of spatial transformation?

These possibilities define different **regimes of fruition**.

The distinction is especially important because political communication does not address the viewer as a purely cognitive observer. The spectator is given a position within the scene and, through that position, is invited to experience political space according to a particular logic.

Trump's corpus predominantly constructs a regime of **contemplation, ritual immersion, recognition, and identitarian participation**.

Milei's corpus more strongly constructs a regime of **crossing, acceleration, conflictual immersion, and transformative participation**.

The basic opposition can initially be expressed as:

TRUMP → INHABIT THE POLITICAL SPACE AS A COMMUNITY TO WHICH ONE BELONGS

MILEI → INHABIT THE POLITICAL SPACE AS A FIELD THAT MUST BE TRANSFORMED

This difference reproduces, at the level of reception, the broader opposition between restorative and disruptive leadership.

In the Trumpian corpus, **IMG 1b** provides a clear example of contemplative fruition.

The leader's centrality, frontality, controlled posture, and visual monumentality produce a scene in which the spectator is invited to focus attention on a stable political figure.

The visual organization reduces dispersion. Attention converges. The leader appears already hierarchized by the composition. The dominant mode of fruition can therefore be described as **directed contemplation**. The spectator sees a body positioned as worthy of being looked at.

The image implicitly organizes the gaze:

LOOK HERE.

The political scene is not open to an indefinite distribution of attention. It privileges a center. This center gives the spectator a stable orientation.

The experience can be represented as:

VISUAL ENTRY

↓

RECOGNITION OF CENTER

↓

CONTEMPLATION OF LEADER

↓

ATTRIBUTION OF AUTHORITY

The viewer remains outside the represented space physically, visual organization creates an immediate relation with the central figure.

This produces a characteristic combination of **distance and involvement**.

The spectator is separated from the leader but oriented toward him. The leader becomes an object of contemplation while simultaneously appearing as an interlocutor or representative. This structure is particularly coherent with monumentalized leadership. Monuments are designed to be seen. Their political effectiveness depends partly upon the management of distance.

Too much proximity can dissolve grandeur. Too much distance can dissolve identification. Trumpian imagery repeatedly negotiates the intermediate point at which the leader appears exceptional but still recognizable.

The regime of fruition therefore contains a vertical component. The viewer is invited to **look toward authority**. This contemplative mode does not exhaust Trumpian spatial experience.

IMG 1d introduces a different regime based on **ritual immersion**.

The MAGA symbolic universe surrounds the supporter with recurring signs:

- red caps;
- flags;
- slogans;
- crowds;
- national colors;
- the leader's image.

The spectator or participant does not simply contemplate an isolated object.

He or she can enter a **semiotically saturated environment**.

The distinction between looking at the political space and being inside it becomes weaker.

The rally exemplifies this transformation.

A participant entering the rally is physically immersed among bodies displaying compatible signs.

The political identity becomes environmental.

One does not merely see MAGA. One is temporarily surrounded by MAGA. This produces a regime of **immersive recognition**.

The process can be represented as:

ENTRY INTO POLITICAL SPACE

↓

SURROUNDING SYMBOLIC REPETITION

↓

RECOGNITION OF SHARED CODES

↓

EXPERIENCE OF COLLECTIVE BELONGING

The supporter's own body may also become part of the environment.

Wearing the cap, waving the flag, repeating the slogan, or participating in collective reaction means that the subject no longer merely consumes the political scene. The subject contributes to producing it. The distinction between spectator and represented collective therefore becomes porous. This is one of the most important features of ritual political fruition.

The supporter is simultaneously:

OBSERVER

and

PARTICIPANT.

He or she looks at the crowd while being part of the crowd. Listens to the chant while contributing to the chant. Sees the symbols while wearing the symbols. Political space thus becomes reflexive.

The community observes itself performing community. This reflexivity reinforces belonging. The collective does not merely exist. It **sees itself existing**.

The rally therefore provides a particularly powerful form of collective self-confirmation.

The experience is not equivalent to individual media consumption, but digital circulation can reproduce part of this immersive structure.

A supporter watching rally footage online encounters:

- the same colors;
- the same slogans;
- the same symbols;
- the same leader;
- the same crowd responses.

The physical environment is absent, but the symbolic structure remains recognizable.

Digital spectatorship can therefore produce a weaker but still significant form of **mediated immersion**.

The user can enter the political world through the screen. This is especially important because platformized political communication extends the spatial regime beyond the temporal limits of the physical event.

The rally ends. Its images remain. The crowd disperses. Its representation continues to circulate. The political environment becomes reproducible. The supporter can re-enter it repeatedly.

This creates a distinction between:

TEMPORARY PHYSICAL IMMERSION

and

REPEATABLE MEDIATED IMMERSION.

The first depends on co-presence. The second on circulation.

Together, they produce a political space capable of being inhabited both physically and symbolically.

IMG 1a adds another regime of fruition centered on **emotional witnessing**.

The assassination attempt places the spectator before an exceptional event. The initial position is that of the witness. Something has happened. The viewer sees the consequences. The raised fist then modifies the mode of fruition. The spectator is no longer simply asked to witness danger. The spectator is invited to interpret a response. The event becomes emotionally organized around resilience.

The trajectory can be represented as:

WITNESSING

↓

SHOCK / VULNERABILITY

↓

RECOGNITION OF GESTURE

↓

EMOTIONAL REORIENTATION

↓

IDENTIFICATION WITH RESISTANCE

The political space therefore moves from documentary witnessing toward **heroic contemplation**.

The image creates a particularly intense regime because it combines historical contingency with symbolic condensation.

The viewer can be simultaneously aware that an event actually occurred and drawn toward a broader interpretation of the leader’s character.

The event provides referential density.

The gesture provides narrative direction.

The spectator's relation to space is therefore one of **retrospective reconstruction**.

The viewer sees an image containing traces of what happened immediately before. The present frame carries an invisible past. This temporal depth intensifies the spatial scene. The body occupies one moment, but the spectator reconstructs the sequence.

This allows the image to function as a threshold between event and myth.

The viewer is invited to move from:

THIS HAPPENED

toward

THIS REVEALS WHO THE LEADER IS.

Spatial fruition therefore becomes interpretive. The scene is not simply consumed visually. It is narrativized by the spectator.

IMG 1c constructs another regime: **aspirational contemplation**.

The luxurious interiors and aircraft associated with Trump invite the viewer into a space that may be materially inaccessible but visually available.

The spectator can see the exclusive environment without entering it physically. This creates a specific relation between **distance and desire**.

The space derives part of its value from restricted access. Media representation makes it visible.

The viewer is therefore positioned at a threshold:

OUTSIDE MATERIALLY

but

INSIDE VISUALLY.

This produces a form of vicarious spatial participation. The spectator temporarily inhabits the luxury environment through representation.

The experience can be described as:

VISUAL ACCESS TO EXCLUSIVE SPACE

↓

PERCEPTION OF WEALTH

↓

ASPIRATIONAL INTERPRETATION

↓

TRANSFER TO LEADER'S COMPETENCE

The space therefore functions as spectacle. Its inaccessibility does not necessarily weaken the political relation. It can intensify fascination.

The viewer is invited to contemplate a world that marks the leader as exceptional.

This regime differs from MAGA immersion:

- in **IMG 1d**, the supporter can materially participate through shared symbols.
- in **IMG 1c**, the spectator predominantly participates **symbolically through aspiration**.

The two modes complement one another.

Trumpian space therefore alternates between:

EXCLUSIVE SPACE OF THE LEADER

and

INCLUSIVE SYMBOLIC SPACE OF THE MOVEMENT.

The leader inhabits luxury. The supporter inhabits MAGA. The two spaces are connected by the mythology of success. This spatial division allows hierarchical leadership to coexist with populist belonging.

IMG 1e introduces a defensive regime of fruition.

The anti-immigration imagery positions the spectator inside a presumed collective space threatened by an outside actor.

The viewer does not merely observe the boundary. The preferred reading places the viewer **on one side of it**. This produces an experiential position of protected interiority.

The structure becomes:

I AM HERE

THE OTHER IS THERE

THE OTHER MAY CROSS

THE SPACE I INHABIT MAY BE THREATENED

The political image therefore constructs a spectator whose relation to space is **defensive**.

The viewer is invited to experience the national or cultural interior as something personally relevant. The boundary becomes affectively charged. The spectator's spatial position is converted into political identity.

The image effectively asks:

WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

This is a powerful mechanism because it reduces interpretive neutrality.

Once the spectator accepts the inside/outside topology, political action concerning the boundary becomes more immediately meaningful.

The Trumpian regimes of fruition can therefore be summarized as a constellation:

- CONTEMPLATION OF THE LEADER
- RITUAL IMMERSION IN THE COMMUNITY
- EMOTIONAL WITNESSING OF RESISTANCE

- ASPIRATIONAL ACCESS TO SUCCESS
- DEFENSIVE OCCUPATION OF THE POLITICAL INTERIOR

These modes converge on a common structure.

The spectator is invited to inhabit a world whose values already possess a recognizable center.

The primary experience is one of **orientation**.

The political space tells the viewer where to look, where to belong, what to defend, and which figure organizes the transformation.

This can be summarized as:

TRUMPIAN FRUITION

↓

ORIENTED IMMERSION IN A WORLD TO BE RESTORED.

The Mileian corpus constructs a substantially different experiential regime.

Here the spectator is less consistently invited to contemplate a stable center and more frequently positioned within a field of **movement, collision, acceleration, and transformative tension**.

The dominant experience is not simply orientation but **activation**.

IMG 2b provides one of the clearest examples.

Milei's bodily intensity transforms the visual field into a space of energetic pressure. The spectator encounters shouting. Gestural expansion. Facial tension. Confrontation. Movement. The body appears difficult to contain.

The mode of fruition is therefore more **tensive** than contemplative. The spectator does not simply look at a stable political body. The spectator is exposed to an **event of bodily intensity**.

This produces a different organization of attention. Trumpian monumentality tends to hold the gaze. Mileian intensity tends to **activate the gaze**. The viewer follows movement. Anticipates gesture. Perceives tension. Registers excess. The body makes the scene unstable.

The experience can be represented as:

PERCEPTION OF INTENSITY

↓

HEIGHTENED ATTENTION

↓

AFFECTIVE ACTIVATION

↓

INTERPRETATION OF CONFLICT

The spectator enters the political space through affective stimulation. The scene does not initially promise equilibrium. It presents tension as meaningful.

This mode of fruition is particularly coherent with a political identity founded on rupture. The spectator must not be reassured too quickly. The perception of instability contributes to the experience of a system in motion.

IMG 2a intensifies this dynamic through the chainsaw: the object creates a strongly directional scene, the spectator imagines action.

A chainsaw implies movement toward material. The object's function is known before the political metaphor is fully reconstructed. The viewer therefore experiences the political message partly through **motor imagination**.

One can almost anticipate the gesture of cutting.

The space is perceived according to possible action:

- WHAT WILL BE CUT?
- WHERE WILL THE TOOL MOVE?
- WHAT WILL REMAIN AFTER THE CUT?

The spectator is therefore not positioned primarily as a contemplator of a completed political identity.

The spectator becomes an observer of **potential transformation**. The chainsaw opens a future within the image. It is a tool waiting to act. The space contains an unrealized trajectory.

This can be represented as:

OBJECT PRESENT

↓

ACTION IMPLIED

↓

TARGET IMAGINED

↓

TRANSFORMATION ANTICIPATED

The mode of fruition is therefore anticipatory. The viewer experiences not merely what exists but what might happen.

This gives **IMG 2a** a particularly strong performative quality. The political program becomes spatially imaginable as action. The spectator can mentally complete the cut. This creates a more active interpretive role than a purely descriptive symbol would require.

The chainsaw asks the viewer to supply the target:

- state expenditure;
- bureaucracy;
- political privilege;
- the old system.

The symbolic action is therefore partly **co-produced by interpretation**. The object provides the operation. The audience reconstructs its political object. This makes the sign highly efficient.

IMG 2c produces a regime of fruition based on **antagonistic positioning**.

The "casta" divides the political field. The spectator is invited to locate himself or herself relative to the divide.

As in Trumpian inside/outside politics, neutrality becomes difficult. The topology differs.

The viewer is not primarily positioned inside a protected community threatened by external entry.

Instead, the viewer is invited to perceive himself or herself as **outside a privileged system but subjected to its effects**.

The relevant spatial experience is one of exclusion and constraint.

The implied position becomes:

THEY OCCUPY THE PRIVILEGED INTERIOR

I BEAR THE COSTS FROM OUTSIDE.

This creates a strong demand for movement. The spectator should not simply remain where he or she is. The political program promises a reconfiguration of positions.

The mode of fruition can therefore be described as **mobilizing exteriority**. Being outside is initially a condition of disadvantage but subsequently becomes the source of authenticity and political legitimacy.

The outsider position is revalued. The spectator is invited to interpret marginality not as weakness but as **distance from corruption**.

This creates an important transformation:

EXCLUSION → AUTHENTICITY

DISTANCE FROM SYSTEM → MORAL SUPERIORITY

EXTERIORITY → POTENTIAL POLITICAL POWER

The spectator's spatial position is therefore dynamic.

The outside is not where the subject must remain.

It is the place from which the old center can be challenged.

This regime is especially coherent with Milei's outsider persona.

Leader and audience can share symbolic exteriority.

Milei says, in effect:

I AM OUTSIDE THEM WITH YOU

while also promising:

I CAN ENTER THE CENTER

TO TRANSFORM IT.

The audience is therefore invited to participate in a movement from margin toward reconfiguration of the center.

IMG 2d provides perhaps the clearest example of a regime of **accelerated and conflictual immersion**.

Productive chaos does not offer the spectator a stable spatial structure.

The political environment appears fragmented, contested, and continually moving: voices collide, messages overlap, provocations generate responses, fragments circulate.

The spectator's attention is repeatedly redirected.

The mode of fruition therefore resembles **navigation through instability**.

The viewer does not simply occupy one position, the viewer must move among signs.

The experience can be represented as:

FRAGMENT

↓

REACTION

↓

NEW FRAGMENT

↓

COUNTER-REACTION

↓

CONTINUOUS REPOSITIONING

The political space becomes traversable rather than fixed.

This is particularly compatible with digital feeds: the user scrolls, stops, watches, moves, returns, comments, shares, encounters a reaction, encounters a parody, encounters a correction.

The political experience is fragmented temporally and spatially. Recurrent Mileian signs provide coherence: the chainsaw, the hairstyle, the shouting, the anti-caste language, the graph.

The political persona functions as a **recognition anchor within moving space**.

This combination of instability and recognizability is crucial. Without recognizable signs, the chaotic environment would dissolve into noise.,Without instability, the disruptive identity would lose experiential force.

Productive chaos therefore constructs a regime in which the viewer is invited to **remain oriented while moving**.

This is fundamentally different from Trumpian ritual space, where orientation is generated through stable symbolic recurrence around a central leader.

In Milei's case, orientation survives **despite and through acceleration**.

The contrast can be formulated as:

- **TRUMP → STABLE CENTER WITHIN IMMERSIVE SPACE**
- **MILEI → RECOGNIZABLE DISRUPTOR WITHIN MOBILE SPACE**

The spectator inhabits the two environments differently.

Trumpian space tends to say:

STAY HERE AND RECOGNIZE WHAT BINDS US.

Mileian space tends to say:

MOVE THROUGH THIS CONFLICT AND RECOGNIZE WHAT MUST CHANGE.

The difference is therefore partly one between **dwelling and traversal**.

Trumpian political space is more easily imagined as a symbolic home.

MAGA provides a place of recognition. Mileian political space is more easily imagined as a passage. The old order must be traversed and exceeded.

This opposition can be represented as:

TRUMP → HABITATION

MILEI → TRANSITION

This is a significant comparative finding.

The restorative political subject needs a space in which the community can recognize itself as already belonging.

The disruptive political subject needs a space in which the community can experience itself as **moving away from an unacceptable condition**.

IMG 2e introduces a further regime: **epistemic traversal**. The chart offers a structured visual field. Unlike productive chaos, the graph is highly ordered.

The graph therefore organizes a **guided visual journey through data**. The speaker can direct that journey, but the spectator's gaze is mobilized epistemically. The political subject guides perception.

This mode of fruition can be represented as:

SEE

↓

COMPARE

↓

INTERPRET

↓

ACCEPT / CONTEST DIAGNOSIS

The graph produces a different form of immersion from **IMG 2d**.

Here the viewer enters a space of apparent order. But the purpose remains transformative.

The orderly visualization is used to justify disruptive politics. This creates one of the most interesting tensions in Milei's corpus:

DISRUPTIVE POLITICS CAN BE LEGITIMATED

THROUGH HIGHLY ORDERED REPRESENTATION.

The graph organizes what the political body destabilizes. The two modes complement one another.

IMG 2b says:

FEEL THE INTOLERABILITY OF THE CRISIS.

IMG 2e says:

SEE ITS STRUCTURE.

The spectator therefore alternates between **affective immersion and cognitive orientation**.

This combination prevents Mileian communication from being reduced to chaos alone.

The corpus contains both acceleration and ordering devices.

The political identity derives strength from their convergence.

Chaos supplies urgency, data supply intelligibility: the spectator is invited both to experience disruption and to understand why disruption is represented as necessary.

The Mileian regimes of fruition can consequently be summarized as:

- TENSIVE EXPOSURE TO THE LEADER'S BODY;
- MOTOR ANTICIPATION OF RUPTURE;
- ANTAGONISTIC POSITIONING OUTSIDE THE CASTA;
- ACCELERATED TRAVERSAL OF PRODUCTIVE CHAOS;
- GUIDED EPISTEMIC NAVIGATION THROUGH ECONOMIC DATA.

These modes converge on a broader structure:

MILEIAN FRUITION

↓

ACTIVATED IMMERSION IN A WORLD UNDER TRANSFORMATION.

The comparison between Trump and Milei can therefore be developed through several spatial oppositions:

CONTEMPLATION / ACTIVATION

- Trumpian monumentalization privileges contemplation of a stable central figure;
- Mileian bodily excess privileges activation through visible tension.

DWELLING / TRAVERSAL

- Trumpian collective space tends toward symbolic habitation and belonging;
- Mileian collective space tends toward passage through crisis toward another order.

RITUAL REPETITION / ACCELERATED CIRCULATION

- Trump's political universe stabilizes identity through recurrent signs and ritual forms;
- Milei's stabilizes identity through recurrent disruptive operations moving across heterogeneous media contexts.

PROTECTION / RUPTURE

- Trump's spectator is invited to inhabit a space whose boundaries deserve protection;
- Milei's is invited to inhabit a space whose constraining structures require transformation.

RESTORATIVE IMMERSION / DISRUPTIVE IMMERSION

- Trumpian immersion produces identification with a community represented as authentic and recoverable;
- Mileian immersion produces identification with a collective process represented as necessary to liberation.

These oppositions should not be interpreted rigidly. Trumpian communication can be extremely dynamic and confrontational.

Mileian communication can create stable rituals, symbols, and communities.

The comparison concerns the dominant semiotic tendencies generated by the selected corpus.

At a deeper level, both regimes solve the same political problem: **how to transform the spectator from an external observer into an internally positioned political subject**.

The process can be represented as:

SPECTATOR OUTSIDE THE TEXT

↓

TEXT ASSIGNS A POSITION

↓

POSITION ORGANIZES VALUES AND EMOTIONS

↓

SPECTATOR CAN IDENTIFY WITH COLLECTIVE / TRANSFORMATION

↓

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BECOMES IMAGINABLE

The image therefore creates a **virtual place for the receiver**. The spectator does not physically enter the image, but the image offers a position from which it should be interpreted.

This position may be:

- the threatened patriot;
- the admirer of strength;
- the MAGA supporter;
- the subject excluded from the caste;
- the angry citizen;
- the observer persuaded by economic data;
- the participant in a disruptive political movement.

Political fruition is therefore fundamentally related to **subjectivation**.

To see the political space in the preferred way is also to begin occupying a particular political identity.

This process connects directly with the enunciative contract analyzed in Chapter V:

- the enunciator constructs the enunciatee.
- the spatial regime gives that enunciatee **somewhere to stand**.

This formulation is not merely metaphorical.

The interpretive position is spatially organized:

- inside;
- outside;
- center;
- margin;
- above;
- below;
- near;
- far;
- stationary;
- moving.

The political subject becomes intelligible through these relations.

The spectator is therefore not simply told:

WHAT TO THINK

but also:

WHERE TO LOCATE YOURSELF

WITHIN THE POLITICAL WORLD.

Trumpian communication predominantly offers the position:

INSIDE THE AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY, ORIENTED TOWARD

THE STRONG LEADER, DEFENDING A VALUED ORDER.

Mileian communication predominantly offers:

OUTSIDE THE ILLEGITIMATE SYSTEM, ALIGNED WITH

THE DISRUPTIVE LEADER, MOVING TOWARD A DIFFERENT ORDER.

These positions produce different experiences of agency:

- the Trumpian subject participates mainly through **recognition, reaffirmation, defense, and restoration**.
- the Mileian subject participates through **recognition, indignation, confrontation, and transformation**.

The distinction becomes especially significant in digital environments because spatial fruition is increasingly tied to **navigation**.

The platform user moves through political content physically by manipulating an interface:

- scrolling;
- clicking;
- swiping;
- opening;
- closing;
- sharing;
- returning.

The embodied micro-actions of interface use create a literal form of movement through symbolic political space. This is analytically relevant because different political texts compete to interrupt or redirect that movement.

A visually recognizable Trump image can stop scrolling. A Milei confrontation can generate replay. A graph can invite closer inspection. A meme can trigger sharing. The political sign therefore seeks to convert **interface movement into attention**.

The sequence becomes:

SCROLLING

↓

RECOGNITION / SHOCK

↓

ATTENTIONAL STOP

↓

INTERPRETATION

↓

POSSIBLE INTERACTION

Political visibility consequently depends on the ability to produce a **threshold in the user's movement**.

The image interrupts the user pauses, the political world temporarily occupies the screen: this is a new form of spatial power.

The leader does not merely occupy public squares or televised stages, he occupies moments within the user's navigational experience. Political space becomes microscopically integrated into everyday bodily routines.

The hand scrolls, the eye recognizes, the attention stops, the political sign enters: this process contributes to the apparent immediacy of platformized leadership. The leader seems to appear inside the user's personal media environment.

Trump's face or Milei's body is encountered on the same device used for interpersonal communication, work, entertainment, and everyday information.

The distinction among spaces becomes blurred. The public space of politics enters the private space of the screen.

This can be represented as:

PUBLIC POLITICAL EVENT

↓

MEDIA CAPTURE

↓

PLATFORM CIRCULATION

↓

PERSONAL DEVICE

↓

INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE

The political scene travels from collective exteriority to intimate proximity. This transformation has major consequences for spatial fruition.

The rally that once required physical attendance can now be consumed in bed. The political confrontation can enter the kitchen. The chainsaw can appear during ordinary scrolling.

The political space becomes **domesticated without becoming depoliticized**. Its signs enter everyday life. This enhances the continuity between political identity and ordinary media routines.

The spectator can therefore move repeatedly between political and non-political content without a clear spatial transition. Politics is no longer encountered only in explicitly political environments. It appears within a mixed communicative ecology.

This generalized adjacency favors leaders with highly recognizable visual identities: a Trumpian sign can retain recognizability even when surrounded by unrelated content, a Mileian sign can do the same.

The political persona therefore functions as a **portable spatial organizer**. Wherever the recognizable sign appears, it can temporarily reconstruct the leader's political world around itself.

The MAGA cap brings MAGA space into the feed. The chainsaw brings disruptive space. The fist brings restorative resistance. The graph brings Mileian economic diagnosis. The fragment recreates the larger environment. Political fruition therefore becomes increasingly **modular**.

The spectator can enter the political world through small signs rather than complete events. This is a major transformation in contemporary political experience: we do not need to watch an entire rally, a clip may suffice; we do not need to read an entire economic programa, a graph may suffic; we do not need to reconstruct an entire immigration discourse, an image may activate it. The political world becomes accessible through **semiotic portals**, each recognizable object or gesture functions as an entry point.

The relation can be represented as:

SIGN

↓

RECOGNITION

↓

ENTRY INTO POLITICAL FRAME

↓

ACTIVATION OF VALUES / NARRATIVE / PASSION

↓

POSITIONING OF SPECTATOR

This modularity is particularly important because it explains how complex political identities survive fragmented attention.

The spectator does not reconstruct the entire worldview consciously at every encounter. Much of the interpretive work has already been sedimented through previous exposure. The sign reactivates it.

Trumpian and Mileian political spaces can therefore be described as **distributed but reconstructible**. Their elements circulate separately. The audience reconnects them.

The red cap, fist, airplane, chainsaw, angry body, caste, and graph belong to different visual texts, but each can reopen the same broader political universe. The spectator becomes a participant in this reconstruction. This means spatial fruition is not passive.

The audience performs **semiotic assembly**. It connects fragment to persona. Persona to narrative. Narrative to values. Values to political identity. The political space exists partly through this interpretive labor. This is especially visible in memetic circulation, where the original context may be radically reduced.

A meme assumes that the receiver already understands enough to supply what is absent. The less explanation required, the stronger the evidence that a political code has become socially stabilized.

The regime of fruition therefore changes over time. At an early stage, the spectator may need explanation. Later, a single sign may suffice.

This transition can be represented as:

EXPLANATORY FRUITION

↓

REPEATED EXPOSURE

↓

RECOGNITION

↓

CONDENSED FRUITION

The political world becomes progressively easier to enter. This has important implications for polarization. Once different interpretive communities develop distinct spatial and symbolic codes, the same scene can be inhabited in radically different ways.

A Trump rally can be experienced as:

- patriotic community;
- spectacular personalization;
- threatening exclusion;
- democratic mobilization;

depending on the interpretive position.

A Milei chainsaw can be experienced as:

- liberating rupture;
- irresponsible destruction;
- humorous spectacle;
- radical reform;

again depending on the code.

The same physical or visual space therefore contains **multiple possible regimes of fruition**. The corpus allows reconstruction of the preferred regimes produced by each political identity, not prediction of every empirical response. This distinction remains methodologically essential.

Semiotic analysis identifies how the text positions its model spectator. Reception studies would be required to determine how concrete audiences actually inhabit or reject those positions. Nevertheless, the preferred spatial regimes are politically significant because they organize the forms of participation that the text makes most immediately available.

Trumpian images invite the spectator to **recognize, admire, belong, defend, and reaffirm**. Mileian images invite the spectator to **recognize, feel, cross, confront, and transform**.

The verbs themselves reveal two different politics of space.

Trump:

SEE → RECOGNIZE → ENTER → BELONG → DEFEND

Milei:

SEE → RECOGNIZE → MOVE → CONFRONT → TRANSFORM

The first moves toward stabilization. The second toward reconfiguration. This opposition can also be expressed through two ideal spatial metaphors. Trump constructs the political world as a **home under threat**. Such a structure has:

- an interior;
- an identity;
- boundaries;
- memories;
- a legitimate order;
- something worth protecting.

Milei constructs the political world more strongly as a **structure to be escaped or rebuilt**. Such a structure has:

- walls;
- constraints;
- obstacles;
- privileged occupants;
- passages that must be opened;
- a different possible configuration beyond it.

These metaphors are not explicit descriptions of every image, but they synthesize the deeper spatial grammars.

TRUMP: THE POLITICAL HOME

- the spectator is invited to recognize the space as his own;
- the problem is that the home has been weakened or threatened;
- the leader promises restoration.

MILEI: THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE

- the spectator is invited to recognize the space as constraining;
- the problem is that the structure reproduces dysfunction;
- the leader promises rupture and reconstruction.

The modes of fruition consequently differ in their fundamental relation to **stability**: Trumpian space seeks to make **stability desirable**; Mileian space can temporarily make **instability desirable**.

For Trump:

STABILITY = SECURITY / ORDER / RESTORED IDENTITY

For Milei:

INSTABILITY = POSSIBLE EVIDENCE THAT THE OLD ORDER IS BEING DISRUPTED

This does not mean that Milei's desired final state is unstable. As already established, productive chaos possesses a transitional function. The final horizon is another order.

But the spectator is asked to tolerate, and potentially positively value, movement through instability.

The political experience therefore involves different temporalities:

- Trump promises arrival at a known or imagined condition;
- Milei promises passage toward a not-yet-realized one.

The first produces a regime of **return**. The second a regime of **crossing**. This difference can be summarized as:

- TRUMP → FRUITION OF SPACE AS RETURN TO A SYMBOLIC HOME
- MILEI → FRUITION OF SPACE AS TRANSIT THROUGH RUPTURE

The broader significance of this distinction lies in the connection between spatial experience and political subjectivity:

- a subject who experiences the political world as home will value defense, continuity, belonging, and restoration;
- a subject who experiences it as constraint will value exit, rupture, mobility, and liberation.

The representation of space therefore predisposes the interpretation of political action. The political solution appears coherent because the audience has first been given a particular way of **inhabiting the problem**. This is one of the central semiotic mechanisms emerging from the corpus. Trump does not merely propose protection. He constructs **a world experienced as requiring protection**.

Milei does not merely propose rupture. He constructs **a world experienced as requiring rupture**. The regime of spatial fruition connects diagnosis and action. The spectator feels where he or she is. That spatial position gives political transformation meaning. The two models can therefore be condensed as follows:

TRUMPIAN REGIME OF SPATIAL FRUITION

- **CENTERED**
  because attention is organized around the leader;
- **RITUAL**
  because shared symbols are repeatedly enacted;
- **IMMERSIVE**
  because the supporter can inhabit a recognizable political environment;
- **IDENTITARIAN**
  because space confirms belonging;

- **PROTECTIVE**

  because the interior is represented as valuable and potentially threatened;

- **RESTORATIVE**

  because the desired movement returns the community toward a positively valorized order.

MILEIAN REGIME OF SPATIAL FRUITION

- **TENSIVE**

  because the political environment is organized through conflict and intensity;

- **MOBILE**

  because meaning emerges through movement and crossing;

- **ACCELERATED**

  because circulation and reaction continually reorganize the scene;

- **ANTAGONISTIC**

  because the spectator is positioned against a constraining system;

- **TRANSFORMATIVE**

  because space is something upon which political action must operate;

- **DISRUPTIVE**

  because rupture functions as the necessary passage toward a different order.

Despite these differences, both regimes transform the spectator into a **situated political subject**. Neither leaves the viewer in an abstract external position.

Trumpian communication says:

YOU ARE INSIDE THE COMMUNITY WHOSE SPACE MUST BE RESTORED.

Mileian communication says:

YOU ARE INSIDE THE CRISIS BUT OUTSIDE THE PRIVILEGED

SYSTEM, AND YOU MUST PARTICIPATE IN ITS TRANSFORMATION.

Both constructions therefore blur the distinction between seeing and participating. To see the political scene according to its preferred grammar already means accepting a position within it.

Spatial interpretation becomes the first stage of symbolic participation. The spectator is therefore invited not merely to understand the political world, but to **inhabit it according to a specific topology of values**.

This observation allows the spatial chapter to converge with the broader theoretical argument of the study.

Trump and Milei construct different political realities because they construct different ways of moving through those realities.

Trump's leadership produces a space of **ritualized recognition, patriotic immersion, and restorative orientation**.

Milei's produces a space of **conflictual traversal, perceptual acceleration, and disruptive transformation**.

The distinction is visible in the bodies, objects, boundaries, collective formations, and circulatory practices of the corpus.

At the deepest level, therefore, spatial fruition becomes a political grammar of experience.

Trump's spectator is invited to **contemplate the leader, inhabit the community, recognize the boundary, and participate in restoration**.

Milei's spectator is invited to **experience tension, recognize constraint, traverse conflict, and participate symbolically in rupture**.

The two regimes construct opposite but internally coherent relations between space and leadership: **Trump makes political space meaningful by promising to stabilize and restore it; Milei makes political space meaningful by promising to destabilize an inherited configuration in order to open the possibility of another one.** In both cases, however, the spectator is transformed from someone who merely looks at politics into someone who is semiotically positioned **inside a political world whose organization already suggests what kind of transformation should be desired**.

VII. ASPECTUALITY AND TEMPORALITY

7.1. TEMPORAL CONFIGURATIONS AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

The political worlds constructed by Donald Trump and Javier Milei are organized not only through actors, spaces, values, and passions, but also through distinctive **temporal configurations**. Political communication continually produces relations among past, present, and future, assigning different values to each temporal position and defining the transformation through which the collective subject is expected to move from one condition to another.

Time is therefore not a neutral chronological dimension. It is semiotically organized. The past can become an object of nostalgia. The present can become a condition of crisis. The future can become a promise. Continuity can become desirable. Discontinuity can become necessary. Acceleration can become evidence of transformation. Duration can become either endurance or stagnation. The political meaning of time consequently depends on the values assigned to different temporal states.

The comparative corpus reveals two strongly differentiated temporal grammars:

- Trump predominantly constructs a **restorative temporality**, in which a positively valorized past is contrasted with a negatively valorized present and projected forward as the basis for a recovered future;
- Milei predominantly constructs a **discontinuous temporality**, in which the present is represented as the culmination of a dysfunctional historical trajectory that must be interrupted in order for a radically different future to become possible.

The basic opposition can therefore be expressed as:

TRUMP

VALUED PAST → DEGRADED PRESENT → RESTORED FUTURE

MILEI

DYSFUNCTIONAL PAST → CRITICAL PRESENT → RUPTURE → DIFFERENT FUTURE

The distinction is fundamental because the two leaders do not simply disagree about what should happen next. They construct different relationships between political legitimacy and historical time:

- Trump's future acquires value because it promises to recover something represented as already belonging to the nation;
- Milei's future acquires value because it promises to escape from something represented as having persisted for too long.

The first makes the future recognizable through **return**. The second makes it desirable through **difference**. Trumpian political time is therefore strongly connected to memory. Mileian political time is more strongly connected to interruption.

This opposition can be condensed as:

- **TRUMP → FUTURE AS RECOVERY**
- **MILEI → FUTURE AS DISCONTINUITY**

The Trumpian temporal structure is especially visible in **IMG 1d**, where the MAGA symbolic universe condenses an entire temporal narrative into the word *again*.

"Again" is not a neutral adverb. It presupposes a previous condition. Something existed. Something was subsequently lost or weakened. That condition can nevertheless be recovered. The slogan therefore contains a temporal structure even before its political content is fully specified.

The sequence is:

GREATNESS BEFORE

↓

LOSS / DECLINE NOW

↓

GREATNESS AGAIN

The present is negatively defined through its distance from a valued past. The future is positively defined through its capacity to reduce that distance.

This creates a temporal circularity. Political progress is imagined as a return.

The apparent paradox can be expressed as:

TO MOVE FORWARD, THE NATION MUST RECOVER WHAT IT HAS LOST.

This is one of the defining features of restorative political narratives. The past does not remain behind the subject. It is projected ahead as an object of future action.

Memory therefore becomes programmatic. The political future is not imagined as completely unknown. It already possesses an axiological model. The past supplies it.

This gives Trumpian temporality a strong sense of **teleological familiarity**. The desired endpoint is represented as something the nation already knows, remembers, or can recognize as authentically its own. The political promise consequently appears less risky than a completely unprecedented transformation.

Restoration says:

WE ARE NOT ENTERING AN UNKNOWN WORLD,

WE ARE RETURNING TO OUR PROPER CONDITION.

This temporal organization contributes directly to credibility.

A future modeled upon a positively valorized past can appear intelligible because its values are already culturally available.

The leader does not need to invent greatness *ex nihilo.* He needs to present himself as the subject capable of recovering it.

Trump therefore occupies a distinctive temporal position:

PAST VALUE ← PRESENT LEADER → FUTURE RESTORATION

The leader stands at the point where temporal disjunction can be repaired.

This makes the political subject a **temporal mediator**. He connects what America allegedly was with what America should become again.

The present acquires exceptional significance because it becomes the moment in which this reconnection can either occur or fail.

The campaign therefore constructs a **decisive now**. The current moment is not merely one election among others.

It can be represented as the threshold between continued decline and restored greatness.

The structure becomes:

PAST GREATNESS

↓

LONG OR ACCELERATING DECLINE

↓

DECISIVE PRESENT

↓

RESTORATION OR FURTHER LOSS

This type of temporal framing intensifies political urgency: if the present is merely ordinary, delay is tolerable; if the present is a critical threshold, action becomes necessary.

Trumpian temporality therefore combines nostalgia with urgency. The first looks backward. The second demands action now. The future links them.

This temporal architecture can be described as:

RETROSPECTIVE VALUE + PRESENT URGENCY + PROSPECTIVE RESTORATION

The three dimensions reinforce one another. The past supplies the object of value. The present supplies the crisis. The future supplies the promise.

IMG 1b contributes to this temporal structure through a different mechanism. Trump's posture of dominance and visual centrality construct an effect of **durative stability**. The body appears controlled, centered, persistent.

The visual configuration produces less sense of transition than of maintained competence.

This is particularly significant because restorative leadership requires not only the promise of change but also the representation of a subject capable of remaining stable across changing circumstances.

The body introduces continuity into political time.

The relation can be represented as:

CHANGING WORLD

versus

STABLE LEADER

The leader becomes a fixed point. Political conditions may deteriorate. Opponents may change. Campaign moments may succeed one another. The persona retains recognizability. This creates an aspectual configuration based on **duration**.

Trumpian leadership is not represented merely as an instantaneous intervention. It is constructed through repeated continuity of posture, slogan, style, visual identity, and antagonistic positioning.

Repetition therefore gives political identity temporal thickness. The subject appears to persist. This can support a particular authenticity effect:

HE HAS BEEN SAYING / DOING THIS FOR A LONG TIME

↓

THE POSITION APPEARS CONSISTENT

↓

CONSISTENCY CONTRIBUTES TO AUTHENTICITY

Duration therefore becomes a veridictory resource. The leader's identity is authenticated through temporal recurrence. This is especially significant within digital political communication because older signs remain available for recirculation.

A previous speech can be replayed. An old slogan can return. A characteristic gesture can be compared across events. Temporal continuity becomes visible through archives. Political identity therefore develops not merely synchronically but **diachronically**.

The spectator encounters current Trump through memories of previous Trumpian texts. The leader is temporally cumulative.

IMG 1c contributes another temporal dimension: the use of biography as **completed past competence**. Airplanes, wealth, and luxurious environments refer to achievements represented as already accomplished.

Unlike MAGA, which connects past national greatness to future restoration, **IMG 1c** connects Trump's personal past to his political future.

The structure is:

HE SUCCEEDED BEFORE

↓

SUCCESS EXISTS AS A COMPLETED BIOGRAPHICAL RESULT

↓

PAST PERFORMANCE BECOMES EVIDENCE OF PRESENT COMPETENCE

↓

PRESENT COMPETENCE SUPPORTS FUTURE PROMISE

Trump's biography therefore functions temporally as a **precedent**. The past supplies proof.

The political future becomes believable because the protagonist is represented as having already completed successful transformations elsewhere.

The underlying inference is:

WHAT HE HAS DONE BEFORE, HE CAN DO AGAIN IN ANOTHER DOMAIN.

Once more, repetition is central. The same logic of *again* operates at the personal level:

- success has occurred;
- success can recur.

The nation can therefore be invited into the leader's existing temporal pattern of achievement.

Trump's personal narrative and national narrative begin to mirror one another:

TRUMP WAS SUCCESSFUL → TRUMP CAN SUCCEED POLITICALLY

and

AMERICA WAS GREAT → AMERICA CAN BE GREAT AGAIN

The analogy produces a powerful temporal convergence between leader and nation. Trump becomes a subject whose biography already contains the structure promised to the country:

PAST SUCCESS → PRESENT COMPETENCE → FUTURE SUCCESS

The leader's temporal identity therefore prefigures national restoration.

IMG 1a creates a radically different temporal density because the assassination attempt generates an abrupt interruption.

Here the relevant temporal opposition is:

BEFORE / AFTER.

Before the attack, the rally proceeds according to ordinary campaign temporality. The event interrupts continuity. The raised fist immediately establishes a new sequence. The visual significance of the gesture depends heavily on how quickly it follows vulnerability.

The temporal proximity among danger, survival, and resistance contributes to the intensity of the image. The sequence is:

NORMALITY

↓

SUDDEN ATTACK

↓

MOMENT OF VULNERABILITY

↓

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

↓

ICONIC RECOMPOSITION

The political image therefore contains a strong **punctual aspect**. A single instant becomes decisive, it can be expanded through circulation. A brief gesture becomes a durable symbol. This creates a transformation between **event time** and **media time**: the gesture is short, its circulation is long. The original temporal scale and the symbolic temporal scale diverge. The process can be represented as:

MOMENT

↓

IMAGE

↓

REPETITION

↓

MEMORY

↓

ICON

A punctual event becomes durative through mediation. This is one of the most important temporal operations of contemporary political imagery. Digital circulation can transform a second into years of symbolic availability. The event no longer belongs exclusively to its original chronology.

It becomes repeatedly present. Each repost makes it “now” again. Political images can therefore acquire a kind of **recursive presentness**. The viewer encounters the past event within the present interface. The historical moment is reactivated.

This is especially important for iconic political imagery because its meaning depends on the capacity to remain affectively available after the immediate event has ended.

IMG 1e introduces another temporal operation. The fake anti-immigration imagery can construct a threatening event as if it were evidence of a broader and continuing condition.

A specific visual representation can be generalized temporally. What appears to happen once becomes representative of what allegedly **keeps happening**.

The movement is:

SINGULAR REPRESENTATION

↓

GENERALIZATION

↓

DURATIVE THREAT

The image therefore helps transform an episodic or fabricated scene into the impression of an ongoing political problem. This is crucial to fear-based temporality.

A threat that exists only once may require a limited response. A threat represented as continuous requires durable protection. The temporal construction therefore contributes to the political demand:

THIS IS NOT AN ISOLATED MOMENT.

THIS IS WHAT THE PRESENT HAS BECOME.

The political crisis is durativized. This operation supports the restorative leader because prolonged decline requires a subject capable of reversing an extended trajectory.

Across the Trumpian corpus, several temporal modes therefore coexist:

- **RETROSPECTIVE TEMPORALITY**
  through national nostalgia;
- **DURATIVE TEMPORALITY**
  through stable leader identity and continuing threat;
- **BIOGRAPHICAL TEMPORALITY**
  through previous success;
- **PUNCTUAL TEMPORALITY**
  through exceptional events such as the assassination attempt;
- **PROSPECTIVE TEMPORALITY**
  through the promise of restoration.

These modes converge around a common temporal grammar:

A VALUED CONDITION HAS BEEN LOST, THE PRESENT IS DECISIVE,

AND THE FUTURE CAN REPAIR THE DISJUNCTION.

The leader becomes the operator capable of converting historical decline into temporal recovery.

The Mileian corpus constructs a **different relationship** with time.

Here the past is not predominantly a source of positively valorized continuity.

It is more strongly represented as the historical accumulation of the very mechanisms responsible for present crisis.

The temporal narrative therefore tends to be **anti-continuist**. The problem is precisely that the past continues into the present.

Political action must interrupt that continuity.

The basic sequence becomes:

DYSFUNCTIONAL PAST

↓

ACCUMULATED CRISIS

↓

INTOLERABLE PRESENT

↓

RUPTURE

↓

DIFFERENT FUTURE

The key temporal operation is not return but **cessation**. Something must stop. This distinction is essential.

Trump's temporal question is:

HOW DO WE RECOVER WHAT HAS BEEN LOST?

Milei's is:

HOW DO WE STOP REPRODUCING WHAT HAS FAILED?

The future is therefore produced through a different aspectual operation.

Trump reactivates. Milei terminates.

The opposition can be expressed as:

- **TRUMP → REITERATION OF VALUE**
- **MILEI → TERMINATION OF DYSFUNCTION**

IMG 2c, centered on the "casta", is especially important to this temporal structure. The caste is not represented merely as a group occupying the present. It is constructed as the product and reproducer of a long-standing political system.

Its negative value derives partly from duration. The system persists. Privileges persist. Bureaucratic structures persist. Economic dysfunction persists. The problem becomes one of **excessive continuity**.

The anti-caste discourse can therefore be understood aspectually as opposition to the **durative**. What has lasted too long must end.

This gives Milei's rhetoric an implicit temporal demand:

ENOUGH.

The meaning of rupture depends precisely on the existence of a prolonged previous condition. The longer the old order is represented as having persisted, the more radical the break can appear necessary.

The relation becomes:

DURATION OF FAILURE → INTENSIFICATION OF JUSTIFICATION FOR RUPTURE

This is a key Mileian temporal mechanism. Duration does not authenticate the old system. It condemns it. This is the reverse of the consistency effect identified in Trump's persona.

For Trump:

DURATION OF PERSONAL STYLE → CONSISTENCY → AUTHENTICITY

For Milei's antagonist:

DURATION OF SYSTEM → STAGNATION → DELEGITIMATION

Aspectual value therefore depends upon the object to which duration is attributed. Duration can be positive or negative.

In Milei's own persona, temporal consistency can again become positive if it demonstrates persistence in anti-system commitments.

The same aspectual category receives different values depending on narrative position.

IMG 2a represents the temporal operation of interruption with extraordinary clarity. A chainsaw cuts through continuous material. Its ordinary practical function therefore contains a temporal as well as spatial logic.

Before the cut, continuity exists. At the moment of cutting, continuity is interrupted. After the cut, the previous configuration no longer exists in the same form.

The sequence is:

BEFORE

↓

CUTTING

↓

AFTER

The object therefore produces an intrinsic **inchoative and terminative logic**. It initiates a new action while terminating a previous continuity. This dual aspectuality is particularly important.

Rupture is simultaneously:

THE END OF SOMETHING

and

THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING ELSE.

The chainsaw becomes the object situated exactly at this threshold. Its political symbolism is therefore temporal as much as material.

It says:

THE OLD ORDER ENDS HERE.

The dramatic force of the object derives from its capacity to condense structural transformation into a punctual act. Economic reform normally unfolds across extended periods.

Institutional restructuring is gradual. The chainsaw compresses duration into an image of immediate intervention.

This produces a form of **temporal condensation**.

The politics of long-term reform becomes visually represented as:

CUT NOW.

This is a powerful simplification. It transforms a complex process into a decisive instant. The political leader becomes the subject capable of producing that instant.

The temporal relation becomes:

TOO MUCH PAST

↓

DECISIVE PRESENT ACT

↓

NEW FUTURE

The present therefore acquires enormous density. It is not merely one point in chronological time. It is the **moment of rupture**.

This is comparable to the decisive present in Trump's rhetoric, but the function differs. Trump's present decides whether restoration will occur. Milei's present decides whether continuity will finally be broken.

The two structures can be compared:

- **TRUMP → NOW = LAST OR CRUCIAL CHANCE TO RESTORE**
- **MILEI → NOW = NECESSARY MOMENT TO BREAK**

Both construct urgency. But one is restorative urgency, the other ruptural urgency.

IMG 2b contributes an aspectuality of **immediacy and intensity**.

Milei's anger appears as something happening in the present of the performance. Shouting and gestural tension reduce temporal distance between passion and expression. The emotion seems to emerge immediately. This produces an effect of **non-deferred reaction**. The leader does not appear to wait. He reacts.

The temporal sequence becomes compressed:

PERCEPTION OF PROBLEM → EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

with minimal visible delay.

This temporal proximity contributes to authenticity. The body appears not to calculate extensively before responding. Again, this is an effect of representation rather than evidence of psychological spontaneity.

Semiotically, however, the reduction of delay can signify sincerity. The leader appears contemporaneous with his own emotion.

The relation is:

FEELING ≈ EXPRESSION

The shorter the perceived distance between them, the stronger the impression of immediacy. This contributes to Milei's anti-formal identity.

Institutional politics is often associated with procedural time:

- waiting;
- negotiation;
- deliberation;
- protocol;
- gradual decision-making.

Milei's bodily communication constructs the opposite temporal rhythm:

- **IMMEDIATE REACTION**
- **ACCELERATED RESPONSE**
- **LOW TOLERANCE FOR DELAY**

The political style therefore creates a conflict between **institutional temporality and disruptive temporality**:

- the old system delays;
- the disruptor accelerates;
- this opposition is especially important because time itself becomes political;
- bureaucracy can be represented as slowness;
- political negotiation as obstruction;
- institutional procedure as unnecessary duration.

The disruptive leader promises acceleration.

The underlying value system becomes:

SLOW = OLD SYSTEM

FAST = TRANSFORMATION

This association is not inevitable, but it appears compatible with the Mileian corpus.

IMG 2d, concerning productive chaos, intensifies acceleration dramatically.

The communicative environment is characterized by rapid reactions, provocations, media recirculation, conflict, and fragmentation. The dominant aspectual mode becomes **iterative acceleration**. One event follows another. One controversy generates another. Political communication appears permanently ongoing.

The structure becomes:

PROVOCATION → REACTION → COUNTER-REACTION → NEW PROVOCATION

There is no stable closure. The communication reproduces itself. This produces a temporality of **continuous activation**.

The political identity remains alive because new episodes continually emerge. This is particularly compatible with platform logic. Feeds require novelty. Attention shifts rapidly. Content decays quickly.

Political actors therefore benefit from producing repeated moments of intensity. Milei's productive chaos transforms this requirement into part of the leadership style itself. Acceleration is no longer merely a technological condition. It becomes an aesthetic value.

The leader appears temporally synchronized with the platform environment:

- fast;
- reactive;
- fragmentable;
- reproducible;
- always capable of generating another event.

This temporal compatibility is significant. Traditional institutional communication often operates according to slower rhythms:

- press conferences;
- formal statements;
- legislative procedure;
- negotiation;
- policy documents.

Platform politics rewards more immediate temporal units:

- clips;
- posts;
- reactions;
- memes;
- short confrontations.

The Mileian political persona can therefore appear especially adapted to a media ecology of **compressed presentness**.

The present continually renews itself. There is always another now. Political time becomes serial. This seriality produces an interesting paradox. Milei's communication promises radical rupture, the performance of rupture must itself be **repeated**. The once-and-for-all break becomes a continuous style.

The relation can be expressed as:

RUPTURE AS POLITICAL EVENT

but also

RUPTURE AS RECURRING COMMUNICATIVE FORM.

This is essential to maintaining disruptive identity. If rupture occurred only once and then stabilized, the leader might gradually lose the signs distinguishing him from conventional politics.

Repeated disruption allows the political persona to remain recognizably anti-system.

The temporal structure therefore becomes:

BREAK → NEW BREAK → NEW BREAK → CONTINUED IDENTITY OF RUPTURE

This can be described as **iterated discontinuity**.

The paradox is theoretically productive:

DISCONTINUITY BECOMES CONTINUOUS.

A disruptive political identity achieves continuity by repeatedly performing discontinuity. This is one of the most distinctive temporal features of the Mileian corpus.

IMG 2e introduces a markedly different temporal regime through inflation charts and economic indicators. Graphs make temporal sequences visible. They transform time into a spatial axis.

A viewer can see:

- before;
- after;
- rise;
- fall;
- acceleration;
- deceleration;
- trend;
- turning point.

Economic time becomes visually organized. This is particularly important because political legitimacy depends not only on diagnosis of the present but on the comparison among different periods.

The chart can establish:

BEFORE MILEI

versus

AFTER MILEI

or:

OLD MANAGEMENT

versus

NEW MANAGEMENT

Temporal distinction becomes political distinction. The graph therefore performs a kind of **periodization**. It divides historical continuity into meaningful segments. The political subject can then attribute value to each. The sequence can be represented as:

- **PERIOD "A" → NEGATIVE**
- **THRESHOLD / POLITICAL CHANGE**
- **PERIOD "B" → POSITIVE OR PROMISING**

This structure is crucial for a disruptive leader because rupture must eventually become empirically narratable as a turning point. The political program cannot remain indefinitely at the level of promise. It requires temporal evidence.

The chart can provide a visual narrative of:

THINGS WERE GOING THIS WAY

↓

WE INTERVENED

↓

NOW THEY ARE GOING THAT WAY

The leader becomes a **temporal caesura**. History is divided around political action.

The temporal meaning of leadership therefore intensifies:

BEFORE US / AFTER US.

This form of periodization is common in political communication, but it is especially coherent with the Mileian claim to radical discontinuity.

A disruptive government seeks to appear not as another phase of the same cycle but as the beginning of a different one.

The graph can visually support this claim. It turns political transformation into a change of trajectory. The temporal line bends.

The political narrative says:

THIS IS THE TURN.

This can produce a particularly strong form of veridiction because the desired political rupture becomes visible as a temporal inflection. Again, the empirical validity of any specific claim depends on the data and framing employed; semiotic analysis concerns how the visualization constructs the **meaning of temporal change**.

The chart may also contribute to the management of sacrifice. Radical reforms can generate short-term costs.

Political discourse must therefore organize relations between:

IMMEDIATE PAIN

and

FUTURE BENEFIT.

The temporal structure becomes:

DIFFICULT PRESENT

↓

NECESSARY TRANSITION

↓

IMPROVED FUTURE

This is one of the most important temporal challenges for disruptive politics. If the desired future is not yet present, the leader must maintain credibility during the interval.

The public is asked to endure. The present becomes an **intermediate time**. Not the old order. Not yet the final new order. A transitional zone. This gives Mileian politics a strong aspect of **provisionality**.

Current instability can be represented as temporary. Current sacrifice can be represented as necessary. Current conflict can be represented as transitional. The political meaning depends heavily on the future horizon.

Without the promised endpoint, the same present could be interpreted as failure. With the future horizon, it can be interpreted as passage.

The relation is:

PRESENT COST + FUTURE PROMISE = TEMPORALLY JUSTIFIED SACRIFICE

The credibility of the structure depends upon the audience continuing to accept the projected future. This makes temporal expectation politically crucial. The leader must preserve **anticipation**.

Milei's discourse consequently relies not only on anger about the past but on patience toward the future.

This creates an interesting emotional combination:

IMPATIENCE WITH THE OLD SYSTEM

but

PATIENCE WITH THE TRANSITION TO THE NEW ONE.

The two temporal dispositions are not contradictory. They are assigned to different objects. The old system has had too much time. The new system requires time. The asymmetry can be represented as:

- **OLD ORDER** → "ENOUGH TIME HAS ALREADY BEEN WASTED".
- **NEW ORDER** → "RESULTS REQUIRE TIME".

This is a powerful temporal operation because it redistributes responsibility for duration. Long duration under the old system becomes evidence of failure. Required duration under the new system becomes evidence of structural difficulty.

The same temporal quantity can therefore acquire opposite values depending on narrative framing. This demonstrates that political temporality is inherently **axiologized**. Time itself is not positive or negative. Its political meaning depends on who occupies it and what transformation it serves.

The comparative corpus consequently reveals several distinct aspectual categories:

I. INCHOATIVITY

- Trump's political future begins when restoration is reactivated;
- Milei's begins at the moment the old continuity is broken.

II. DURATION

- Trump uses duration positively when it establishes consistency of leader identity and negatively when it represents prolonged national decline or threat;
- Milei uses duration negatively when it represents persistence of the old system and positively when continuity confirms the leader's commitment to rupture.

III. ITERATION

- Trumpian iteration stabilizes slogans, symbols, gestures, and national belonging;
- Mileian iteration stabilizes disruptive operations, confrontation, and communicative acceleration.

IV. PUNCTUALITY

- Trumpian punctuality appears strongly in **IMG 1a**, where a brief gesture condenses resistance;
- Mileian punctuality appears strongly in **IMG 2a**, where the cut condenses the moment of rupture.

V. TERMINATIVITY

- Trump seeks to terminate decline or threat;
- Milei seeks to terminate the old political-economic system.

VI. CONTINUITY

- Trump valorizes continuity with a positively imagined national past;
- Milei negatively valorizes continuity with an old order represented as dysfunctional.

VII. DISCONTINUITY

- Trump typically constructs unwanted discontinuity as evidence of lost order;
- Milei constructs desired discontinuity as the precondition of refoundation.

The deepest temporal contrast can therefore be formulated as:

TRUMP

THE GOOD TIME HAS BEEN INTERRUPTED AND MUST BE RECONNECTED.

MILEI

THE BAD TIME HAS CONTINUED TOO LONG AND MUST BE INTERRUPTED.

This is perhaps the clearest way to distinguish the two temporal grammars.

Trump's political intervention repairs an interruption. Milei's political intervention creates an interruption.

The opposition can be diagrammed as follows:

TRUMP

POSITIVE CONTINUITY → interrupted by decline → NEGATIVE PRESENT

→ restorative leadership → RECOVERED POSITIVE CONTINUITY

MILEI

NEGATIVE CONTINUITY → prolonged until crisis → INTOLERABLE PRESENT

→ disruptive leadership → BREAK → NEW TEMPORAL TRAJECTORY

The leaders therefore occupy opposite positions relative to historical continuity.

Trump is a **connector**. Milei is a **separator**.

Trump says, semiotically:

THE FUTURE MUST BE RECONNECTED TO A VALUED PAST.

Milei says:

THE FUTURE MUST BE DISCONNECTED FROM A REJECTED PAST.

These temporal operations closely mirror the spatial ones reconstructed in Chapter VI.

Trump:

- **BOUNDARY**
- **CENTER**
- **RESTORATION**
- **CONTINUITY**

Milei:

- **BREACH**
- **MOVEMENT**
- **RUPTURE**
- **DISCONTINUITY**

Space and time therefore form coherent systems.

Trump's spatial restoration corresponds to temporal reconnection. Milei's spatial rupture corresponds to temporal interruption. The same political values organize both dimensions.

This convergence reinforces the internal coherence of the two leadership models. The analysis also reveals that both leaders construct the present as **exceptional**.

The present is not ordinary time. It is a turning point.

For Trump, the present is represented as the moment when national decline can still be reversed.

For Milei, the present is represented as the moment when systemic continuity can finally be broken.

The two temporal structures therefore share a logic of urgency:

ACT NOW OR THE TRANSFORMATION MAY BECOME IMPOSSIBLE.

The feared alternative differs. Trump fears further loss. Milei fears continued reproduction of the same system.

The negative futures can be represented as:

TRUMP

NO RESTORATION → CONTINUED DECLINE

MILEI

NO RUPTURE → CONTINUED CRISIS

This construction of alternative futures gives political choice a dramatic temporal character. The election or political decision becomes a branching point. Time can go one way or another.

The leader represents the correct path. Political temporality therefore becomes **bifurcated**. One branch leads toward the desired object. The other toward deepening crisis.

This structure is particularly effective in polarized politics because compromise becomes temporally dangerous.

If the moment is decisive, moderation can appear insufficient. The political field is pushed toward urgency.

This urgency is amplified by digital media environments in which political communication is organized around a permanent present.

Notifications, breaking news, posts, reactions, live streams, short video, trending topics: the technological environment continually signals "NOW". Political actors can exploit this infrastructure of immediacy.

Trump's restoration becomes urgent now. Milei's rupture becomes necessary now. Platform temporality therefore interacts with populist temporality. Both depend strongly on **presentification**.

Historical narratives are condensed into the current moment. Complex political processes are made actionable now. Long-term transformations are represented through immediate signs: the raised fist, the chainsaw, the post, the graph. Each compresses political time into a visually or digitally accessible present.

This process can be described as **temporal condensation**. The political narrative may concern decades. The sign appears in seconds. The audience must reconstruct the long trajectory from the short fragment.

The temporal relation becomes:

LONG HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

↓

CONDENSED DIGITAL SIGN

↓

IMMEDIATE RECOGNITION

A MAGA cap can activate decades of imagined national change. A chainsaw can activate decades of anti-state critique. A graph can compress years of inflation into a small visual field. A raised fist can condense an attack, survival, and political resilience into one frame.

This compression is one of the most important temporal affordances of visual political communication.

The sign becomes a **time capsule**. It contains more temporality than its immediate duration would suggest. This also contributes to memetic circulation.

Signs that condense temporal narratives can be reused repeatedly. The audience does not need the entire chronology each time. The fragment activates it.

The corpus therefore demonstrates an increasing relationship between **temporal depth and expressive brevity**.

The political message becomes shorter while the interpretive structure becomes deeper. This is possible only because previous communication has already stabilized the code.

The viewer knows what MAGA refers to. Knows what the chainsaw refers to. Knows what inflation signifies politically. Knows the context of the raised fist. Recognition supplies temporal depth.

The political image therefore possesses a **diachronic halo**. What is visible now carries meanings accumulated before. This halo contributes to leadership identity.

Trump appears not merely as the Trump in the current image but as the Trump of previous campaigns, business success, MAGA rallies, confrontations, and iconic moments.

Milei similarly appears as the Milei of television conflict, libertarian discourse, anti-caste rhetoric, chainsaw symbolism, and economic diagnosis.

Each new text enters a pre-existing temporal archive. Political identity becomes **sedimented**.

The temporal question is therefore not only:

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

it is also:

WHAT PREVIOUS SIGNS DOES THIS TEXT REACTIVATE?

The corpus itself demonstrates this sedimentation:

- **IMG 1a** acquires meaning partly through an already established ethos of strength;
- **IMG 1b** stabilizes that ethos through recurrent dominance;

- **IMG 1c** supplies the longer biography of success;
- **IMG 1d** inserts national memory and restorative futurity;
- **IMG 1e** constructs threat as continuing present.
- **IMG 2a** constructs decisive rupture;
- **IMG 2b** produces immediate passional response;
- **IMG 2c** gives duration to systemic antagonism;
- **IMG 2d** generates accelerated iterative presentness;
- **IMG 2e** converts economic time into measurable trajectories.

The corpus occupy different temporal functions within the same political system. No single image contains the entire political temporality. Together, they form a **temporal architecture**.

This architecture can be summarized as follows.

TRUMPIAN TEMPORALITY

- **PAST:** positively valorized source of greatness and national identity;
- **PRESENT:** condition of loss, threat, and decisive political choice;
- **LEADER:** mediator capable of reconnecting temporal continuity;
- **FUTURE:** restoration of a positively recognized condition;
- **DOMINANT ASPECT:** recovery and reiteration;
- **MEDIA RHYTHM:** repetition of stable symbols and recurring iconic confirmation.

MILEIAN TEMPORALITY

- **PAST:** accumulation of dysfunctional structures and political-economic failure;
- **PRESENT:** intolerable crisis and decisive threshold of rupture;

- **LEADER:** operator capable of interrupting inherited continuity;
- **FUTURE:** refoundation and liberation from the old order;
- **DOMINANT ASPECT:** interruption and beginning;
- **MEDIA RHYTHM:** acceleration, repeated confrontation, and continuous reactivation of disruption.

The distinction can be condensed even further:

- **TRUMP → TIME MUST BE REPAIRED.**
- **MILEI → TIME MUST BE BROKEN OPEN.**

The first model imagines politics as the recovery of a lost temporal alignment. The second imagines politics as the creation of a historical discontinuity. Both personalize temporal agency.

History does not simply evolve. A leader must intervene. The future is therefore represented as dependent upon the competence of a singular subject.

Trump becomes the one who can make America great **again**.

Milei becomes the one who can ensure Argentina is **no longer** governed according to the old model.

The crucial temporal operators are revealing:

AGAIN

versus

NO LONGER.

“Again” restores. “No longer” terminates. From this opposition, two different futures emerge. Trump’s future is made desirable through recognition. Milei’s through difference.

At the deepest level, therefore, aspectuality confirms the broader semiotic opposition running throughout the entire corpus. Trumpian leadership is constructed through a temporality of **loss, endurance, resistance, and restorative return**; Mileian leadership through a

temporality of **prolonged crisis, intolerability, rupture, acceleration, and refoundational beginning**.

The political leader consequently functions as a **temporal operator**. Trump is represented as the subject capable of reconnecting a broken continuity between past greatness and future restoration. Milei is represented as the subject capable of interrupting an undesirable continuity between inherited structures and present crisis. Their difference lies not only in what political future they promise, but in **what kind of relationship with time must be accepted for that future to become meaningful**.

Trump asks the spectator to experience the present as a historical deviation that can still be corrected.

Milei asks the spectator to experience it as the endpoint of an exhausted trajectory that can no longer be allowed to continue.

In both cases, political temporality transforms the present into a threshold. The current moment acquires value because it is represented as the point at which the collective subject must decide whether history will **return to a lost object of value or break away from an inherited system of disvalue**. The future is therefore never simply awaited: it is presented as something that must be produced through the exceptional intervention of the leader.

7.2. ASPECTUAL REGIMES: BEGINNING, DURATION, INTERRUPTION, COMPLETION

The temporal configurations examined in the previous section can be further specified through the analysis of **aspectuality**, understood as the organization of processes according to their modes of beginning, continuation, interruption, repetition, completion, and transformation. Aspectuality does not simply answer the question of *when* something happens. It concerns **how an action or state unfolds in time** and how its internal temporal structure contributes to meaning.

A political process may be represented as:

- already completed;

- still ongoing;
- about to begin;
- repeated;
- interrupted;
- temporarily suspended;
- accelerating;
- approaching an endpoint;
- or indefinitely prolonged.

These differences are politically significant because they affect how audiences understand crisis, agency, responsibility, and expectation:

- a condition represented as **ongoing** requires endurance or intervention;
- a process represented as **beginning** produces expectation;
- a crisis represented as **prolonged** can generate impatience;
- a transformation represented as **almost complete** can justify continued support;
- an action represented as **repeatedly interrupted** can generate frustration or renewed mobilization.

Aspectuality therefore organizes the internal temporality of political narratives. Within the present corpus, Trump and Milei construct two distinctive aspectual regimes:

- Trump's discourse is predominantly organized around a movement from **prolonged decline toward interrupted decline and renewed restoration**;
- Milei's is predominantly organized around a movement from **prolonged systemic continuity toward abrupt rupture and the beginning of a new trajectory**.

The contrast can initially be represented as:

TRUMP

NEGATIVE DURATION → INTERRUPTION OF DECLINE → RESTORATIVE CONTINUATION

MILEI

NEGATIVE DURATION → RUPTURE → INCHOATIVE REFOUNDATION

The two systems therefore share an initial diagnosis of excessive negative duration. Something has continued for too long. The nature of what follows differs:

- Trump seeks to **restart a positively valorized continuity;**
- Milei seeks to **begin a qualitatively different sequence**.

This distinction becomes especially clear through the opposition between **iterativity and inchoativity**.

Trumpian political communication relies heavily on iteration:

- MAGA;
- repeated slogans;
- recurring patriotic signs;
- stable gestures;
- repeated antagonistic structures;
- recurrent representations of strength.

The same political identity is continually reconfirmed through repetition.

Mileian communication also relies heavily on repetition, but what is repeated is frequently the **operation of disruption itself**:

- the shout returns;
- the confrontation returns;

- the chainsaw returns;
- the anti-caste opposition returns;
- the graphic demonstration returns;
- the leader repeatedly re-performs the beginning of rupture.

This difference can be formulated as:

- **TRUMP → REPETITION OF IDENTITY**
- **MILEI → REPETITION OF INTERRUPTION**

The first stabilizes. The second continually reactivates instability. Both require recurrence to remain politically recognizable.

In the Trumpian corpus, **IMG 1d** offers the clearest example of iterative aspectuality. The MAGA slogan depends on repetition at multiple levels. The word *again* already contains repetition semantically. Something existed before and is expected to recur.

At the same time, the slogan itself is endlessly repeated across rallies, merchandise, posts, speeches, images, and user-generated content. Aspectual repetition therefore operates both **inside the slogan and around the slogan**.

The internal structure is:

GREATNESS → LOSS → GREATNESS AGAIN

The external communicative structure is:

MAGA → MAGA → MAGA → MAGA

The two forms of repetition reinforce one another. The political message is about return and is itself communicated through return. This creates a strong correspondence between **content and aspectual form**.

The slogan promises reiteration while being reiterated. This is a particularly efficient semiotic structure because the temporal form of communication embodies the temporal form of the political project.

The political identity becomes recognizable precisely because it comes back. The cap returns. The slogan returns. The colors return. The leader returns to the same semantic universe. Recurrence becomes a guarantee of coherence. The process can be represented as:

FIRST OCCURRENCE

↓

REPETITION

↓

FAMILIARITY

↓

STABILIZATION

↓

IDENTITY

Aspectuality therefore contributes to the construction of ethos. A leader whose central signs recur consistently appears to possess a durable political identity. The repetition of MAGA is not simply redundancy. It is **identity maintenance** through temporal recurrence.

The political sign must return because the political world must remain recognizable. This recurrence also creates a ritual dimension. Political ritual depends on iteration:

- the same slogan;
- the same gestures;
- the same symbols;
- the same call-and-response structures.

The collective subject experiences political identity as something that is **renewed rather than invented anew at each event**.

Aspectuality thus reinforces the communal structure analyzed in Chapter VI. The supporter does not simply participate once. Political belonging is reproduced through recurring acts. This creates a durative community composed of punctual events:

- the rally is temporary → the movement **persists**;
- the individual chant is brief → the slogan **continues**;
- the specific cap is material and finite → its symbolic type is **repeated indefinitely**.

The Trumpian political collective therefore acquires continuity through **iterated punctuality**. This distinction is important. Duration does not always require uninterrupted presence. A political identity can persist because it is repeatedly reactivated.

The relation becomes:

EVENT

↓

INTERRUPTION

↓

NEW EVENT

↓

INTERRUPTION

↓

NEW EVENT

at a higher level:

CONTINUOUS POLITICAL IDENTITY.

The individual manifestations are discontinuous. The symbolic system is durative. This is characteristic of mediatized political movements. The audience may not be permanently mobilized, but the recurring sign allows rapid re-entry into the political world.

IMG 1b reinforces this durative structure through bodily consistency. Trump's posture of dominance does not depend on one isolated appearance. Its political meaning is strengthened through repetition across rallies, debates, public events, photographs, and audiovisual representations.

A single dominant posture might remain contingent. Repeated dominance becomes a trait. The aspectual movement is therefore:

GESTURE / POSTURE AS EVENT

↓

ITERATION

↓

STABILIZED BODILY STYLE

↓

ETHOS OF DOMINANCE

The body acquires duration through recurrence. This creates an important distinction between **physical continuity and semiotic continuity**.

Trump's body changes over time, appears in different contexts, and performs different actions. Selected recurring configurations allow political representation to produce a relatively stable bodily persona.

Semiotic duration is therefore constructed rather than simply given. The audience remembers the recurring pattern. Each new occurrence confirms it.

This mechanism contributes to the perception:

HE IS STILL THE SAME.

In political communication, that perception can be valuable because it supports the authenticity of the leader. The subject does not appear to begin from zero in each situation. He carries a temporal history. This produces what may be termed **aspectual persistence of persona**. The political identity persists because its characteristic forms recur.

IMG 1c introduces another aspectual category: the **perfective**. The wealth, airplanes, and luxurious environments associated with Trump represent outcomes already achieved. They refer to completed success.

The relevant process is not shown unfolding. The image presents the result. This produces a perfective interpretation:

SUCCESS HAS ALREADY OCCURRED.

The political value of the image depends precisely on this completedness. The leader does not merely promise that he may become successful. He is represented as **already having achieved success**.

The result is available in the present. The political argument therefore uses a completed past as evidence for an uncompleted future.

The structure becomes:

COMPLETED PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

↓

PRESENT ATTRIBUTION OF COMPETENCE

↓

FUTURE POLITICAL PROMISE

The perfective aspect supplies a form of credibility that differs from the durative one.

Duration says:

I HAVE REMAINED CONSISTENT.

Completed success says:

I HAVE ALREADY DONE SOMETHING SUCCESSFULLY.

The first authenticates character. The second authenticates competence. Together, they construct a protagonist whose temporal identity combines persistence and achievement.

The leader appears both **stable across time and capable of completing transformations**.

This is particularly important to the narrative program of restoration. The collective future remains unaccomplished. The leader's biography provides images of previous accomplishment.

The incomplete national narrative is therefore entrusted to a subject represented through completed individual success.

The temporal asymmetry is politically productive.

IMG 1a, by contrast, is dominated by **punctuality and interruption**. The assassination attempt abruptly breaks the durative temporality of the campaign rally.

The event functions aspectually as an interruption. The ordinary sequence cannot continue unchanged. The interruption creates a before and after.

The relation is:

ONGOING EVENT

↓

SUDDEN BREAK

↓

EXCEPTIONAL MOMENT

↓

REORIENTATION

The raised fist becomes especially meaningful because it occurs inside this interrupted temporality.

Its aspectual function is not simply to continue. It is to restart political agency after interruption. The sequence can therefore be formulated as:

INTERRUPTION OF NORMALITY

↓

MOMENTARY VULNERABILITY

↓

REACTIVATION OF SUBJECT

↓

CONTINUATION UNDER A NEW SYMBOLIC MEANING

The leader survives the break. The political narrative resumes. But it resumes transformed. The event becomes incorporated into the ethos. This process can be described as **re-inchoation after interruption**.

The political subject begins again. This "beginning again" is structurally compatible with Trump's broader restorative logic.

At the micro-level of **IMG 1a**, the leader undergoes interruption and reassertion. At the macro-level of MAGA, the nation undergoes decline and promised restoration.

The aspectual forms mirror one another:

TRUMP IS INTERRUPTED → TRUMP REASSERTS HIMSELF

↓

AMERICA IS INTERRUPTED IN ITS GREATNESS → AMERICA MUST BECOME GREAT AGAIN

The individual event therefore becomes compatible with the national narrative because both share a grammar of **disrupted continuity followed by recovery**.

This correspondence contributes to iconicization.

The image appears to condense the broader political myth. Trump's body becomes a miniature temporal model of America itself within the restorative narrative.

The leader's resilience prefigures national resilience. This is a particularly important connection between bodily and collective aspectuality.

IMG 1e provides a different durative function. The anti-immigration fake imagery does not become politically powerful merely by representing an isolated alleged event.

Its relevance increases when the represented threat is inserted into a narrative of **ongoing repetition**.

A singular image can be generalized:

THIS HAPPENED

becomes

THIS KEEPS HAPPENING

or more broadly:

THIS IS WHAT THE CURRENT SITUATION HAS BECOME.

The political transformation from punctual to durative meaning is central. A single alleged event might require local interpretation. A repeated condition legitimates structural response.

The discourse therefore tends toward **imperfectivization** of threat. Threat is represented as unfinished. Ongoing. Not yet resolved. The political action is consequently also unfinished. Protection must continue. The leader's task remains open.

This creates an aspectual dependency:

ONGOING THREAT → ONGOING NEED FOR PROTECTIVE LEADERSHIP

The absence of closure reinforces political necessity. If the threat were definitively resolved, the protector's narrative function would diminish. Political conflict therefore possesses a built-in mechanism of continuation.

The antagonist persists. The leader remains necessary. This is particularly important to serial political communication. The same actantial structure can be renewed with new events. The specific content changes.

The aspectual relation remains:

PROBLEM NOT YET COMPLETED / RESOLVED

↓

LEADER'S TASK NOT YET COMPLETED

↓

POLITICAL NARRATIVE CONTINUES

The Trumpian corpus therefore constructs a significant interplay among **perfective and imperfective forms**. Trump's personal success can appear perfective. The national crisis appears imperfective. The leader himself appears duratively consistent. The desired restoration remains prospective.

The political structure is therefore:

LEADER'S COMPETENCE = ALREADY DEMONSTRATED

while

COLLECTIVE MISSION = NOT YET COMPLETED.

This asymmetry is highly functional. The subject is ready. The object has not yet been recovered. Political mobilization remains necessary.

The Trumpian aspectual regime can therefore be summarized through four dominant operations:

- **ITERATION**
  repeated symbols and performances stabilize identity;

- **DURATION**
  leader consistency and ongoing threat create political continuity;
- **INTERRUPTION / RESTART**
  exceptional events can be absorbed as demonstrations of resilience;
- **PROSPECTIVE COMPLETION**
  restoration remains the future endpoint toward which the narrative moves.

The corresponding structure is:

- WHAT WAS GOOD MUST RETURN;
- WHAT IS BAD MUST END;
- THE LEADER HAS ALREADY PROVED HIS COMPETENCE;
- THE COLLECTIVE PROGRAM REMAINS TO BE COMPLETED.

The Mileian corpus reorganizes these aspectual categories around a different political logic.

The dominant object of negative evaluation is **continuation itself**. The old system persists. The caste persists. Inflation persists. Bureaucracy persists. Political routines persist.

The state reproduces structures represented as dysfunctional. The first aspectual problem is therefore one of **excessive imperfectivity**.

The political system never reaches the desired closure. Problems continue. Reforms fail. The crisis reproduces itself. The collective subject appears trapped in an unfinished negative process.

The Mileian political intervention consequently promises a radical **terminative operation**. Something must end. This is especially visible in **IMG 2c**.

The “casta” is not simply a present adversary. It is represented as part of a system whose persistence has become intolerable.

The relevant aspectual structure is:

THE SYSTEM CONTINUES

↓

ITS NEGATIVE EFFECTS CONTINUE

↓

CONTINUATION ITSELF BECOMES DISVALUE

↓

TERMINATION BECOMES NECESSARY

The political demand is therefore not merely:

IMPROVE THE PROCESS.

It becomes:

STOP THE PROCESS.

This terminative logic is crucial to disruptive leadership. Incremental modification leaves the underlying continuity intact. Rupture seeks closure. The old sequence must be completed by being ended. The political transformation therefore begins through a **terminative act**.

This is where **IMG 2a** becomes aspectually decisive. The chainsaw is both terminative and inchoative. It ends one material continuity while initiating a new configuration.

The cut can therefore be represented as:

- **TERMINATIVE**
- **OLD STRUCTURE ENDS**

and simultaneously:

- **INCHOATIVE**
- **NEW POSSIBILITY BEGINS**

This dual operation makes the chainsaw an unusually dense aspectual sign. It does not represent pure destruction. It represents the boundary between two temporal regimes. Before the cut. After the cut.

The leader occupies the instant between them. Milei therefore becomes the subject of the **aspectual threshold**.

The political identity is constructed around the capacity to transform:

NOT YET BROKEN

into

NOW BROKEN.

This is fundamentally different from Trump's temporal competence. Trump reactivates a previous value. Milei initiates a new state through termination.

The contrast is:

- **TRUMP → BEGIN AGAIN**
- **MILEI → BEGIN AFTER ENDING**

The distinction is subtle but theoretically important. Restoration treats the desired condition as a recurrence. Refoundation treats it as an emergence after rupture. This is why Milei's political future requires stronger **inchoativity**.

The new order must be represented as beginning. A beginning possesses special political value because it separates the present from the previous system.

The discourse can mark institutional decisions, economic reforms, or electoral victory as thresholds:

FROM NOW ON

A NEW ERA

THE OLD MODEL ENDS HERE

Such formulations are compatible with the deeper semiotic structure even when not literally present in each corpus image.

IMG 2b produces a different kind of inchoativity through bodily action. Milei's gestures and shouting appear to begin rapidly. The body is constantly on the verge of another intervention. Another gesture. Another accusation. Another intensification.

The political subject appears **inchoatively saturated**. Action is always beginning. The body rarely appears fully concluded or settled. This contributes to the impression of continuous activation.

The aspectual sequence is:

TENSION

↓

GESTURAL ONSET

↓

INTENSIFICATION

↓

TEMPORARY CULMINATION

↓

NEW TENSION

The completion of one performance generates the possibility of another. This produces a cyclical structure.

Unlike Trumpian repetition, where recurrence often stabilizes an existing identity through the same signs, Mileian recurrence repeatedly **restarts action**.

The body remains prospective. Something else may happen. The performance appears open-ended. This can produce an effect of unpredictability. Paradoxically, the unpredictability itself becomes predictable.

The audience expects another rupture. The political persona becomes duratively recognizable through repeated beginnings.

This can be expressed as:

REPEATED INCHOATIVITY → STABLE ETHOS OF DISRUPTION

Again, discontinuity produces continuity at a higher level. This is one of the central paradoxes of Mileian aspectuality. The leader's identity persists because his actions repeatedly appear to begin anew.

IMG 2d develops this principle at the level of media circulation. Productive chaos is characterized by a proliferation of incomplete sequences. A statement generates a reaction before the previous controversy has fully ended. A new provocation may begin while an earlier one remains active. A meme may extend the life of a conflict after the original event has passed.

The communicative environment therefore contains **overlapping aspectualities**. Some events are beginning. Others continuing. Others being revived. Others apparently ending. The result is a temporal field in which complete closure is rare.

This can be represented as:

EVENT "A" → CONTINUES

while

EVENT "B" → BEGINS

while

EVENT "C" → IS REACTIVATED

while

EVENT "D" → GENERATES A NEW RESPONSE

The political present becomes densely populated. This contributes to the experience of acceleration. Acceleration does not mean only that events happen rapidly. It also means that multiple unfinished processes coexist.

The audience encounters a political environment in which closure is continually deferred by new beginnings. This creates a form of **permanent inchoativity**.

The communication is always starting something. A new conflict. A new response. A new outrage. A new meme. A new interpretation. This regime is especially compatible with digital platforms because platform attention often depends on novelty.

The new post displaces the previous one. The new controversy reactivates attention. Older content remains technically available.

The political environment therefore combines:

NOVELTY

with

ARCHIVAL PERSISTENCE.

The past is not fully past. It can return instantly. The current event is not fully autonomous. It enters an archive of earlier disruption. This creates a temporal structure of **recursive novelty**.

Everything appears new. The new is recognizable because it repeats a known operation. Milei provokes again. Milei attacks again. Milei explains another graph. Milei confronts another adversary. The same political identity emerges through different events.

This aspectual structure can be formulated as:

NEW EVENT + RECURRING OPERATION = CONTINUOUS DISRUPTIVE IDENTITY

The novelty belongs to the event. The continuity belongs to the style.

IMG 2e introduces a more explicitly perfective dimension because economic graphs can be used to demonstrate whether a process has reached a measurable result.

A graph allows political communication to distinguish among:

- what has already happened;
- what is currently happening;

- what has begun to change;
- what remains incomplete.

Economic data therefore provide a mechanism for **aspectual evaluation**.

A result may be represented as:

- already achieved;
- still progressing;
- only beginning;
- temporarily interrupted.

The political interpretation changes accordingly.

For example, the same trajectory can be framed as:

THE TURNAROUND HAS BEGUN

or:

THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN SOLVED

or:

THE PROCESS IS STILL INCOMPLETE BUT MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

These are not equivalent claims. They assign different aspectual statuses to political action. The graph therefore supports a particularly important distinction between **inchoative success and completed success**.

For a government engaged in radical transformation, this distinction can be politically useful. Full completion may not yet be available. But beginning can itself be presented as evidence.

The structure becomes:

THE RESULT IS NOT COMPLETE

but

THE TRAJECTORY HAS CHANGED.

This allows the leader to claim competence before the final object of value has been reached.

The political narrative can say:

WE HAVE NOT ARRIVED, BUT WE HAVE BEGUN TO MOVE DIFFERENTLY.

Aspectuality therefore mediates between promise and outcome. It supplies intermediate stages.

This is crucial because radical political projects require time. Without aspectual differentiation, the audience might judge only through the binary:

PROMISE FULFILLED / PROMISE NOT FULFILLED.

The inchoative allows a third possibility:

THE PROMISE IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING REALIZED.

The durative extends it:

THE PROCESS CONTINUES.

The terminative can identify partial victories:

THIS PHASE HAS ENDED.

The prospective maintains expectation:

THE FINAL OBJECT REMAINS AHEAD.

Political communication therefore uses aspectuality to organize **waiting**.

This applies to Trump as well, but is particularly important for Mileian reform narratives because disruption can initially produce instability.

The audience must distinguish between:

FAILED PROCESS

and

INCOMPLETE PROCESS.

These interpretations are politically opposite. Failure implies that the transformation should perhaps be abandoned. Incompletion implies that it requires more time. Aspectual framing therefore has direct political consequences.

The statement:

IT HAS NOT WORKED

is terminative and negative.

The statement:

IT HAS NOT WORKED YET

is imperfective and prospective.

One closes. The other keeps the narrative open. The adverb *yet* can therefore perform enormous political work.

This distinction can be generalized:

NOT ACHIEVED

versus

NOT YET ACHIEVED.

The first evaluates. The second temporalizes. Political leadership often depends on converting the former into the latter.

The transformation becomes a process rather than a failed outcome.

This mechanism can support continued mobilization.

Trump's restorative narrative similarly depends on a form of **not yet**:

- America has **not yet** been fully restored;
- the border is **not yet** secure enough:
- greatness has **not yet** been completely recovered.

The common structure is therefore:

OBJECT OF VALUE NOT YET FULLY ACHIEVED

↓

POLITICAL PROGRAM REMAINS OPEN

The difference lies in the object. Trump's incomplete process seeks restoration. Milei's incomplete process seeks refoundation. Aspectual openness allows both leadership projects to persist.

This reveals a structural feature shared by populist political narratives: the transformational program often resists definitive completion.

Complete success would create a narrative problem. If the nation were fully restored, why would the restorer remain necessary?

If the old system were completely dismantled and freedom fully achieved, why would the disruptor remain necessary?

Political identities therefore benefit from a state of **approaching completion without definitive closure**.

This does not mean politicians consciously avoid success. It means that at the level of narrative structure, complete conjunction with the object of value can weaken the conflict that sustains the protagonist's role.

The discourse may consequently continually identify:

- new threats;
- remaining obstacles;

- unfinished reforms;
- resistant institutions;
- new stages of restoration;
- new dimensions of rupture.

The political program becomes serial. This creates a distinctive aspectual configuration:

PROGRESS WITHOUT FINAL SATURATION.

Trump can claim:

WE ARE WINNING, BUT THE WORK IS NOT OVER.

Milei can claim:

THE OLD ORDER IS BEING DISMANTLED,

BUT THE TRANSFORMATION IS NOT COMPLETE.

The structures are analogous. The political subject remains necessary because the transformation remains **imperfective**.

This is particularly compatible with permanent campaigning. Governance and campaign discourse begin to overlap. Even after electoral victory, the leader continues narrating an unfinished struggle.

The political scene remains aspectually open. This allows electoral identity to survive institutional transition. The campaign does not simply end. Its antagonisms can continue in government.

This is especially important for outsider or anti-establishment leaders. Institutional victory could otherwise produce a perfective closure:

OUTSIDER WINS → OUTSIDER BECOMES INSIDER → NARRATIVE COMPLETED.

Instead, the discourse can resist closure:

ELECTORAL VICTORY = ONLY THE BEGINNING.

This is a powerful inchoative transformation. Winning the presidency becomes not the endpoint but the start of the "real" struggle.

The structure is:

CAMPAIGN COMPLETION

↓

GOVERNMENTAL BEGINNING

↓

NEW ANTAGONISTIC PHASE

The same political identity can therefore cross institutional thresholds without ending:

- for Trump, electoral victory can become the beginning of restoration;
- for Milei, electoral victory can become the beginning of dismantling the old system.

Perfective success at one narrative level becomes inchoative opening at another. This nested aspectuality is essential to political seriality. An endpoint at the micro-level becomes a beginning at the macro-level.

The relation can be represented as:

ELECTION WON = PROGRAM BEGINS

REFORM APPROVED = IMPLEMENTATION BEGINS

OPPONENT DEFEATED = NEXT CONFLICT BEGINS

Political time therefore resembles a sequence of **partial closures embedded within an open transformation**.

This structure is especially visible in platformized communication, where each event can be represented as a mini-narrative: a post begins and ends, a clip begins and ends, a controversy begins and fades. All belong to a larger political story that remains open.

The relation becomes:

CLOSED TEXTUAL UNIT

inside

OPEN POLITICAL SERIALITY.

This is one of the key aspectual consequences of digital political communication. Content is fragmented into discrete units, but leadership identity depends on continuity across them.

Trump's repeated symbols provide such continuity. Milei's repeated disruptive operations provide another form. The platform environment therefore encourages a political identity capable of **serial re-inchoation**.

Every post can begin the story again. Every image can reactivate the same conflict. Every meme can renew the antagonism. This also affects collective memory. The past is not simply concluded. It remains available for reactivation:

- **IMG 1a** can be reposted to renew the ethos of resistance;
- **IMG 1d** can be reused to reactivate restoration;
- **IMG 2a** can return whenever a new cut or reform is discussed;
- **IMG 2e** can be compared with subsequent data to reconstruct a temporal narrative.

Past texts become **aspectually reopenable**. Digital archives weaken closure. An old image can become present again.

The political sign thus possesses a latent inchoativity: it can always begin another cycle of interpretation.

This is particularly significant for post-truth communication, because corrective information can also face this recursive temporality.

A false image may be debunked at one moment, apparently closing the factual dispute.

IMG 1e illustrates how the sign can later be recirculated, reframed, or transformed into ideological shorthand. The factual claim may have been terminatively challenged, but the symbolic process can remain imperfective.

This distinction is crucial:

FACT-CHECKING MAY CLOSE A PROPOSITIONAL CLAIM

while

CIRCULATION MAY KEEP THE SYMBOLIC SIGN ALIVE.

Different aspectual levels can therefore conflict. Epistemic closure does not necessarily produce semiotic closure. An image can continue after its referential claim has been discredited.

The sign's political life exceeds the truth-status event. This is one of the mechanisms through which post-truth imagery can retain durability.

The same principle applies positively to factual evidence. An economic graph may initially support a specific claim. Later charts can reopen, extend, or revise its interpretation. The data series is inherently imperfective because new data points will arrive.

IMG 2e therefore belongs to an open temporal object. The economic trajectory continues. The graph can never be absolutely final while the economy continues to evolve. This creates a political advantage and a political risk.

Advantage:

future data can confirm the narrative.

Risk:

future data can challenge it.

Economic veridiction is therefore aspectually exposed to continuation. Unlike a symbolic object whose meaning can remain relatively stable, a chart is tied to a process that will keep producing new evidence.

This makes **IMG 2e** especially important in distinguishing Milei's technical credibility from purely performative credibility.

The chainsaw can retain the same symbolic meaning. The graph remains accountable to temporal change. Political expertise must therefore survive future measurement. This introduces a relationship between aspectuality and falsifiability.

The political claim:

THE TREND IS IMPROVING

is inherently prospective.

New data can confirm or contradict it. The semiotic narrative remains open to empirical continuation.

This creates a different temporal regime from the closed symbolic condensation of the chainsaw.

The corpus therefore juxtaposes:

SYMBOLIC ASPECTUALITY

and

EMPIRICAL ASPECTUALITY.

Symbols can stabilize meanings through repetition. Data remain embedded in ongoing processes. This distinction enriches the comparison between Trump and Milei.

Trump's corpus relies particularly strongly on signs whose aspectual power comes from **repetition and mnemonic stabilization**.

Milei's contains the same mechanism but combines it with data whose political force depends on **measurable temporal trajectories**.

At the comparative level, the principal aspectual operations can be summarized as follows:

TRUMP

- **ITERATIVE**

  MAGA, patriotic signs, recognizable gestures, and recurrent antagonisms continually return;

- **DURATIVE**

  national decline and political threat are represented as ongoing, while the leader's persona appears persistent;

- **PERFECTIVE**

  personal wealth and success can be represented as already accomplished;

- **PUNCTUAL**

  IMG 1a condenses an exceptional event into an iconic instant;

- **RE-INCHOATIVE**

  restoration means beginning again from a valued condition that has been interrupted;

- **IMPERFECTIVE-PROSPECTIVE**

  the full recovery of greatness remains incomplete and therefore politically actionable.

MILEI

- **DURATIVE-NEGATIVE**

  the old system, caste, inflation, and institutional dysfunction are represented as having persisted too long;

- **TERMINATIVE**

  rupture promises to end the old continuity;

- **INCHOATIVE**

  the political break inaugurates a new trajectory;

- **ITERATIVELY DISRUPTIVE**

  confrontation, provocation, and symbolic rupture repeatedly reactivate the same leadership identity;

- **ACCELERATIVE**
  productive chaos multiplies partially overlapping political events;

- **IMPERFECTIVE-PROSPECTIVE**
  refoundation remains ongoing, with results framed as developing rather than fully completed.

The deepest contrast can therefore be represented as:

TRUMP

CONTINUE WHAT SHOULD HAVE CONTINUED.

MILEI

STOP WHAT SHOULD NEVER HAVE CONTINUED AND BEGIN SOMETHING ELSE.

This difference gives the two political projects distinct aspectual identities. Trump's political ideal contains an underlying principle of **recovered continuity**. Milei's contains an underlying principle of **productive discontinuity**.

Trump repairs temporal cohesion. Milei produces temporal separation. The distinction also appears in their respective relations to completion.

Trump's completion is imagined as **reconjunction**:

- America becomes great again;
- the nation recovers security;
- the collective returns to a positively valued state.

Milei's completion is imagined more strongly as **emergence**:

- the old order has been dismantled;
- libertarian transformation has produced a different system;
- the collective subject gains a condition that could not be reached within the previous structure.

The endpoints therefore differ phenomenologically. Trump's desired future should feel **recognizable**. Milei's should feel **new**. This produces different affective relations to completion.

Trumpian completion promises:

- relief;
- security;
- pride;
- recognition;
- return.

Mileian completion promises:

- release;
- freedom;
- vindication;
- renewal;
- refoundation.

Aspectuality therefore connects directly to the passional structures reconstructed in Chapter IV. The endpoint is emotionally meaningful because the process has been temporally organized toward it.

For Trump:

FEAR DURING THREAT

↓

RESISTANCE DURING STRUGGLE

↓

PRIDE AT RESTORATION

For Milei:

FRUSTRATION DURING CONTINUITY

↓

ANGER AT THE THRESHOLD

↓

INTENSITY DURING RUPTURE

↓

LIBERATORY EXPECTATION DURING REFOUNDATION

The political emotion changes with the aspectual phase. This demonstrates that passion is temporally structured. The supporter is not expected to feel the same thing throughout the entire narrative.

Different stages generate different emotional dispositions. The leader must therefore manage a passional sequence across aspectual phases.

Trump must convert anxiety into confidence. Milei must convert anger into endurance and future expectation. This becomes particularly important after political victory. Campaign passion must be transformed into governmental patience. The temporality of mobilization differs from the temporality of implementation.

A campaign says:

NOW.

Governance often says:

NOT YET.

This tension can be especially difficult for disruptive leadership.

A political identity constructed around immediate rupture encounters institutions and economic processes that operate through duration.

Milei's aspectual challenge is therefore to reconcile:

PUNCTUAL SYMBOLISM OF THE CUT

with

DURATIVE REALITY OF REFORM.

The chainsaw promises immediate intelligibility. Institutional transformation requires time. The gap between the two can be politically managed by presenting each reform as another cut within a longer sequence.

The single decisive rupture becomes a series:

CUT 1 → CUT 2 → CUT 3 → CONTINUING TRANSFORMATION

The symbol thus moves from punctuality to iteration. This is another example of how aspectual categories can transform one another. Trump faces a comparable gap. MAGA promises a recognizable restored condition. National change is necessarily complex and prolonged.

The slogan condenses the endpoint, while political action unfolds imperfectively.

The restorative program therefore becomes a sequence of partial recoveries:

- **RESTORE X**
- **RESTORE Y**
- **DEFEND Z**
- **RECOVER ANOTHER VALUE**

The final object remains available beyond each partial success. Both leadership models therefore rely on **aspectual segmentation**. A vast political transformation is divided into smaller episodes.

Each episode can produce a partial sanction:

- a victory;
- a reform;

- a poll;
- a statistic;
- a symbolic moment.

These partial sanctions help sustain the larger unfinished narrative.

The structure becomes:

OPEN MACRO-NARRATIVE

containing

MULTIPLE PARTIALLY CLOSED MICRO-NARRATIVES.

This structure is particularly suited to platform communication because every micro-narrative can become content. The political leader can continually produce small signs of movement.

Trump:

- another rally;
- another endorsement;
- another symbolic confrontation;
- another representation of resistance.

Milei:

- another reform;
- another conflict with the caste;
- another graph;
- another act of cutting;
- another viral confrontation.

The political process thus becomes **serially narratable**. Aspectuality supplies the grammar of that seriality.

Beginning, continuing, winning, being obstructed, restarting, approaching, not yet completing: political leadership becomes an ongoing narrative engine. At a deeper level, this helps explain why both leaders benefit from a politics of permanent conflict.

Conflict prevents complete closure. As long as an antagonist remains, the narrative remains imperfective. The leader continues to possess a function. The object of value remains worth pursuing. The supporter retains a role. The political world remains organized.

This does not mean that conflict is purely instrumental or fabricated. Real political conflict exists independently of narrative strategy. The semiotic point is that **the representation of conflict as unfinished provides aspectual continuity to leadership**.

The antagonist becomes a temporal operator. He delays conjunction. The obstacle extends the narrative.

The conflict says:

NOT YET.

Trump's enemies say:

AMERICA CANNOT YET BE FULLY RESTORED.

Milei's caste says:

THE OLD SYSTEM HAS NOT YET BEEN FULLY DISMANTLED.

The antagonist therefore produces duration. Without resistance, the transformation would be shorter and the political narrative more easily closed.

This relationship can be represented as:

OBSTACLE → DELAY → DURATION → CONTINUED NEED FOR LEADER

Aspectuality thus interacts directly with personalization.

The leader remains central because the political transformation remains incomplete. At the same time, excessive duration creates risk.

If Trumpian restoration remains perpetually unachieved, the promise may lose credibility.

If Mileian refoundation remains indefinitely transitional, sacrifice may become harder to justify.

Political narratives therefore require a balance between:

ENOUGH INCOMPLETION TO SUSTAIN MOBILIZATION

and

ENOUGH COMPLETION TO DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCE.

This balance can be described as an **aspectual economy of political credibility**. The leader needs partial achievements. But also remaining tasks.

Success must occur. But not exhaust the mission. The corpus contains the semiotic resources for this balance:

- **IMG 1c** supplies completed success for Trump;
- **IMG 1a** supplies completed resistance within an ongoing political struggle;
- **IMG 1d** keeps restoration open;
- **IMG 2e** can supply measurable partial results for Milei;
- **IMG 2a** keeps rupture active as a continuing program;
- **IMG 2c** preserves the antagonist;
- **IMG 2d** continuously generates new episodes.

The images therefore occupy different positions within the aspectual economy. Some close. Some open. Some prolong. Some restart.

The corpus functions as a distributed system of temporal roles.

This observation reinforces a central methodological point of the study: the ten images should not be treated as isolated illustrations. Their significance emerges partly from the way they perform **complementary aspectual functions within larger political narratives**.

The Trumpian subcorpus constructs:

- completed personal competence;
- ongoing national crisis;
- punctual heroic resistance;
- iterated belonging;
- continuous threat;
- prospective restoration.

The Mileian subcorpus constructs:

- persistent systemic failure;
- punctual symbolic rupture;
- ongoing bodily activation;
- durable antagonism;
- iterated productive chaos;
- measurable trajectories of transformation.

Taken together, these structures create two different experiences of political process.

The Trumpian process can be summarized as:

WHAT WAS INTERRUPTED MUST BE RESUMED.

The Mileian process as:

WHAT HAS CONTINUED MUST BE INTERRUPTED.

This inversion is the deepest aspectual distinction between the two corpora.

It can be represented formally:

TRUMP

POSITIVE STATE

↓ interrupted

(**NEGATIVE DURATION)**

↓ restorative intervention

POSITIVE STATE REACTIVATED

MILEI

NEGATIVE STATE

↓ prolonged

(**INTOLERABLE DURATION)**

↓ disruptive intervention

NEGATIVE CONTINUITY TERMINATED

↓

NEW STATE BEGINS

Trump's leader therefore functions predominantly as a **re-inchoative operator**: he makes the valued process begin again.

Milei functions predominantly as a **terminative-inchoative operator**: he ends one process in order to initiate another.

This distinction offers a particularly precise semiotic formulation of restorative and disruptive leadership.

At the level of aspectuality, restoration is not merely a political ideology. It is the grammar of **recommencement**.

Disruption is not merely a style. It is the grammar of **termination followed by inauguration**.

These aspectual grammars also help explain the different political meanings of repetition.

Trump repeats to reaffirm continuity. Milei repeats to reaffirm discontinuity.

Trumpian repetition says:

WE REMAIN WHO WE ARE AND WILL RECOVER WHAT BELONGS TO US.

Mileian repetition says:

WE HAVE NOT YET BROKEN ENOUGH WITH WHAT MUST END.

One recurrence protects identity. The other sustains transformative pressure. Both transform repetition into a mechanism of recognition. The audience learns the temporal logic. Once learned, even small signs can reactivate it.

IMG 1d says *again* and reopens the entire restorative trajectory.

IMG 2a displays the chainsaw and reopens the entire ruptural trajectory.

The objects become aspectual condensers. They tell the audience not simply what political values are at stake, but where the collective is located within a process. Not yet restored. Still fighting. About to cut. Already cutting. Still dismantling. Beginning to rebuild.

Political signs therefore supply temporal orientation. This orientation is one of the deeper sources of political agency. A subject who knows where he or she is in the story can infer what must happen next.

Aspectuality thus transforms temporality into a practical political grammar:

- WHAT HAS BEGUN?
- WHAT CONTINUES?
- WHAT MUST STOP?
- WHAT MUST RETURN?
- WHAT REMAINS UNFINISHED?
- WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN NEXT?

Trump and Milei provide different answers, but both construct leadership through the capacity to **control the transition from one aspectual state to another**.

Trump's political competence lies in turning prolonged decline into renewed restoration.

Milei's lies in turning prolonged dysfunction into termination and new beginning.

In both cases, the leader becomes credible when he appears capable not merely of occupying political time, but of **changing its aspectual direction**.

The central opposition of the corpus can therefore be restated in temporal-processual terms:

- Trump constructs leadership as the power to make a valued history continue again;
- Milei constructs leadership as the power to make an unvalued history stop so that another one can begin.

7.3. TEMPORAL RHYTHMS, ACCELERATION, AND POLITICAL INTENSITY

The temporal organization of political communication also depends on **rhythm**. Political processes do not merely begin, continue, or end; they unfold according to different speeds, intervals, repetitions, accelerations, decelerations, pauses, and moments of sudden intensification. Rhythm therefore introduces a qualitative dimension into temporality.

A political world may appear:

- slow;
- stable;
- accelerated;
- interrupted;
- repetitive;
- explosive;
- continuous;

- or increasingly compressed.

These temporal qualities influence the way political transformation is experienced. A slow process can suggest stability, institutional continuity, paralysis, or frustrating delay. Acceleration can suggest efficiency, urgency, instability, vitality, or loss of control. Repetition can produce reassurance or saturation. Sudden interruption can create shock. Temporal density can generate the impression that history itself is moving faster.

The political meaning of rhythm therefore depends upon the axiological and narrative structures within which speed is interpreted.

This dimension is especially productive in the comparison between Trump and Milei because the two corpora construct markedly different dominant rhythms:

- Trump's political temporality tends toward a combination of **symbolic repetition, controlled recurrence, punctual intensification, and restorative stabilization**;
- Milei's tends more strongly toward **acceleration, multiplication of events, rapid confrontation, communicative compression, and continuous reactivation of rupture**.

The contrast can initially be represented as:

- **TRUMP → RHYTHM OF RECURRENCE AND RECENTERING**
- **MILEI → RHYTHM OF ACCELERATION AND DISRUPTION**

This distinction does not imply that Trumpian communication is slow or that Mileian communication lacks repetition. Both leaders operate within highly accelerated digital environments. The difference lies in **what temporal experience their recurring signs predominantly construct**.

In Trump's corpus, repetition often creates stability. In Milei's, repetition frequently recreates intensity.

Trumpian rhythm says:

THE SAME IDENTITY RETURNS.

Mileian rhythm says:

ANOTHER DISRUPTION BEGINS.

The distinction is subtle but central. Within the Trumpian corpus, **IMG 1d** provides the clearest example of rhythmic recurrence.

MAGA operates through continual repetition. The slogan returns. The cap returns. The red color returns. The national flag returns. The same lexical and visual formulas recur across different communicative moments.

This recurrence produces a relatively regular rhythm. The political subject encounters a familiar symbolic unit and recognizes it almost immediately.

The temporal sequence can be represented as:

SIGN

↓

INTERVAL

↓

SIGN AGAIN

↓

INTERVAL

↓

SIGN AGAIN

At the level of content, repetition reinforces identity. At the level of rhythm, it creates **predictability**. Predictability is not necessarily a communicative weakness.

In identity-centered political communication, it can function as reassurance. The supporter knows what will return. The repetition becomes ritual. The political movement acquires a temporal pulse.

This is especially important because political identity requires not only semantic coherence but **rhythmic continuity**.

A symbol that appears once may remain episodic. A symbol that returns continually enters collective memory.

The process becomes:

RECURRENCE → EXPECTATION → RECOGNITION → STABILIZATION

The audience eventually anticipates the sign. Expectation itself becomes part of the relationship.

Trumpian political communication therefore develops a recognizable rhythm of return. This rhythm mirrors the semantics of restoration.

MAGA says *again*. The political sign itself appears **again and again**. Content and temporal form converge. The promise of return is communicated through recurrent return.

This creates a particularly coherent semiotic structure:

RESTORATIVE MESSAGE + ITERATIVE RHYTHM

= TEMPORALIZED RESTORATIVE IDENTITY

The political movement performs its own temporal ideology through its communicative repetition.

IMG 1b similarly contributes to rhythmic stability through the recurrent construction of bodily dominance.

Trump's posture does not depend upon continuous physical immobility. Rather, visual representations repeatedly select moments compatible with control, centrality, and symbolic superiority.

The rhythm emerges across texts. One image. Another rally. Another debate. Another frontal posture. Another dominant gesture. The pattern becomes recognizable.

The body itself acquires a **rhythmic signature**. This signature can be understood as a sequence of variations around a stable model.

The particular gesture may change. The underlying bodily grammar remains.

The political identity therefore combines:

VARIATION AT THE SURFACE

with

RECURRENCE AT THE STRUCTURAL LEVEL.

This is essential to maintaining attention without losing recognizability. Pure repetition risks monotony. Pure novelty risks fragmentation.

A successful mediatized persona must continually produce **new instances of the same identity**.

Trump's bodily communication frequently performs this operation. The event changes. The dominant body returns. The location changes. The centrality returns. The adversary changes. The ethos of strength returns.

The rhythm is therefore not mechanically identical. It is **patterned recurrence**. This distinction is important because political rhythm depends on recognizable variation.

The audience receives something sufficiently new to remain attentive and sufficiently familiar to identify the persona.

This produces a temporal balance between:

NOVELTY

and

CONTINUITY.

Trumpian symbolic communication tends to resolve this tension by allowing events to change while maintaining a relatively stable interpretive center.

The surrounding political environment may accelerate. The leader remains recognizable. This creates an effect of **rhythmic anchoring**. Trump functions as a stable beat inside a changing media sequence.

The political world produces novelty. Trumpian identity supplies recurrence. The relationship can be represented as:

NEW EVENT → SAME ETHOS

NEW CONTROVERSY → SAME ANTAGONISTIC POSITION

NEW RALLY → SAME SYMBOLIC CENTER

This rhythmic anchoring contributes to the perception of consistency reconstructed in previous sections. It also supports restorative leadership. A leader promising stability must himself remain temporally legible.

The supporter should not need to reconstruct the political subject entirely from one moment to the next. The persona provides continuity within the flow.

IMG 1a, however, introduces a radically different rhythm. The assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania, produces a sudden break in the ordinary temporal organization of the political event.

The relevant rhythm can be represented as:

NORMAL CAMPAIGN RHYTHM

↓

ABRUPT INTERRUPTION

↓

EXTREME TEMPORAL DENSITY

↓

GESTURAL RESPONSE

↓

MEDIA REPETITION

A long political trajectory becomes condensed into a few seconds of exceptional intensity.

This is a key feature of political events capable of becoming iconic.

Their symbolic impact does not depend upon duration. It depends upon temporal concentration.

An enormous quantity of meaning becomes attached to a very short interval.

Danger. Shock. Physical vulnerability. Security intervention. Trump's re-emergence. Raised fist. Audience reaction. All become compressed within an unusually dense temporal sequence.

The event therefore produces a form of **punctual intensification**. Political time momentarily accelerates. The ordinary rhythm is suspended.

Every second becomes consequential. The image extracted from that sequence then performs the opposite operation.

It slows the event down.

The photograph freezes the moment. The spectator can contemplate what occurred rapidly.

This creates an important relationship between event rhythm and image rhythm:

- **EVENT → EXTREME SPEED / CONTINGENCY**
- **IMAGE → FREEZE / STABILIZATION**

The political photograph transforms accelerated history into a durable visual object. The medium therefore changes the rhythm of the event.

What happened quickly can be observed slowly.

The instantaneous becomes repeatable.

This is one of the defining temporal powers of photography and digital image circulation.

The event ends. The frame remains.

The moment becomes available for indefinite revisiting.

The process can be represented as:

RAPID EVENT

↓

CAPTURE

↓

TEMPORAL SUSPENSION

↓

REPEATED CONTEMPLATION

↓

SYMBOLIC DURABILITY

The political meaning of **IMG 1a** therefore emerges not only from what is represented but from the tension between **the speed of occurrence and the slowness of subsequent interpretation**.

This distinction is central to the production of iconicity.

The image extracts a highly charged instant from the flow and converts it into an object that can be revisited outside the urgency of the original situation.

Media circulation subsequently reintroduces speed. The frozen image spreads rapidly.

The temporal structure becomes:

FAST EVENT → FROZEN IMAGE → FAST CIRCULATION → LONG MEMORY

This sequence demonstrates the complex relationship among physical, representational, and platform temporalities.

Different speeds coexist. The event has one rhythm. The image another. The feed another. Collective memory another. The political sign moves across these rhythms.

IMG 1c introduces another temporal regime: **slowness and permanence associated with luxury and achieved success**.

Unlike the violence and suddenness of **IMG 1a**, the airplane and gilded interiors evoke a relatively stable material condition.

Wealth appears durative. The environment suggests accumulated success rather than immediate transformation. Its temporality is one of possession.

The relevant message is not:

SUCCESS IS HAPPENING NOW

but:

SUCCESS HAS BECOME A STABLE CONDITION OF THE SUBJECT.

This produces a slow temporal quality. Material abundance appears consolidated. The leader inhabits success.

The political spectator does not encounter an explosive event but a **durative state**.

This makes **IMG 1c** especially important to the rhythmic diversity of the Trumpian corpus. Trump's identity is not constructed only through acceleration and confrontation. It also depends upon images of established permanence.

The combination produces a persona capable of moving between:

EVENTFUL INTENSITY

and

STABLE SUCCESS.

The first demonstrates resistance. The second demonstrates achievement.

Trumpian leadership can therefore oscillate between **punctual heroization and durative monumentalization**.

This rhythmic alternation prevents the persona from being reduced to a single temporal mode.

IMG 1e constructs another rhythm through the repetition of threat.

The political effectiveness of threatening imagery increases when the threat is represented not as a singular exception but as something recurrent.

Repeated stories. Repeated visual claims. Repeated references to immigration. Repeated representations of danger. The audience encounters a rhythm of **renewed alarm**.

The structure becomes:

THREAT

↓

ATTENTION

↓

TEMPORARY DECLINE OF ATTENTION

↓

NEW THREAT

↓

REACTIVATION

This rhythm can maintain a condition of political vigilance. The audience is repeatedly returned to the same negative object. The threat becomes durative because alarm is iterative.

The political system therefore combines two temporal forms:

CONTINUOUS DANGER

produced through

DISCONTINUOUS EPISODES OF ALARM.

This structure is important because it allows political communication to sustain a general narrative through individual cases.

Each episode appears to confirm the whole.

The rhythm of isolated incidents generates the perception of a continuing condition.

The movement is:

EPISODE

↓

GENERALIZATION

↓

NEW EPISODE

↓

REINFORCED GENERALIZATION

The political threat therefore acquires temporal durability through serial exemplification.

Across the Trumpian corpus, the dominant rhythm can consequently be understood as a combination of:

- **RITUAL RECURRENCE**
  through MAGA;
- **BODILY CONSISTENCY**
  through repeated dominant configurations;
- **PUNCTUAL INTENSIFICATION**
  through exceptional events;
- **DURATIVE MATERIAL STABILITY**
  through success imagery;
- **SERIAL REACTIVATION OF THREAT**
  through antagonistic representations.

These different rhythms converge upon a central principle:

THE POLITICAL WORLD MAY CHANGE, BUT

THE TRUMPIAN SYMBOLIC CENTER REPEATEDLY RETURNS.

The leader's temporality therefore has a **recentring function**.

Each acceleration ultimately returns attention toward a stable identity.

The Mileian corpus produces a more strongly accelerated temporal regime.

Here rhythm is itself one of the central signs of political disruption.

IMG 2d, concerning productive chaos, provides the clearest case:

- shouting;
- provocation;
- hyperbole;
- media conflict;
- rapid circulation;
- memetic transformation;
- continuous reaction.

These elements generate a temporal environment characterized by **high event density**.

Political communication appears crowded with occurrences. Something is always happening.

The next confrontation begins before the previous one has completely disappeared.

The rhythm can be represented as:

EVENT A

↓

EVENT B

↓

REACTION TO A

↓

EVENT C

↓

REACTION TO B

↓

MEME OF A

↓

NEW CONFRONTATION

The sequence is no longer cleanly linear. Events overlap. The political present becomes temporally thick. This is one of the defining features of acceleration. Acceleration should not be understood simply as shorter intervals between events.

It also involves an increase in **simultaneity and overlap**. Several political temporalities coexist. A controversy remains active while another begins. A meme revives an earlier moment. A television clip circulates after a new institutional event has already occurred.

The audience therefore encounters a political world characterized by **temporal superimposition**. This contributes strongly to the perception of chaos. The political present becomes difficult to stabilize because its components move at different speeds.

The leader’s persona, however, remains recognizable.

This produces a crucial relation:

ACCELERATED ENVIRONMENT ↔ STABLE DISRUPTIVE SIGNATURE

The political identity survives the flow by making acceleration itself part of the identity. This is one of the most distinctive differences from Trump.

Trump's recognizable persona tends to function as an anchor against changing events.

Milei's recognizable persona tends to function as the **source or accelerator of changing events**.

The comparison can be expressed as:

- **TRUMP → STABILITY WITHIN ACCELERATION**
- **MILEI → IDENTITY THROUGH ACCELERATION**

This distinction is especially significant in platform communication. The platform feed rewards novelty and reaction.

Mileian productive chaos does not merely adapt to that rhythm. It appears semiotically homologous with it.

The leadership style and platform temporality share several characteristics:

- speed;
- fragmentation;
- recurrence;
- intensity;
- rapid response;
- short high-impact units;
- continuous novelty.

This produces a strong **rhythmic compatibility** between persona and medium.

The political leader appears temporally at home within the platform environment. This does not mean that platform algorithms automatically favor one political ideology, but it does indicate that some communicative styles may possess greater formal compatibility with accelerated circulatory conditions.

Milei's high-intensity performance generates fragments suitable for:

- clips;
- memes;
- quotes;
- reaction videos;
- short-form circulation;
- conflictual reposting.

The original event can therefore be rapidly decomposed into smaller temporal units. A long television appearance becomes a fifteen-second clip. A speech becomes one shout. A debate becomes one confrontation. The political event undergoes **temporal fragmentation**. The fragment then acquires an autonomous circulation. The process can be represented as:

LONGER EVENT

↓

EXTRACTION OF HIGH-INTENSITY MOMENT

↓

SHORT DIGITAL UNIT

↓

RAPID CIRCULATION

↓

REINSERTION INTO LARGER POLITICAL PERSONA

This is one of the principal mechanisms through which Mileian acceleration becomes media-efficient.

The highly intense moment survives compression. Indeed, compression may increase its apparent intensity because contextual moderation disappears. The fragment contains only the peak.

Political communication therefore becomes increasingly organized around **temporal maxima**.

The loudest moment, the strongest gesture, the most conflictual phrase, the most visually spectacular object: this produces a politics of **peak extraction**.

IMG 2b is especially compatible with this process. Bodily anger and gestural excess create moments that can be temporally isolated without losing immediate expressive force.

A screenshot freezes the face. A short clip preserves the shout. A GIF repeats the gesture. The performance can therefore be transformed across temporal media.

Each transformation changes rhythm. The original shout is singular. The GIF loops it. The clip can be replayed. The screenshot suspends it. The meme reconnects it to another context.

One event therefore generates multiple temporal forms:

PUNCTUAL EVENT

- **REPLAYABLE CLIP**
- **ITERATIVE LOOP**
- **STATIC IMAGE**
- **REACTIVATED MEME**

The body becomes temporally modular. This is especially important to Milei's public persona because expressive intensity retains recognizability across these transformations.

The political performance can therefore be continuously reactivated without the leader physically repeating the original act.

Digital media make repetition possible **after the body has stopped performing**.

The archive performs for him. This is a profound temporal transformation. The body produces once. The platform reproduces many times. Political presence becomes partly detached from physical repetition.

The relation is:

ONE PERFORMANCE → MULTIPLE DIGITAL PRESENCES

This allows political intensity to persist far beyond the duration of the embodied act.

IMG 2a operates similarly through the chainsaw but introduces a slightly different rhythm. The object symbolizes a **decisive cut**. Its semantic strength derives from punctuality. The cutting action has a clear temporal threshold:

BEFORE → CUT → AFTER

Yet repeated appearances of the chainsaw convert the singular cut into an iterative political rhythm. The structure becomes:

CUT

↓

NEW TARGET

↓

CUT AGAIN

↓

NEW TARGET

↓

CUT AGAIN

Rupture becomes serial. The object therefore moves from punctual symbolism to iterative program. This transformation is particularly important to the political narrative.

A single cut could symbolize one reform. Repeated cutting can symbolize an entire style of governance. The chainsaw ceases to represent one isolated act.

It becomes a temporal model:

CONTINUOUS GOVERNANCE THROUGH SUCCESSIVE TERMINATIONS.

This creates a rhythm of repeated decisiveness. Each political intervention is represented as another clear break. The complexity of gradual reform can therefore be narratively segmented into a sequence of punctual actions.

The political process acquires a **staccato rhythm**:

CUT — CUT — CUT — CUT

rather than a smooth durative transformation.

This rhythm is highly compatible with the spectacular identity of the object. Each action can become a separate media event. Each event renews the symbolic association. The chainsaw therefore produces both narrative and media seriality.

IMG 2c contributes another temporal rhythm through repeated confrontation with the “casta”. Unlike the punctuality of the chainsaw, the caste is durative. It remains. The leader repeatedly attacks it. This produces a rhythm based on **persistent obstacle and recurrent assault**.

The sequence becomes:

CASTA REMAINS

↓

MILEI ATTACKS

↓

RESISTANCE REMAINS

↓

MILEI ATTACKS AGAIN

This creates an agonistic pulse. The antagonist provides continuity. The leader provides repeated intervention. The conflict therefore develops a rhythm of **pressure and counter-pressure**.

This is particularly useful to the disruptive narrative because complete disappearance of the antagonist would eliminate the need for continued rupture.

The caste's durative presence allows Milei's punctual interventions to remain meaningful.

The relation can be represented as:

DURATIVE ANTAGONIST + ITERATIVE DISRUPTOR

The two temporal forms depend on one another. The system persists. The leader repeatedly acts.

This produces the impression of a struggle not yet concluded.

Political intensity remains high because every intervention can be represented as part of an ongoing battle.

IMG 2e appears at first to introduce a much slower rhythm. Economic graphs represent trends unfolding across months or years. The temporality of data differs substantially from the immediacy of anger or chainsaw symbolism. Economic change may be gradual. Inflation can accelerate or decelerate progressively. Policy effects may require extended periods.

The graph therefore introduces a **longer temporal horizon** into Milei's otherwise accelerated communication. This is analytically important.

Mileian temporality is not simply fast. It contains a tension between:

FAST COMMUNICATIVE RHYTHM

and

SLOWER ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION.

The political persona must connect them. The leader communicates rupture immediately. The economic system changes over duration. This creates a temporal gap. The graph can function as a bridge. It divides the slow process into visible stages. Each new data point becomes a political event.

Monthly inflation, quarterly indicators, fiscal results, changes in trends: the slow temporal process is therefore serialized into faster communicative units.

The sequence becomes:

LONG ECONOMIC PROCESS

↓

PERIODIC DATA RELEASE

↓

MEDIA INTERPRETATION

↓

POLITICAL REACTION

↓

NEXT DATA RELEASE

The graph converts gradual transformation into a rhythm compatible with platform politics. Each measurement produces another opportunity for narrative renewal. The economic process remains durative. Its political representation becomes punctual and iterative.

This is a highly significant operation. A slow structural transformation can be experienced through **rapid successive indicators**. The audience receives monthly or periodic signs of movement.

Political time is therefore broken into measurable intervals.

The leader can say:

LOOK AT THIS CHANGE NOW.

Even if the broader process remains incomplete. This produces a rhythm of **quantified anticipation**. Each indicator updates the future. Hope or disappointment can be recalibrated. The political narrative remains open.

Economic data therefore perform a dual temporal function:

- they slow political discourse by recalling the duration of real processes;
- and accelerate it by converting each measurement into a new communicative event.

This tension is central to the relationship between Milei's technical and performative identities.

The politician of disruption says:

CHANGE MUST HAPPEN NOW.

The economist says:

THE TREND MUST BE OBSERVED OVER TIME.

The political persona must combine these temporal demands. The solution is to present each incremental change as evidence that rupture has already altered the trajectory.

The distinction becomes:

FINAL RESULT = SLOW

but

EVIDENCE OF DIRECTIONAL CHANGE = AVAILABLE NOW.

This allows fast political communication to remain attached to slow empirical processes.

The temporal formula can be expressed as:

FAST SYMBOLIC BREAK + SLOW STRUCTURAL CHANGE + FREQUENT MEASUREMENT

This may be one of the most distinctive temporal configurations in the Mileian corpus.

The comparison between Trump and Milei therefore requires more than a simple opposition between slow and fast.

Trump also operates through high-speed media cycles.

Milei also depends on long-term processes.

The deeper distinction concerns the **semiotic function of speed**.

For Trump, acceleration often intensifies a situation that the leader then seeks to symbolically stabilize.

For Milei, acceleration can itself become evidence of political vitality and transformation.

This difference can be represented as:

TRUMP

ACCELERATED CRISIS → NEED FOR STABLE CENTER

MILEI

ACCELERATED INTERVENTION → EVIDENCE OF BREAK WITH STAGNANT SYSTEM

The value of speed changes according to the narrative.

Trump can construct undesirable acceleration:

- rapid decline;
- rapid border deterioration;
- rapid cultural change;
- rapid loss of control.

Speed becomes threatening when it signals destabilization of a valued order. The leader promises deceleration, stabilization, or control.

Milei can construct undesirable slowness:

- bureaucratic delay;
- institutional inertia;
- decades of failed policy;
- prolonged economic stagnation.

Slowness becomes threatening when it signals reproduction of the old system. The leader promises acceleration of change.

The two models can therefore be summarized as:

TRUMP

TOO MUCH UNCONTROLLED CHANGE MUST BE BROUGHT BACK UNDER CONTROL

MILEI

TOO LITTLE STRUCTURAL CHANGE MUST BE RAPIDLY INTENSIFIED

This temporal opposition mirrors their axiological structures.

Trump values continuity with an imagined national order.

Milei values discontinuity with a negatively evaluated institutional order.

Speed is interpreted accordingly.

The distinction can be formalized:

TRUMPIAN AXIOLOGY OF RHYTHM

CONTROLLED RECURRENCE = POSITIVE

- **STABILITY = POSITIVE**
- **SUDDEN THREAT = NEGATIVE**
- **RAPID UNCONTROLLED CHANGE = NEGATIVE**
- **DECISIVE RESPONSE = POSITIVE**

MILEIAN AXIOLOGY OF RHYTHM

- **INSTITUTIONAL STAGNATION = NEGATIVE**
- **PROLONGED CONTINUITY = NEGATIVE**

- **RAPID DISRUPTION = POSITIVE**
- **HIGH-INTENSITY INTERVENTION = POSITIVE**
- **ACCELERATION TOWARD REFOUNDATION = POSITIVE**

These configurations also produce different forms of **political impatience**.

Trumpian impatience concerns the duration of decline:

HOW LONG MUST THE NATION CONTINUE TO LOSE?

Mileian impatience concerns the duration of the old system:

HOW LONG MUST THE SAME POLITICAL-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE CONTINUE?

Both mobilize frustration with time, but the proposed temporal correction differs.

Trump:

RETURN SOONER.

Milei:

BREAK FASTER.

The leader therefore appears as a subject who can correct the rhythm of history.

This is a powerful political claim. Leadership does not simply alter outcomes. It alters **speed**:

- Trump promises to stop or reverse undesirable momentum;
- Milei promises to overcome inertia.

The political subject becomes an operator of temporal modulation. This is particularly visible in relation to institutional politics.

Institutions possess rhythms. Legislative procedures. Elections. Budgets. Court processes. Administrative implementation. Negotiation. These rhythms can be politically recoded.

Trumpian discourse can represent institutional procedures obstructing restoration as unnecessary delay or establishment resistance.

Mileian discourse can represent them as manifestations of the very inertia associated with the caste.

The leader's urgency then clashes with institutional duration.

This produces a structural tension between:

CHARISMATIC TIME

and

INSTITUTIONAL TIME.

Charismatic time tends to be decisive. Immediate. Personalized. Oriented toward visible intervention. Institutional time tends to be procedural. Distributed. Sequential. Often slower.

The tension is not unique to Trump or Milei, but it becomes particularly visible in strongly personalized populist leadership.

The leader says:

ACTION NOW.

The institution says:

PROCESS.

Political conflict can therefore become a conflict over legitimate rhythm:

- Is delay prudence or obstruction?
- Is speed efficiency or recklessness?
- Is negotiation democratic mediation or preservation of the system?

The interpretation of temporal rhythm becomes politically contested. This is particularly clear in Milei's disruptive universe, where slowness can be resemanticized as evidence of institutional pathology.

But a comparable mechanism operates in Trumpian claims that established political actors prevent rapid restoration or effective protection.

The same temporal phenomenon may therefore be evaluated through competing frames.

The corpus allows us to identify the preferred rhythm of each leadership model, not to establish that one speed is objectively desirable.

This methodological distinction remains important. Rhythm is politically valued, not intrinsically good or bad. The relation between speed and credibility also deserves particular attention.

A rapid response can produce an effect of competence:

HE ACTS IMMEDIATELY.

But it can also produce an effect of impulsiveness:

HE ACTS WITHOUT REFLECTION.

A slow response can produce an effect of prudence:

HE CONSIDERS COMPLEXITY.

Or an effect of weakness:

HE CANNOT DECIDE.

Political communication therefore continually attempts to **axiologize speed**.

Trump’s decisive bodily response in **IMG 1a** can be read positively because immediacy becomes resilience.

Milei’s rapid emotional reactions in **IMG 2b** can be read positively because immediacy becomes sincerity.

The underlying mechanism is similar:

SHORT DELAY BETWEEN EVENT AND RESPONSE → AUTHENTICITY EFFECT

but the political values differ.

Trump:

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

↓

STRENGTH

Milei:

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

↓

PASSIONAL AUTHENTICITY

This temporal immediacy contributes to the construction of the leader as an unmediated subject. The reaction appears to occur before strategic calculation.

Again, this is a semiotic effect, not a psychological inference.

What matters is that reduced temporal distance between stimulus and response can be interpreted culturally as spontaneity.

Spontaneity then contributes to authenticity. Digital platforms intensify this mechanism because they privilege rapid reaction. A political actor who responds quickly can enter the media cycle before competing interpretations stabilize.

The first framing can influence subsequent circulation. Temporal precedence therefore becomes a form of **enunciative power**:

- Who speaks first?
- Who names the event first?
- Who supplies the first image?
- Who produces the first viral interpretation?

These temporal questions can affect the political meaning of an event.

The sequence is:

EVENT

↓

FIRST INTERPRETATION

↓

RAPID CIRCULATION

↓

COMPETING INTERPRETATIONS

The initial frame may become difficult to displace once widely circulated.

This is especially relevant to post-truth dynamics, where emotional or visually powerful interpretations can spread before verification catches up.

The relation between **IMG 1e** and temporality is particularly important here.

A fabricated image can circulate rapidly. Fact-checking may require time.

The asymmetry becomes:

- **PRODUCTION / SHARING OF CLAIM = FAST**
- **VERIFICATION / CORRECTION = POTENTIALLY SLOWER**

The false claim therefore may enjoy a **temporal advantage**.

It enters attention first. Produces emotion first. Activates existing narratives first.

The correction arrives within a political world already affected by the initial representation.

This does not determine the final interpretation, but it changes the temporal structure of veridiction.

The sequence can be represented as:

CLAIM

↓

EMOTIONAL / NARRATIVE IMPACT

↓

VIRAL CIRCULATION

↓

CORRECTION

The correction must act upon a sign that has already acquired political life.

This demonstrates that post-truth is also a problem of **temporal asymmetry**.

Truth and falsehood do not circulate under identical temporal conditions. Verification may be more procedurally demanding than fabrication.

A dramatic image can be generated or shared in seconds. Establishing provenance can take longer. The political effects of the interval matter. During the interval, the claim occupies visibility.

The phenomenon therefore involves a race between:

VIRALITY

and

VERIFICATION.

This temporal competition is one of the defining features of digital political communication.

IMG 2e, by contrast, illustrates an almost inverse temporality.

Economic data require production, collection, measurement, and interpretation. Their authority derives partly from procedural duration. The chart cannot legitimately appear before the underlying data exist. Its epistemic status depends upon a slower chain.

The structure is:

ECONOMIC PROCESS

↓

DATA COLLECTION

↓

MEASUREMENT

↓

VISUALIZATION

↓

POLITICAL INTERPRETATION

Here slowness can contribute to credibility. The information appears methodologically grounded because it emerges from a process rather than pure immediacy.

Milei's communication therefore combines two temporal regimes of truth:

- **FAST PASSIONAL AUTHENTICITY**
  through bodily performance;

and

- **SLOWER EPISTEMIC AUTHORITY**
  through economic data.

This coexistence is analytically significant. Credibility is rhythmically plural.

One sign says:

BELIEVE THE INTENSITY NOW.

Another says:

BELIEVE THE MEASUREMENT ACROSS TIME.

The political persona integrates both.

This allows Milei to occupy simultaneously the temporal position of the urgent disruptor and that of the technical interpreter.

Trump's corpus contains a comparable duality.

IMG 1a produces instantaneous authenticity through resistance.

IMG 1c produces durative competence through accumulated success.

Again:

FAST PROOF OF CHARACTER

and

SLOW PROOF OF BIOGRAPHICAL COMPETENCE.

The two leaders therefore each combine fast and slow credibility, but with different semantic investments.

Political rhythm also structures **memory**. Repeated high-intensity moments can dominate recollection over longer periods of less spectacular political activity.

The audience may remember:

- the fist;
- the chainsaw;
- the shout;
- the red cap;
- the dramatic graph;
- rather than the longer processes surrounding them.

This creates a discrepancy between:

DURATION OF EVENT

and

DURATION OF MEMORY.

A brief political moment can have a much longer mnemonic life than a prolonged institutional process.

The relation becomes:

SHORT EVENT + HIGH INTENSITY

↓

LONG MEMORY

while potentially:

LONG PROCESS + LOW VISUAL INTENSITY

↓

WEAKER MEMORY

This asymmetry helps explain why spectacular signs are so important to personalized leadership. They compress political time into memorable forms. The leader's history becomes organized around peaks.

Political biography is increasingly remembered through **iconic temporal landmarks**.

For Trump, the Butler fist can become such a landmark.

For Milei, the chainsaw can function similarly as a recurring symbolic marker of political rise and reformist identity.

These signs organize political memory by creating recognizable temporal nodes.

The audience can narrate the leader's trajectory through them.

This process can be represented as:

CONTINUOUS BIOGRAPHICAL TIME

↓

SELECTION OF HIGH-INTENSITY MOMENTS

↓

SYMBOLIC LANDMARKS

↓

NARRATIVE MEMORY

The result is a non-uniform political temporality. Some moments become huge. Others disappear. Political memory therefore possesses its own rhythm of emphasis. Platform circulation intensifies this unevenness because algorithmically successful fragments can recur long after less engaging material has vanished from attention.

The archive becomes selective through visibility. Political history is consequently not merely stored. It is **rhythmically reactivated**.

Some moments return repeatedly. Others remain dormant. The leader's public past therefore remains available as a resource for present identity.

Trump's old images of success can return. MAGA imagery can return. The Butler fist can return.

Milei's early chainsaw appearances can return. Past graphs can be compared with current ones. Old confrontations can be remixed.

Political time becomes **non-linear**. The feed can place past beside present. A user can encounter a 2023 image after a 2026 speech. Chronological distance collapses at the interface level.

This produces what may be described as **platform synchronicity**. Texts from different periods coexist within the same present of consumption. The viewer encounters them now.

This affects political identity because past and present signs can mutually authenticate one another.

A past statement appears consistent with present action. A present event reinterprets an earlier image. A previously marginal sign becomes important retrospectively. The political persona therefore develops through **retroactive temporal organization**.

Later events can change the meaning of earlier ones. Trump's pre-political luxury imagery may acquire new political significance after his rise. Milei's early television confrontations may retrospectively appear as the beginning of a coherent disruptive trajectory.

Political biography is therefore not merely accumulated forward. It is also continually rewritten backward. This retrospective reorganization is crucial to mythologization.

The successful leader's past begins to look as if it always pointed toward the present. Contingency is reduced. Biography acquires teleology.

The process becomes:

EARLIER HETEROGENEOUS EVENTS

↓

LATER POLITICAL SUCCESS

↓

RETROSPECTIVE SELECTION

↓

COHERENT LEADER NARRATIVE

Trump's business success becomes preparation for political competence.

Milei's television anger becomes early evidence of anti-caste authenticity.

The past is reorganized according to the current persona. Temporal rhythm therefore interacts directly with narrative causality.

What once appeared episodic becomes part of a sequence. This mechanism contributes to the transformation of public figures into political myths.

The comparison between Trump and Milei can therefore be summarized through two rhythmic systems.

TRUMPIAN RHYTHM

- **RECURRENT**
  stable signs continually return;
- **RITUALIZED**
  repetition reinforces belonging;
- **ANCHORING**
  the leader functions as a stable center amid changing events;
- **PUNCTUALLY INTENSE**
  exceptional moments can suddenly concentrate political meaning;
- **RESTORATIVE**
  acceleration is ultimately redirected toward stabilization and recovery.

MILEIAN RHYTHM

- **ACCELERATED**
  events and reactions multiply rapidly;
- **OVERLAPPING**
  multiple unfinished conflicts coexist;
- **STACCATO**
  successive acts of rupture produce a sequence of decisive interventions;
- **REACTIVE**
  conflict continually generates new content;

- **TRANSFORMATIVE**

  speed itself can signify distance from institutional stagnation.

The difference can be condensed as:

- **TRUMP → REPETITION PRODUCES STABILITY;**
- **MILEI → REPETITION PRODUCES RENEWED INTENSITY.**

This opposition is particularly useful because both leaders are repetitive, but their repetition performs different semiotic work.

Trumpian recurrence says:

THE CENTER REMAINS.

Mileian recurrence says:

THE BREAK CONTINUES.

One repeats a symbolic home. The other repeats movement away from an old structure. The two regimes converge in the need to continuously occupy attention. This convergence reflects the broader temporality of platformized politics.

Visibility decays rapidly. A political sign must return. The leader must remain present. The communication therefore becomes continuous even when individual messages are short.

This creates a paradox:

FRAGMENTED COMMUNICATION

produces

PERMANENT POLITICAL PRESENCE.

The political subject is encountered in discontinuous fragments. But the accumulation of fragments creates durative visibility. The leader is always somewhere in the flow.

This may be expressed as:

MICRO-DISCONTINUITIES → MACRO-CONTINUITY

A post disappears down the feed. Another appears. A clip fades. Another controversy emerges. The individual content is ephemeral. The persona persists.

This is one of the most important temporal transformations produced by platformized leadership. Political continuity no longer requires the same message to remain visible indefinitely. It requires a sufficiently rapid succession of new messages associated with the same political identity.

The leader's presence therefore takes the form of **renewed ephemerality**.

Each unit is temporary. The sequence is permanent. Trump and Milei both exploit this structure, but through different rhythms:

- Trump repeatedly returns to recognizable symbolic anchors;
- Milei repeatedly generates new moments of disruptive intensity.

The political identity thus survives the accelerated media environment through two different strategies:

STABILITY THROUGH RECURRENCE

and

CONTINUITY THROUGH ACCELERATED REACTIVATION.

This distinction connects directly to the broader contrast between restoration and rupture:

- Trump's political temporality seeks to protect the collective from uncontrolled historical movement by offering recognizable points of return;
- Milei's seeks to intensify historical movement by presenting the existing order as intolerably slow, stagnant, or repetitive.

Trump's leader acts as a **temporal anchor**.

Milei's as a **temporal accelerator**.

Again, these are dominant semiotic functions rather than exhaustive descriptions of either political actor.

At the deepest level, the rhythmic analysis shows that political leadership is partly constructed through control over **the felt speed of political reality**.

A leader can make crisis appear urgent. Can make change appear too slow. Can make an event feel historic. Can make repetition feel reassuring. Can make disruption feel energetic. Can make transition feel temporary. Can make a long-term process appear to have already begun through a single visible sign.

Time therefore becomes one of the principal materials of political persuasion.

Trump and Milei do not merely tell audiences where history should go. They also construct **how quickly it should move, which rhythms should be trusted, which delays should be rejected, and which forms of recurrence should be experienced as evidence of authenticity**.

Trump's preferred political rhythm transforms recurrence into the reassurance that a recognizable center can survive disruption and guide the nation back toward a valued condition. Milei's preferred rhythm transforms acceleration into evidence that a previously stagnant system is finally being forced into motion. The first makes repetition a sign of **continuity and restoration**; the second makes repeated rupture a sign of **energy and transformation**.

The contrast can therefore be condensed into a final temporal formula:

TRUMP

THE POLITICAL WORLD MOVES, BUT THE LEADER

REPEATEDLY RESTORES A CENTER.

MILEI

THE POLITICAL WORLD HAS MOVED TOO LITTLE, AND

THE LEADER MUST ACCELERATE ITS TRANSFORMATION.

In both cases, rhythm contributes directly to credibility because the leader's temporal performance appears coherent with the crisis he defines. Trump's recurring stability fits a world represented as requiring control and restoration; Milei's acceleration fits a world represented as requiring interruption of inertia and radical change. Political time is thus not merely narrated: it is **performed through the rhythm of the leadership itself**.

7.4. TEMPORAL THRESHOLDS, EXPECTATION, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FUTURE

The temporal structures reconstructed in the previous sections ultimately converge on the problem of **expectation**. Political discourse does not merely interpret what has already happened or organize the present as a condition of crisis. It also constructs a future that does not yet exist and makes that future sufficiently imaginable, desirable, or urgent to orient political action in the present.

The future is therefore not simply a chronological segment located after the present. It is a **semiotic object**. It can be promised. Feared. Anticipated. Visualized. Deferred. Accelerated. Made conditional. Presented as inevitable. Or represented as dependent upon the intervention of a particular political subject.

The political future acquires meaning through its relation to the present:

- a difficult present can be tolerated if it is represented as temporary;
- a threatening present can generate mobilization if a safer future appears reachable;
- a disappointing present can be interpreted as transitional if the desired transformation is represented as already beginning.

Expectation therefore connects:

PRESENT CONDITION

to

FUTURE OBJECT OF VALUE.

The leader occupies the interval between them.

This interval is crucial because political leadership is constructed not only through competence already demonstrated but through the capacity to **guarantee, accelerate, or make credible a transformation that has not yet been completed**.

The basic structure can be represented as:

WHAT IS

↓

LEADER'S INTERVENTION

↓

WHAT COULD / SHOULD BE

The future is therefore mediated by political agency. Trump and Milei construct this mediation differently:

- Trump's future is predominantly organized as **restoration of a positively valorized condition**;
- Milei's future is predominantly organized as **emergence of a different order after the interruption of a negatively valorized continuity**.

The distinction can be expressed as:

TRUMP

THE FUTURE IS DESIRABLE BECAUSE IT RECOVERS SOMETHING RECOGNIZABLE.

MILEI

THE FUTURE IS DESIRABLE BECAUSE IT BREAKS WITH SOMETHING INTOLERABLE.

Trumpian expectation is therefore strongly connected to **recognition**.

Mileian expectation is more strongly connected to **difference**.

The first says:

WE KNOW WHAT WE WANT TO RECOVER.

The second says:

WE KNOW WHAT WE CAN NO LONGER ACCEPT.

These two temporal structures produce different forms of political hope.

In Trump's corpus, **IMG 1d** is once again central because the MAGA slogan contains a future orientation despite its explicit reference to the past.

The word *again* creates a future state modeled upon a previous one. The anticipated future is therefore not represented as radically unknown. It appears familiar before it occurs.

This can be represented as:

PAST GREATNESS

↓

MEMORY / MYTH OF VALUE

↓

PRESENT LOSS

↓

POLITICAL PROMISE

↓

FUTURE GREATNESS

The future is built from memory. This makes Trumpian political anticipation structurally **retrospective**.

The subject looks backward in order to know what to desire ahead. The political promise therefore reduces uncertainty:

- a radically new future contains an unavoidable degree of indeterminacy.
- a restorative future can instead be presented as a return to a condition already encoded as legitimate.

The underlying message becomes:

THE FUTURE WILL NOT ALIENATE YOU FROM WHO YOU ARE.

IT WILL RESTORE WHO YOU AUTHENTICALLY ARE.

This is one of the most important temporal functions of the MAGA universe. The future is narratively domesticated. It is represented as a return home.

The political subject therefore does not need to abandon identity in order to change. Change itself becomes the restoration of identity.

The apparent contradiction between **change and continuity** is resolved.

Trump promises political transformation while presenting that transformation as continuity with a more authentic national condition.

The temporal structure is therefore:

CHANGE IN ORDER TO RESTORE CONTINUITY.

This formula captures one of the central paradoxes of restorative populism.

The political project can be radical in its proposed interventions while remaining conservative at the level of temporal imagination.

The desired future is justified as recovery rather than invention. The supporter is therefore invited to anticipate not simply improvement but **recognition**. The future should feel like the nation becoming itself again. This makes expectation identitarian.

The **object of value** is not only economic prosperity or security. It is a restored relation between collective subject and temporal identity.

IMG 1c reinforces the credibility of this future through the temporal analogy between Trump's biography and the national promise.

Airplanes, luxury, and material success represent an achieved condition. They show a future that has already become past in the leader's personal narrative. Trump can therefore be positioned as someone who has already crossed the threshold between ambition and achievement.

The political inference becomes:

HE KNOWS WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

because

HE HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED IT.

This makes the leader's biography a kind of **anticipatory model** for the collective future. The individual past supplies evidence for national futurity.

The temporal relation can be represented as:

TRUMP'S COMPLETED SUCCESS

↓

PRESENT POLITICAL COMPETENCE

↓

AMERICA'S FUTURE SUCCESS

The leader therefore functions as a **preview of the desired future**.

His personal environment displays values that the collective narrative attributes to national greatness:

- wealth;
- power;
- autonomy;

- visibility;
- success;
- exceptionality.

The political promise can consequently be materialized through biography. The future does not remain purely abstract. It appears partially embodied in the leader.

This creates a powerful anticipatory mechanism:

LOOK AT THE LEADER → IMAGINE THE FUTURE HE PROMISES.

The political body and environment become signs of futurity. Trump is presented not merely as someone who promises success but as someone who already inhabits it. This reduces the distance between promise and proof.

IMG 1b performs a similar operation through bodily authority. The leader's dominant posture can be interpreted as a **present embodiment of future order**.

If the political world is represented as weak, unstable, or lacking control, Trump's bodily stability provides a condensed image of what restored political authority should look like.

The body therefore anticipates the political arrangement.

The sequence becomes:

PRESENT BODY OF CONTROL

↓

PROMISE OF FUTURE POLITICAL CONTROL

The leader's kinesic configuration functions as a miniature model of the desired future.

This is a recurrent mechanism throughout the corpus:

THE LEADER PERFORMS IN THE PRESENT THE VALUE

THE COLLECTIVE IS PROMISED IN THE FUTURE.

Trump performs strength now, America will recover strength later

Trump performs success now, America will recover success later.

Trump performs resistance now, America will resist decline.

The political leader therefore occupies the future **in advance**.

This can be described as a form of **proleptic leadership**.

The leader's present performance anticipates the collective endpoint.

The political future becomes more believable because its values are already visible in the subject who promises it.

IMG 1a intensifies this mechanism through the transformation of vulnerability into resilience.

The assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania, produces uncertainty at the most immediate temporal level:

- What happens next?
- Can the leader continue?
- What does the attack mean?

The raised fist answers the future question instantaneously. It performs continuation.

The gesture says, semiotically:

THIS DOES NOT END HERE.

This is one of the deepest temporal meanings of the image. Resistance is future-oriented. To resist means to preserve the possibility of continuation.

The gesture therefore transforms an event that could signify interruption into a sign of **political futurity**.

The sequence is:

THREAT OF TERMINATION

↓

GESTURE OF RESISTANCE

↓

CONTINUATION BECOMES VISIBLE

↓

FUTURE POLITICAL AGENCY REMAINS OPEN

The image does not merely say:

I SURVIVED.

It can also imply:

I WILL CONTINUE.

This future dimension is essential to the subsequent political iconicization of **IMG 1a**. The leader's body becomes the place where the possibility of future action is reasserted. The present instant therefore contains a projected future. The fist is not only retrospective evidence of resistance. It is prospective evidence of persistence.

IMG 1e, by contrast, constructs the future negatively. Threatening anti-immigration imagery can generate not only a diagnosis of the present but an **anticipation of what will happen if the threat continues**. The political image therefore opens a feared future. The structure becomes:

THIS IS HAPPENING NOW

↓

IF NOTHING CHANGES

↓

THIS WILL CONTINUE / INTENSIFY

The feared future creates urgency. Political mobilization is produced not only by dissatisfaction with the present but by the anticipation of further deterioration.

This is a classic conditional temporal structure:

IF X CONTINUES → Y WILL BECOME WORSE.

The leader's intervention becomes necessary because it interrupts the projected negative trajectory. The political narrative therefore contains **two futures**.

One without Trumpian intervention:

CONTINUED DECLINE / THREAT

and one with it:

RESTORATION / CONTROL / GREATNESS.

The future becomes bifurcated.

The audience is invited to choose not merely between candidates or policies but between temporal trajectories.

This can be represented as:

PRESENT

↙ ↘

NO RESTORATION **TRUMPIAN RESTORATION**

↓ ↓

FURTHER DECLINE **RECOVERED GREATNESS**

Political choice becomes a choice of futures. This branching structure intensifies the significance of the present. The present is the threshold at which one temporal line must be selected over another.

The political moment becomes **kairotic** in the broader sense of being constructed as a decisive opportunity for action.

The election is not simply scheduled time. It becomes the moment in which history can be redirected.

Trumpian expectation therefore combines:

HOPE OF RESTORATION

and

FEAR OF CONTINUED DECLINE.

The positive and negative futures reinforce one another. The more threatening the alternative future appears, the more valuable restoration becomes.

The more attractive restoration appears, the more intolerable continued decline becomes.

Political anticipation is therefore polarized. There is relatively little neutral temporal space between the two trajectories. This contributes to the intensity of political choice.

The Trumpian future can consequently be summarized through three main mechanisms:

- **RESTORATIVE PROJECTION**
  the future recovers positively valorized past values;
- **PROLEPTIC EMBODIMENT**
  the leader already performs the values promised to the nation;
- **NEGATIVE COUNTER-FUTURE**
  continued decline provides the feared alternative against which restoration becomes necessary.

The structure is:

MEMORY + PRESENT LEADER + FEARED ALTERNATIVE

↓

DESIRED RESTORATIVE FUTURE.

The Mileian corpus constructs futurity through a different grammar. The future is not primarily made recognizable through return. It is made desirable through **separation from the past**.

This means that the Mileian political future can initially be less determinate than Trump's.

The key promise is not necessarily:

WE WILL RETURN TO A SPECIFIC PREVIOUS CONDITION

but:

WE WILL STOP REPRODUCING THIS ONE.

The negative definition precedes the positive one.

This creates a temporal sequence:

NOT THIS ANYMORE

BEFORE

THIS INSTEAD.

The Mileian future therefore emerges through **negation**. A new political-economic order becomes thinkable only after the old one has been delegitimized.

This is especially visible in **IMG 2c**. The "casta" represents a political system whose persistence is constructed as historically unacceptable.

The political future begins with a terminative requirement:

THE CASTA'S ORDER MUST END.

The future is therefore first defined as **post-caste**. This is significant because anti-establishment political discourse can generate strong mobilization without providing an equally detailed positive image of every aspect of the future.

The initial object is the removal of the obstacle. The anticipated future is organized around what will no longer exist.

The structure becomes:

- **NO MORE CASTA**
- **NO MORE OLD SYSTEM**
- **NO MORE SAME POLITICAL LOGIC**

The political future acquires identity through **absence**. The rejected past becomes the negative mold from which futurity is constructed. This temporal structure differs fundamentally from MAGA.

Trump says:

AGAIN.

Milei's disruptive grammar says:

NO LONGER.

The two operators create opposite relationships to historical continuity:

- "again" reconnects;
- "no longer" separates.

This opposition can be represented as:

- **TRUMP → AGAIN → RETURN**
- **MILEI → NO LONGER → BREAK**

IMG 2a then gives material form to the temporal threshold separating the two states.

The chainsaw is the instrument of passage.

The future does not arrive gradually by itself.

It must be produced through an act that cuts continuity.

The political temporal structure becomes:

OLD SYSTEM

↓

CUT

↓

POST-CUT FUTURE

The chainsaw therefore functions as a **threshold object between historical regimes**. Its political meaning is prospective because its significance lies partly in what exists after the cut.

The viewer is invited to imagine absence. What will no longer be there?

- Bureaucracy.
- Public expenditure.
- Institutional privileges.
- State structures.

The exact political object varies according to context, but the temporal grammar remains stable. The future appears as a **cleared field**.

This is an important difference from Trumpian futurity:

- Trump's future is already symbolically furnished by the values of the past.
- Milei's future initially appears more open because rupture creates space.

The political narrative says:

FIRST REMOVE THE OBSTACLE.

THEN THE NEW ORDER CAN EMERGE.

This produces a future defined through possibility. The chainsaw does not fully represent what comes after. It represents the condition necessary for the after to become possible.

The object is therefore strongly **prefigurative but incomplete**. It signifies the opening of futurity rather than its exhaustive description.

This incompleteness is politically productive. Different supporters can invest the post-rupture future with overlapping but not identical expectations:

- economic freedom;
- reduced taxation;
- greater market autonomy;
- lower inflation;
- smaller government;
- individual liberty;
- institutional renewal.

The future becomes a space of projection. The chainsaw clears the symbolic ground on which those projections can be placed.

IMG 2b contributes to the construction of futurity through urgency.

Milei's anger does not merely evaluate the present negatively. It makes continued duration appear emotionally intolerable.

The body communicates:

THIS CANNOT CONTINUE.

This is inherently future-oriented. The emotion establishes a **temporal limit**.

The present has reached the point beyond which endurance is no longer acceptable.

Anger therefore produces a deadline. The political condition must change.

The passional structure can be represented as:

PROLONGED FRUSTRATION

↓

ACCUMULATED TENSION

↓

ANGER

↓

DEMAND FOR TEMPORAL BREAK

The future becomes urgent because the present is represented as no longer sustainable. The body therefore makes the threshold sensible. The spectator does not merely understand that change is necessary. The intensity of the leader's performance makes waiting itself appear problematic.

Mileian anger thus contributes to a politics of **impatience with continuity**. The desired future is brought psychologically closer by making the current condition increasingly difficult to tolerate.

This creates an important temporal relation:

THE WORSE THE PRESENT IS FELT TO BE,

THE MORE IMMEDIATE THE FUTURE MUST BECOME.

Political passion compresses temporal distance. The future cannot remain indefinitely deferred. Rupture must begin now.

IMG 2d intensifies this compression through productive chaos.

Acceleration produces the impression that transformation is already underway. The political future is not simply promised from a stable present. The present itself becomes unstable enough to look transitional. This is a crucial mechanism.

A stable present creates a clear separation:

NOW / LATER.

An unstable present can make the future feel as though it is **already entering the present**. The distinction begins to blur.

The political environment says:

THE OLD ORDER IS ALREADY BEING DISRUPTED.

The future therefore acquires a form of anticipatory presence. This can be described as **proleptic disruption**.

The new order does not yet exist completely, but signs of its arrival are already visible in the instability of the old one.

The sequence becomes:

OLD ORDER

↓

PRODUCTIVE CHAOS

↓

OLD ORDER LOSES STABILITY

↓

FUTURE DIFFERENCE BECOMES IMAGINABLE

Chaos therefore functions as a **temporal index**. It says that the previous configuration is no longer reproducing itself seamlessly.

Political disorder becomes evidence that history has entered a transition. This is why productive chaos can acquire positive value within Milei's political universe.

Its meaning is not:

THIS IS THE DESIRED FUTURE.

Rather:

THIS SHOWS THAT THE OLD FUTURE HAS BEEN INTERRUPTED.

The distinction is fundamental. Chaos is not the destination. It is evidence of movement.

IMG 2e plays a decisive role because economic graphs can give this movement measurable form.

If the chainsaw symbolizes the beginning of rupture and productive chaos makes transition perceptible, the graph can be used to claim that the new trajectory has begun to produce empirically visible effects.

The temporal sequence becomes:

PROMISE

↓

INTERVENTION

↓

MEASURABLE TREND

↓

ANTICIPATION OF FUTURE RESULT

The graph therefore mediates between **future promise and present evidence**. This is one of its most important political functions. A future outcome cannot yet be demonstrated as completed.

But a change in trajectory can be presented as evidence that the anticipated future is becoming more probable.

The rhetoric shifts from:

THIS WILL HAPPEN

to:

THIS HAS BEGUN TO HAPPEN.

The distinction is enormous. The first is purely **prospective**. The second is **inchoative-veridictory**. The beginning of the process becomes evidence supporting the expectation of completion.

The graph can therefore construct the future through extrapolation:

CURRENT TREND

↓

IF CONTINUED

↓

DESIRED FUTURE

The future is made visible as the continuation of a present trajectory. This is particularly important for Milei's leadership because the disruptive symbolic vocabulary risks remaining disconnected from measurable outcomes.

IMG 2e creates the bridge.

The chainsaw says:

WE HAVE BROKEN WITH THE OLD MODEL.

The chart can say:

THE NEW DIRECTION IS NOW VISIBLE.

The relation between **IMG 2a** and **IMG 2e** therefore possesses a strong temporal logic:

SYMBOLIC BEGINNING → EMPIRICAL TRAJECTORY

The first marks the threshold. The second claims to measure what follows.

This combination produces a particularly complex future regime because spectacular rupture and technical anticipation reinforce one another.

The future is emotional and epistemic. It must be desired. But it should also appear measurable.

The Mileian future can therefore be summarized through four main mechanisms:

- **TERMINATIVE EXPECTATION**
  the old system must cease;
- **RUPTURAL THRESHOLD**
  the chainsaw makes discontinuity visible;
- **TRANSITIONAL PRESENT**
  productive chaos indicates that the old order is already being destabilized;
- **TRAJECTORY-BASED ANTICIPATION**
  economic indicators can be used to show that the new direction has begun.

The future is thus produced progressively. First through rejection. Then through rupture. Then through transitional instability. Finally through evidence that another trajectory may be emerging.

The comparative opposition becomes especially clear:

TRUMP

THE FUTURE IS IMAGINED BEFORE

AND THROUGH A VALUED PAST.

MILEI

THE FUTURE IS MADE POSSIBLE

BY BREAKING WITH A DEVALUED PAST.

Trump's anticipated future is **recognizable**.

Milei's is **emergent**.

Trump's future closes a temporal circle.

Milei's opens a new line.

This can be represented diagrammatically:

TRUMP

PAST VALUE

↓

LOSS

↓

PRESENT THRESHOLD

↓

RESTORATION

↓

RETURN OF VALUE

MILEI

PAST DISVALUE

↓

ACCUMULATED CRISIS

↓

PRESENT THRESHOLD

↓

RUPTURE

↓

NEW TRAJECTORY

The leader occupies the same structural position in both sequences: **the decisive threshold between present and future**. This is one of the most significant similarities between the two leadership models. Although their temporal ideologies differ, both strongly personalize futurity. The collective future appears dependent upon an exceptional political subject.

Without Trump, restoration is endangered. Without Milei, rupture is endangered. The future therefore becomes **leader-dependent**.

This produces a powerful personalization of historical agency. The political message is no longer only:

THIS FUTURE IS DESIRABLE.

It becomes:

THIS FUTURE REQUIRES THIS LEADER.

The relation can be expressed as:

FUTURE OBJECT OF VALUE

+

EXCLUSIVE OR EXCEPTIONAL COMPETENCE OF LEADER

=

PERSONALIZED EXPECTATION

This is fundamental to charismatic populist temporality. The future is not represented as the automatic product of institutions, collective procedures, or long-term structural evolution. It is attached to the leader's intervention.

The leader becomes a **temporal gatekeeper**. Trump opens the gate back toward greatness. Milei opens the gate beyond the old order. This personalization increases the dramatic stakes of political succession.

If the political future is inseparable from the leader, removal of the leader can be represented as interruption of the collective trajectory itself.

Political opposition then becomes more than disagreement. It becomes a threat to the future. This structure can intensify polarization. An opponent does not merely offer another future. The opponent can be represented as the actor who prevents the correct future from occurring.

The antagonist thus becomes a **temporal obstacle**.

For Trump:

- opponents delay restoration;
- hostile institutions prevent the return of greatness;
- external threats deepen decline.

For Milei:

- the caste delays rupture;
- bureaucratic structures obstruct transformation;
- institutional resistance prolongs the old order.

The antagonist performs the same structural function in both cases:

OBSTACLE → DELAY OF DESIRED FUTURE.

This introduces a crucial relation between antagonism and time. The opponent does not merely oppose the leader spatially or ideologically. The opponent **steals time**. Every delay becomes politically meaningful.

Trumpian discourse can imply:

WE ARE LOSING MORE TIME WHILE AMERICA DECLINES.

Mileian discourse can imply:

THE OLD SYSTEM IS USING DELAY TO SURVIVE.

Temporal delay is therefore moralized. The leader's urgency appears justified because waiting benefits the antagonist. This structure creates a politics of acceleration.

Even Trump's restorative project, despite its symbolic emphasis on continuity, can require rapid intervention because prolonged delay means further deviation from the desired order.

The difference is again one of direction:

- **TRUMP ACCELERATES RETURN.**
- **MILEI ACCELERATES EXIT.**

The shared structure is:

THE PRESENT CANNOT REMAIN AS IT IS.

This creates a characteristic future-oriented imperative:

NOW.

Political temporality is therefore organized through an exceptional present. The audience is invited to believe that the current moment possesses disproportionate historical importance.

This is particularly compatible with electoral rhetoric, but within platformized political communication the exceptional present can become almost permanent.

Each controversy appears decisive. Each election historic. Each institutional confrontation a turning point. Each data release proof of direction. Each visual event evidence that the future is approaching or receding. The future is continually **updated**. This creates what may be described as a regime of **permanent anticipation**.

The audience is repeatedly told, implicitly or explicitly:

WE ARE ALMOST THERE

or

WE ARE AT A DECISIVE MOMENT

or

THIS MAY DETERMINE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

The political relationship therefore depends upon sustained expectation. This is structurally useful because expectation keeps the narrative open. A completed future would end anticipation. An endlessly distant future would weaken credibility.

Political communication must therefore place the desired object at an appropriate temporal distance:

CLOSE ENOUGH TO MOTIVATE

but

DISTANT ENOUGH TO REQUIRE CONTINUED ACTION.

This can be described as the **temporal management of political desire**. The future must appear reachable but unfinished:

- Trumpian restoration must appear possible but not yet complete;
- Mileian refoundation must appear underway but not yet fully realized.

The leader occupies this interval. This produces an important temporal formula:

PROGRESS + INCOMPLETION = CONTINUED POLITICAL NECESSITY.

Too little progress risks disappointment. Too much completion risks narrative closure.

The leader therefore benefits semiotically from demonstrating partial conjunction with the object of value while preserving a remaining distance.

Trump can show signs of restoration while identifying further threats.

Milei can show economic improvements while identifying remaining structures of the old system.

The future continually approaches without being exhausted. This is a central mechanism of **permanent leadership narration**.

The audience remains located within a journey. The destination is visible. But the path continues.

The role of **IMG 1d** and **IMG 2a** is particularly revealing from this perspective.

MAGA and the chainsaw both condense entire future trajectories into portable symbolic forms.

They do so oppositely.

IMG 1d says:

THE FUTURE SHOULD REPEAT A VALUE.

IMG 2a says:

THE FUTURE REQUIRES A BREAK.

One symbol contains **return**. The other contains **passage**.

One stabilizes the object of desire by naming it. The other dramatizes the operation necessary to reach an object not yet fully represented.

This creates two different semiotic economies of hope.

Trumpian hope is **substantive**: the desired value already has a recognizable name (greatness).

Mileian hope is more strongly **procedural**: the desired future emerges through the process of liberation from the old system.

This does not mean Milei lacks substantive values. Freedom, market autonomy, and libertarian principles clearly provide positive content. The distinction is that within the selected visual corpus, **rupture itself has unusually strong symbolic prominence**.

The means of transformation becomes almost as visible as the endpoint. The chainsaw says **how** change must begin. MAGA says more directly what condition must return.

The comparison can therefore be summarized as:

TRUMP

FUTURE DEFINED PRIMARILY BY OBJECT OF VALUE

MILEI

FUTURE DEFINED PRIMARILY BY TRANSFORMATIVE BREAK AND EMERGENT ORDER

This difference also shapes uncertainty:

- Trumpian restorative futurity attempts to reduce uncertainty through familiarity;
- Mileian disruptive futurity can positively valorize a degree of uncertainty because the old order must be abandoned before the new one is completely stabilized.

The relationship to uncertainty can therefore be expressed as:

TRUMP

UNCERTAINTY = SOMETHING TO BE OVERCOME

THROUGH RESTORED ORDER

MILEI

UNCERTAINTY = TEMPORARILY ACCEPTABLE

IF IT IS THE EFFECT OF BREAKING AN ILLEGITIMATE ORDER

This distinction is closely related to productive chaos:

- for Trump, disorder predominantly validates the need for control;
- for Milei, transitional disorder can validate the existence of transformation.

The spectator is therefore asked to tolerate different forms of temporal ambiguity.

Trump's supporter must believe that a recognizable order can be recovered. Milei's supporter must believe that instability will eventually produce a better order. The corresponding trust relations differ.

Trumpian trust says:

FOLLOW ME BECAUSE I KNOW WHERE WE MUST RETURN.

Mileian trust says:

FOLLOW ME THROUGH THE RUPTURE

because the old path cannot continue.

The second requires a particularly strong **faith in transition**.

The future may be less experientially familiar. The leader must therefore make the passage itself credible. The economic graphs of **IMG 2e** become especially important for this reason.

They can transform transition into a measurable trajectory. The future becomes less uncertain if the present appears to display directional evidence.

The chart can say:

WE ARE NOT THERE YET, BUT THE LINE IS MOVING.

This is perhaps one of the most concise formulas for the political use of aspectual futurity. The unfinished becomes credible because it possesses direction.

The graph therefore supplies **vectorial hope**. Political expectation is no longer based solely on promise. It is based on the perceived orientation of the process.

Trumpian communication can create analogous vectoriality through polling, economic indicators, border data, or other measures, but within the specific corpus selected here, the future is more strongly anchored in symbolic restoration than in statistical visualization.

This difference is important for the internal coherence of the two subcorpora:

- Trumpian futurity is predominantly **mythic-symbolic**;
- Mileian futurity combines **disruptive-symbolic and technical-vectorial** forms.

This allows the comparison to move beyond a simple emotional/rational dichotomy. Both are emotional. Both use claims of competence. But their temporal representation of political possibility is differently organized.

The platform environment further transforms these future regimes by compressing the distance between **expectation and reaction**. Political promises are immediately commented upon. Indicators are immediately circulated. Events are immediately interpreted as confirming or contradicting future trajectories. The public therefore participates in a continuous evaluation of futurity. The political future is not simply promised during campaigns and evaluated years later. It is micro-evaluated in real time.

A new image. A new poll. A new graph. A new controversy. A new policy. Each can become evidence that the future is approaching or receding. This creates a highly unstable anticipatory environment.

The political project is repeatedly subjected to short-term symbolic sanctions. The long-term future must survive the rapid temporality of the feed.

This creates a structural tension:

LONG POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

versus

SHORT MEDIA EVALUATION CYCLES.

Trump and Milei manage this tension through different symbolic mechanisms.

Trump's highly stable symbolic repertoire can absorb short-term events into a long restorative narrative.

A temporary setback does not necessarily destroy the project because it can be interpreted as another obstacle on the road to restoration.

Milei's disruptive narrative can similarly absorb short-term instability as a necessary phase of rupture.

The temporal interpretation becomes:

SETBACK ≠ FAILURE

if it can be recoded as:

RESISTANCE / TRANSITION / COST OF TRANSFORMATION.

This is a fundamental temporal mechanism of political resilience.

The leader's narrative supplies a way of **postponing final judgment**.

Trump:

THE STRUGGLE IS NOT OVER.

Milei:

THE TRANSFORMATION IS NOT COMPLETE.

Both formulations maintain the future horizon. The political project survives because incompletion remains meaningful. This again shows the importance of **not yet**.

Not yet restored. Not yet free. Not yet finished. The phrase implicitly protects the political future from premature closure. But it cannot do so indefinitely without empirical and symbolic costs.

The leader must periodically produce signs that the distance is decreasing. This creates a rhythm of anticipatory confirmation: promise, evidence, new promise, partial result, remaining obstacle, further expectation.

The political future is therefore maintained through a sequence:

EXPECTATION → PARTIAL SANCTION → RENEWED EXPECTATION.

This sequence connects temporality directly to **veridiction**. The future becomes credible when current signs appear compatible with the promised trajectory:

- Trump's present strength supports the future promise of national strength;
- Milei's present economic indicators can support the future promise of transformation.

The leader's current performance becomes an **index of futurity**. This leads to a deeper conclusion.

Political credibility is fundamentally temporal because it requires the receiver to make an inference from **what is visible now to what is expected later**.

The political leader says, semiotically:

BECAUSE I AM / DO THIS NOW, I CAN PRODUCE THAT FUTURE.

Trump:

I embody strength now → I can restore national strength.

Milei:

I enact rupture and interpret economic change now

↓

I can produce systemic transformation.

The political body, object, gesture, and graph therefore serve as **present signs of absent futures**.

This is one of the defining functions of political representation. The future cannot be shown directly because it does not yet exist. It must be represented through proxies. The corpus is therefore filled with **future-signs**.

- **IMG 1b** makes authority visible before restored authority exists collectively;
- **IMG 1c** makes success visible before national success is achieved;
- **IMG 1d** names the future as return;
- **IMG 1a** makes persistence visible before the subsequent political trajectory unfolds;
- **IMG 2a** makes rupture visible before institutional transformation is complete;
- **IMG 2b** makes intolerability visible before the old system ends;
- **IMG 2c** identifies what the future must leave behind;
- **IMG 2d** makes transition visible through destabilization;
- **IMG 2e** makes directional change visible through data.

The two corpora thus produce future orientation through different but complementary semiotic resources.

The Trumpian future is built through:

- **MEMORY**
- **EMBODIED STRENGTH**

- **ACHIEVED SUCCESS**
- **RESILIENCE**
- **RESTORATIVE SLOGAN**
- **THREAT OF ALTERNATIVE FUTURE**

The Mileian future through:

- **NEGATION OF OLD SYSTEM**
- **SYMBOLIC CUT**
- **PASSIONAL URGENCY**
- **TRANSITIONAL CHAOS**
- **ECONOMIC TRAJECTORY**
- **PROMISE OF LIBERTARIAN REFOUNDATION**

The comparison can therefore be condensed into two formulas:

TRUMP

THE FUTURE IS A LOST VALUE MADE PRESENT AGAIN.

MILEI

THE FUTURE IS A NEW POSSIBILITY RELEASED

BY THE TERMINATION OF AN OLD CONTINUITY.

These formulas capture the deepest temporal opposition between the two leadership models.

Both share one central semiotic principle: **the future must be made present enough to mobilize action before it actually exists**.

Political leadership depends upon this anticipatory power.

The leader gives the future a body, a sign, a direction, a rhythm, an emotional tone.

The public is then invited to act in the present according to that anticipated future. Political temporality is therefore performative.

Expectation changes behavior now. A future image can mobilize a present vote. A feared future can justify present exclusion. A promised recovery can sustain present loyalty. A projected refoundation can legitimize present sacrifice. The future acts before it exists. This is perhaps the deepest semiotic significance of political expectation.

Trump and Milei construct different anticipated worlds, but both transform those worlds into **present forces** capable of structuring identity, conflict, credibility, and collective action.

At the deepest level, therefore, the temporal threshold is the point where political imagination becomes political agency. Trump's discourse invites the public to cross that threshold toward a **future made legitimate by the recovery of a valued past**; Milei's invites it toward a **future made possible by severing the continuity of a rejected past**. Trump makes hope depend on return; Milei makes hope depend on rupture. In both cases, however, the leader occupies the decisive interval between the unsatisfactory present and the desired future, becoming the personalized operator through whom **historical possibility itself is rendered visible, credible, and actionable**.

7.5. MEMORY, REPETITION, AND THE TEMPORAL RESEMANTIZATION

The temporal dimension of the corpus cannot be reduced to the representation of past, present, and future within individual texts. Political images themselves possess a **temporal trajectory**. They appear at a particular moment, circulate, are repeated, archived, recalled, reframed, and sometimes acquire meanings that differ significantly from those available at the moment of their first emergence.

An image therefore has not only a represented time but also a **social time of circulation**. It can be new. Become familiar. Enter collective memory. Disappear temporarily. Return. Be connected to later events. Acquire retrospective significance. Become iconic. Or gradually lose its original contextual specificity and function increasingly as a condensed sign of a broader political identity.

The distinction can initially be represented as:

TIME REPRESENTED IN THE IMAGE

versus

TIME OF THE IMAGE AS A CIRCULATING SIGN.

The first concerns what the text depicts. The second concerns what happens **to the text itself** over time. This second dimension is particularly important in platformized political communication because digital infrastructures dramatically expand the possibility of storing and reactivating previous signs.

An image does not necessarily disappear when the event ends. It remains available. Searchable. Repostable. Editable. Comparable. Memetically transformable. The archive is therefore not simply a place where political communication ends.

It becomes a reservoir from which communication can continually begin again. The political image acquires what may be described as **latent temporal availability**. It exists between moments of activation. The structure becomes:

EVENT

↓

IMAGE

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

ARCHIVAL LATENCY

↓

REACTIVATION

↓

NEW CONTEXT → POSSIBLE NEW MEANING

This movement has major consequences for political identity. The leader's persona can be constructed not only through what he does now, but through the continuous availability of images showing what he has done before.

Political biography becomes visually retrievable. Earlier signs can be mobilized to interpret later ones. Later events can retrospectively transform the meaning of earlier images.

The relationship between present and past therefore becomes **bidirectional**.

Conventionally, one might imagine:

PAST → INFLUENCES PRESENT.

Media circulation also allows:

PRESENT → REINTERPRETS PAST.

A later political achievement can cause earlier behavior to appear prophetic. A later controversy can make an earlier statement newly significant. A subsequent leadership role can transform a previously non-political image into political evidence.

The political past is therefore continually reorganized from the standpoint of the present. This process is fundamental to the construction of both Trump and Milei.

In the Trumpian corpus, **IMG 1c** provides an especially clear example.

Airplanes, gilded interiors, wealth, and celebrity-business imagery originated within a public persona that long preceded Trump's presidency. At the time of their original production or circulation, such images could primarily signify economic success, celebrity status, luxury, business identity, or personal branding.

After Trump's entry into electoral politics, however, these same signs become available for **retrospective political reinterpretation**.

What had been:

BUSINESS SUCCESS

can become:

PRE-POLITICAL EVIDENCE OF LEADERSHIP COMPETENCE.

What had been:

CELEBRITY LUXURY

can become:

VISUAL PROOF OF THE WINNER ETHOS.

What had been:

PRIVATE BIOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION

can become:

POLITICAL LEGITIMATION.

The temporal operation is therefore not merely repetition. It is retrospective resemanticization.

The later political identity reorganizes the earlier visual archive.

The sequence can be represented as:

EARLIER IMAGE

↓

ORIGINAL PUBLIC MEANING

↓

LATER POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION OF SUBJECT

↓

RE-READING OF EARLIER IMAGE

↓

NEW POLITICAL FUNCTION

The past appears different because the subject's present has changed. This is a crucial feature of mediatized political biography. Trump does not enter politics without a visual history. He enters with an extensive pre-existing archive.

That archive can be politically appropriated. The celebrity-business persona therefore becomes not merely anterior to the political persona but **incorporated into it retrospectively**.

Political time reorders biographical time. This mechanism is especially important because it can produce a kind of narrative inevitability. Once a subject has achieved political success, earlier images may begin to look as though they were already anticipating that future.

The businessman appears retrospectively presidential. The dominant celebrity appears retrospectively political. The visual signs of wealth appear retrospectively as preparations for governance.

Contingency can therefore be reduced through retrospective narration. The biography acquires **teleological coherence**.

The structure becomes:

PAST EVENT

↓

LATER OUTCOME

↓

PAST EVENT REINTERPRETED AS STEP TOWARD OUTCOME.

This temporal reconstruction is one of the mechanisms through which public figures become mythologized.

Their histories cease to appear as collections of heterogeneous episodes. They become trajectories. The end appears to explain the beginning. The present reorganizes the past into a story.

In Trump's case, the winner ethos provides the principle through which heterogeneous biographical signs can be connected:

- business;
- luxury;
- celebrity;
- television;
- political campaigning;
- presidency;
- resistance.

These domains can be retrospectively arranged as successive manifestations of the same underlying subject:

- **THE WINNER;**
- **THE STRONG MAN;**
- **THE EXCEPTIONAL ACTOR.**

The political identity therefore extends backward in time. This does not mean that the earlier signs originally possessed all the meanings subsequently attributed to them.

On the contrary, the key analytical point is precisely that **meaning changes through temporal recontextualization**.

The political corpus is therefore diachronic even when the selected images are analyzed synchronically.

Each text contains traces of previous interpretations and potential future reinterpretations.

IMG 1d operates differently because MAGA itself is explicitly structured around memory.

The slogan produces an imagined past while simultaneously becoming a historical object in its own right through repetition.

Initially, MAGA points backward:

MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN.

Over time, however, the slogan also accumulates its own political history. Campaign rallies. Electoral victories and defeats. Institutional conflicts. Media controversies. Supporter communities. Material objects. Memetic transformations. The sign becomes increasingly sedimented.

A MAGA cap viewed after years of political circulation does not signify exactly what the same sign could have signified at the beginning of Trump's first presidential campaign.

It now carries **layers of remembered usage**.

The temporal structure can be represented as:

INITIAL SLOGAN

↓

REPEATED POLITICAL USE

↓

ACCUMULATION OF EVENTS

↓

MEMORY ATTACHED TO SIGN

↓

INCREASING SEMANTIC DENSITY

The cap becomes a political archive in miniature. Its physical form may remain relatively stable.

Its historical meaning grows. This distinction between **formal stability and semantic accumulation** is essential.

The sign looks the same. Its temporal depth changes. The red cap can evoke not only the lexical content of MAGA but an entire political era. A materially simple object thus acquires a complex temporal halo.

The political sign becomes a carrier of **sedimented memory**. This process can be described as:

REPETITION + HISTORY = SYMBOLIC THICKENING.

The longer the sign remains politically active, the less its meaning depends exclusively on literal interpretation. The words themselves remain important, but accumulated associations increasingly contribute to recognition.

MAGA becomes a historical shorthand. This temporal thickening also changes the relation between newcomers and long-term participants. A new supporter encounters an already historicized sign.

The individual may enter the political community after many of the events constituting its symbolic memory have occurred.

Through images, slogans, videos, and repeated references, the subject can inherit a **mediated memory** of the movement.

Political memory is therefore not restricted to those who personally experienced the original events. It can be transmitted semiotically.

The process becomes:

PAST POLITICAL EVENT

↓

MEDIA REPRESENTATION

↓

ARCHIVE

↓

NEW RECEIVER

↓

APPROPRIATED COLLECTIVE MEMORY

This is a fundamental mechanism of political continuity. A movement can reproduce historical identity across changing audiences. The memory is not purely personal. It is media-assisted and collectively narrativized.

IMG 1a provides an even clearer example of the transformation from event into memory.

The assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania, belongs initially to a specific historical sequence.

Its first meaning is strongly attached to immediacy. An attack has occurred. The leader has been injured. The political event has been disrupted. The raised fist emerges within that immediate context. As the image circulates, its relation to the event can gradually change.

The sequence can be represented as:

EVENT DOCUMENTATION

↓

POLITICAL INTERPRETATION

↓

REPEATED CIRCULATION

↓

SYMBOLIC CONDENSATION

↓

MEMORIALIZATION / ICONIZATION

At the first stage, contextual information is indispensable. Where did it happen? What happened? Who fired? What were the consequences? At later stages, the image can increasingly function without the entire event narrative being restated. The viewer recognizes the fist. The blood. The body. The surrounding scene. The image becomes capable of evoking the event through condensation.

This produces **contextual economy**. The more iconic the image becomes, the less verbal context may be necessary for recognition. Something is also lost in this process.

The complexity of the event can be reduced. The historical sequence becomes concentrated into one privileged frame. Other moments disappear. The image becomes a **memory selector**.

This is crucial. Collective visual memory is never the entire past. It is the past reorganized through memorable forms. One photograph may become more culturally durable than thousands of other frames taken during the same event.

The image then influences how the event itself is remembered. The relation becomes:

EVENT PRODUCES IMAGE

but subsequently:

IMAGE ORGANIZES MEMORY OF EVENT.

The direction of influence reverses.

The representation does not merely preserve history. It participates in constructing its later intelligibility.

For Trump, the raised fist can therefore become a visual shorthand for resilience irrespective of the greater complexity of the assassination attempt.

The event becomes narratively legible through a selected moment.

This is one of the most important operations of political iconicity.

The icon does not eliminate history. It **compresses history around a privileged interpretation**.

This compression also permits strategic reactivation.

The image can return during later moments of political conflict and say, implicitly:

REMEMBER WHO HE WAS IN THAT MOMENT.

Past resistance becomes available as evidence for present strength.

The temporal sequence is therefore:

PAST PERFORMANCE

↓

MEMORY

↓

CURRENT REACTIVATION

↓

PRESENT AUTHENTICATION

The past supplies symbolic capital to the present. Trump's political identity can thus become temporally self-reinforcing.

New conflicts recall old resistance. Old resistance makes new conflicts easier to interpret within the same ethos.

The relation is circular:

CURRENT TRUMP → REACTIVATES PAST TRUMP

while

PAST TRUMP → LEGITIMATES CURRENT TRUMP.

This temporal feedback contributes to the stabilization of persona.

IMG 1b operates through a less dramatic but equally important mechanism: repeated bodily configurations produce **habitual memory**.

Unlike the exceptional iconicity of **IMG 1a**, the posture of dominance is stabilized through frequency.

No single instance necessarily becomes historically decisive.

Instead, the accumulation of similar appearances creates a memory of style.

The spectator gradually develops an expectation:

THIS IS HOW TRUMP APPEARS.

The temporal mechanism is:

INSTANCE

↓

ANOTHER INSTANCE

↓

RECOGNITION OF PATTERN

↓

STORAGE AS CHARACTERISTIC STYLE

This is a form of **schematic memory** rather than event memory. The audience may not remember the precise rally or debate in which a particular posture appeared.

It remembers the general Trumpian body. Central. Frontal. Dominant. Recognizable. The specific contexts blur into a recurrent type.

This distinction between **episodic iconicity and schematic recurrence** is analytically useful:

- **IMG 1a** tends toward event memory.
- **IMG 1b** tends toward stylistic memory.

Both contribute to ethos, but differently.

The first says:

REMEMBER WHAT HE DID THEN.

The second says:

REMEMBER WHAT HE IS GENERALLY LIKE.

The political persona therefore combines exceptional moments and ordinary repetitions. The exception dramatizes. The repetition stabilizes. Together, they produce temporal depth.

IMG 1e demonstrates the more problematic side of memory formation. Fake anti-immigration imagery can persist even after its factual status has been challenged. This persistence is important because visual memory does not necessarily follow the same temporal trajectory as factual correction.

The initial image may be emotionally vivid. The correction may be verbally complex. The image can therefore remain more memorable than the explanation that discredits it.

The relation can become:

VIVID FALSE IMAGE

↓

STRONG INITIAL ENCODING

↓

FACTUAL CORRECTION

↓

PROPOSITIONAL CLAIM CHALLENGED

but potentially

IMAGE REMAINS MNEMONICALLY AVAILABLE.

This creates a distinction between:

epistemic persistence

and

mnemonic persistence.

A claim may cease to be defensible as factual evidence while remaining easy to remember.

The remembered image can then continue to activate the broader narrative with which it had become associated.

This does not mean the audience necessarily continues to believe the literal claim.

The sign may survive in another mode:

- as joke;
- meme;
- symbol;
- exaggeration;
- provocation;
- eeference to a broader anti-immigration discourse.

The political life of the representation can therefore continue through **veridictory mutation**.

The image moves from:

CLAIM OF DOCUMENTATION

toward

SYMBOLIC OR IDEOLOGICAL MEMORY.

This temporal mutation is one of the key mechanisms through which post-truth content can remain politically relevant after debunking. Factual closure and semiotic closure do not coincide.

The sign may outlive the proposition. This is especially important in visual environments because images possess strong mnemonic condensation.

A detailed correction may require a sequence of propositions. A striking image can be recalled instantly.

The asymmetry is temporal and cognitive. The correction unfolds. The image flashes back.

Political memory therefore becomes one of the sites where veridiction continues after the immediate factual dispute has ended.

Across the Trumpian corpus, temporal memory thus operates through several different mechanisms:

- **BIOGRAPHICAL REINTERPRETATION**
  in **IMG 1c**;
- **SYMBOLIC SEDIMENTATION**
  in **IMG 1d**;
- **EVENT ICONIZATION**
  in **IMG 1a**;
- **STYLISTIC HABITUATION**
  in **IMG 1b**;
- **MNEMONIC PERSISTENCE AND VERIDICTORY MUTATION**
  in **IMG 1e**.

Together, these processes transform the Trumpian corpus into a **layered archive of leadership**.

The signs do not simply follow one another. They accumulate.

The Mileian corpus presents an analogous but differently structured temporal dynamic.

Because Milei's public political identity is strongly associated with rupture and accelerated circulation, his images are especially interesting examples of how **disruptive novelty can become historical memory**.

A leader constructed around breaking with the past must eventually generate a past of his own. This produces a paradox: the new becomes old; rupture becomes history; anti-tradition can become tradition.

Disruptive signs can become stabilized symbols.

The temporal question becomes:

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE SIGN OF BREAKING

WITH THE PAST ITSELF ACQUIRES A PAST?

This problem is particularly visible in **IMG 2a**. The chainsaw initially operates as a spectacular sign of future-oriented rupture.

Its political force depends partly on novelty. It shocks because the object is unusual within conventional political symbolism. Yet repeated use gradually reduces novelty. The chainsaw becomes expected. The process can be represented as:

UNEXPECTED OBJECT

↓

SHOCK / HIGH SALIENCE

↓

REPETITION

↓

RECOGNITION

↓

STABILIZED POLITICAL SYMBOL

The disruptive sign becomes conventional **within the Mileian symbolic universe**. This is an important transformation. A sign can remain anti-conventional in relation to institutional political aesthetics while becoming highly conventional within the leader's own communicative system.

The chainsaw therefore undergoes a double temporal movement:

EXTERNAL TRANSGRESSION

and

INTERNAL STABILIZATION.

From the standpoint of traditional political imagery, it remains unusual. From the standpoint of Milei's identity, it becomes normal. The supporter expects it. The media recognize it. Opponents know its meaning.

The symbol becomes historically established.This process can be described as the **institutionalization of disruption at the semiotic level**.

What initially interrupts a code becomes a code. The paradox is central to Mileian temporality.

A political identity based on rupture must continually preserve signs of novelty even after its original signs have become familiar.

The chainsaw may therefore require new contexts, new targets, or new political applications in order to retain transformative energy.

Repetition stabilizes identity but risks reducing shock.

The political system must balance:

RECOGNIZABILITY

and

DISRUPTIVE FRESHNESS.

This is a temporal problem as much as an aesthetic one. Too little repetition and the sign does not stabilize. Too much repetition and the sign may become routine.

The political persona must therefore generate **renewed difference within recognizable continuity**.

IMG 2b develops this problem through bodily performance.

Milei's anger, shouting, and expansive gestures may initially appear highly transgressive relative to conventional political demeanor.

With repetition, however, the audience learns the style.

What first appears unexpected becomes expected.

The temporal sequence is:

SURPRISE

↓

REPETITION

↓

ANTICIPATION

↓

STYLISTIC NORMALIZATION

The viewer comes to know that Milei may shout. May point. May intensify. May confront.

This creates the same paradox identified earlier:

PREDICTABLE UNPREDICTABILITY.

The exact episode may remain unpredictable. The expectation of intensity becomes stable. The political style thus enters **procedural memory**.

The audience knows how to read the performance before knowing its specific content. The body becomes a remembered code. This process resembles Trumpian stylistic habituation in **IMG 1b**, but the values differ.

Trumpian recurrence stabilizes control. Mileian recurrence stabilizes excess.

The comparison can be expressed as:

- **TRUMP → MEMORY OF DOMINANT STABILITY**
- **MILEI → MEMORY OF DISRUPTIVE INTENSITY**

In both cases, repetition converts behavior into ethos. But the remembered political body carries opposite temporal qualities. One recalls command. The other recalls activation.

IMG 2c adds a different historical structure because the “casta” depends upon a **narrative memory of systemic continuity**.

The category acquires force when contemporary political actors are connected to a longer history of institutional failure.

The present antagonist becomes meaningful through the past attributed to it.

The structure can be represented as:

CURRENT POLITICAL ACTOR

↓

PLACEMENT WITHIN "CASTA"

↓

CONNECTION TO HISTORICAL SYSTEM

↓

ACCUMULATED RESPONSIBILITY

The category therefore temporalizes blame. An actor is not merely criticized for what is happening now. The actor can be positioned within a historical continuity represented as responsible for accumulated decline or dysfunction.

The "casta" becomes a container of **negative political memory**. This is particularly important because collective blame becomes durable. Individual politicians change. The category persists. New actors can be interpreted through an old historical frame.

The temporal relation becomes:

OLD SYSTEM

↓

NEW REPRESENTATIVE

↓

SAME CASTA

The narrative therefore reduces the novelty of opponents. What appears empirically new can be semiotically reclassified as another recurrence of the same old order.

This is the exact inverse of Milei's self-presentation. Milei must appear as:

NEW.

The caste must appear as:

MORE OF THE SAME.

Political conflict thus becomes a temporal opposition:

- **NOVELTY / REPETITION**
- **FUTURE / PAST**
- **RUPTURE / CONTINUITY**

The opponent is delegitimated through historical repetition. The leader is legitimated through claimed discontinuity. This temporal coding is fundamental to the Mileian narrative.

IMG 2d, productive chaos, presents one of the most interesting relationships between memory and acceleration. Highly accelerated communication might initially appear hostile to memory.

New events displace old ones. Attention moves quickly. Controversies become obsolete. Repetition of a recognizable style can produce a powerful cumulative memory even when the individual events are rapidly forgotten.

The audience may not remember every confrontation. It remembers:

MILEI AS CONFRONTATIONAL.

May not remember every provocation. It remembers:

MILEI AS DISRUPTIVE.

May not remember every moment of communicative chaos. It remembers:

CHAOS AS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE MILEIAN MEDIA PRESENCE.

This produces a distinction between:

MEMORY OF EVENTS

and

MEMORY OF RHYTHM.

The first may be weak because events are numerous. The second can be strong because the same temporal quality recurs.

The audience remembers not necessarily *what happened* but **how Mileian politics feels temporally**:

- fast;
- intense;
- conflictual;
- unstable;
- always moving.

This is a significant form of political memory because it operates at the level of **temporal atmosphere**.

The leader acquires not only a visual style but a remembered rhythm.

The political persona becomes associated with a particular speed.

The memory is therefore tensional as well as semantic.

One remembers acceleration.

This contributes to the stabilization of "productive chaos" as a leadership marker.

The sequence becomes:

MANY HETEROGENEOUS EVENTS

↓

SHARED RHYTHMIC CHARACTER

↓

ABSTRACTION OF STYLE

↓

MEMORY OF DISRUPTIVE TEMPORALITY

This is particularly compatible with platform environments.

The user may not retain every piece of content encountered in a feed. But repeated exposure can produce a generalized perception of the political subject.

The memory becomes **statistical rather than episodic** in a broad semiotic sense.

Countless small encounters accumulate into an overall impression.

The political persona is remembered through frequency and tone.

IMG 2e adds still another form of temporal memory because economic charts can create **quantified historical narratives**.

Data provide points of comparison.

The present can be measured against the past.

The political memory is not only symbolic but numerical.

Previous inflation, current inflation. previous fiscal conditions, current indicators, before reform, after reform. The chart therefore builds memory through explicit temporal segmentation.

The structure becomes:

PAST VALUE

↓

CURRENT VALUE

↓

VISIBLE DIFFERENCE

↓

POLITICAL INTERPRETATION

The graph produces an **externalized memory device**. The audience does not need to remember every historical number unaided.

The visualization stores the comparison. It makes the past present again in graphic form. This is a powerful function. The chart converts memory into visible simultaneity.

Two temporal moments that occurred separately can coexist on the same page or screen.

The past and present become spatial neighbors. Temporal distance is transformed into visual distance.

This allows political communication to make historical comparison immediate.

The graph can say:

LOOK AT WHERE WE WERE.

and

LOOK AT WHERE WE ARE.

The audience sees both at once. This creates a form of **synoptic memory**.

Historical time is compressed into one perceptual field.

The political significance is obvious.

A government can construct a narrative of improvement. An opposition can construct a narrative of deterioration. The same temporal mechanism is available to competing actors.

What matters for the present analysis is that **IMG 2e** gives Milei's political identity access to a form of memory different from the memetic or bodily forms seen elsewhere in the corpus.

The leader does not merely ask:

REMEMBER HOW BAD IT WAS.

He can attempt to say:

HERE IS A VISUALIZED RECORD OF HOW BAD IT WAS.

The graph therefore transforms memory into an **epistemic resource**. This is particularly important for the anti-caste narrative.

If the old system is blamed for the crisis, the political argument benefits from making that crisis historically visible.

The chart can function as an archive of disvalue, previous management leaves numerical traces: the past becomes measurable. This gives Milei's rupture a temporal justification:

THE BREAK IS NECESSARY BECAUSE THE PREVIOUS TRAJECTORY IS VISIBLE.

The future can then be compared against this baseline.

The chart therefore simultaneously organizes:

MEMORY OF PAST FAILURE

and

EXPECTATION OF FUTURE IMPROVEMENT.

It becomes a hinge between retrospective and prospective time.

This dual function distinguishes **IMG 2e** from the other Mileian images.

The chainsaw remembers rupture. The angry body remembers intensity. The caste remembers institutional failure. Productive chaos remembers acceleration. The chart remembers **trajectory**.

Together, the five images produce a layered political memory.

The Mileian subcorpus can therefore be summarized through:

- **SYMBOLIC MEMORY OF RUPTURE**
  in **IMG 2a**;
- **BODILY MEMORY OF INTENSITY**
  in **IMG 2b**;
- **HISTORICAL MEMORY OF SYSTEMIC ANTAGONISM**
  in **IMG 2c**;
- **RHYTHMIC MEMORY OF PRODUCTIVE CHAOS**
  in **IMG 2d**;
- **QUANTIFIED MEMORY OF ECONOMIC TRAJECTORY**
  in **IMG 2e**.

The comparison with Trump is revealing. Trump's corpus organizes memory predominantly around: **identity, restoration, biographical success, iconic resistance, and continuing threat**.

Milei's organizes it predominantly around: **rupture, systemic failure, accelerated confrontation, bodily intensity, and measurable economic discontinuity**.

The two political memories therefore correspond closely to the wider temporal grammars.

TRUMP

The past contains **values to recover** and **evidence of the leader's strength and success**.

MILEI

The past contains **structures to reject** and **evidence justifying discontinuity**.

The dominant relation can therefore be expressed as:

- **TRUMP → MEMORY AS RESOURCE FOR RESTORATION**
- **MILEI → MEMORY AS JUSTIFICATION FOR RUPTURE**

This is one of the clearest temporal distinctions between the two leadership models.

The corpus also demonstrates that both leaders depend upon the production of a **personal political archive**.

The archive is essential because leadership identity becomes more credible when it appears temporally deep. The public figure does not merely exist in the instantaneous present of the feed. He has a retrievable history.

Signs from different moments can be compared. Patterns can be identified. The leader can claim consistency. Opponents can claim contradiction. The archive thus becomes a field of political struggle. Past content can authenticate. But it can also undermine.

A previous statement may be recalled against a current one. A previous promise may be compared with later outcomes. An old image may be reframed critically. Political memory is therefore not controlled entirely by the leader.

It remains **contestable**. Supporters and opponents can activate different pasts. The same archive may generate competing narratives. This can be represented as:

SAME PAST MATERIAL

↙ ↘

SUPPORTIVE READING **CRITICAL READING**

↓ ↓

CONSISTENCY **CONTRADICTION**

↓ ↓

AUTHENTICATION **DELEGITIMATION**

The political archive is therefore polysemic. What becomes decisive is not merely what survives, but which past is activated and how it is connected to the present.

This is particularly important in platformized communication because archival retrieval has become extremely easy.

Old posts, videos, photographs, screenshots, news clips, quotes. They can return within minutes when a new political event occurs.

The past becomes **operationally immediate**. **Digital media therefore weaken one of the conventional distinctions between historical and current communication.**

An image from years earlier can suddenly re-enter a current controversy and compete for present attention. The political present becomes temporally heterogeneous.

The feed can contain:

- today's speech;
- yesterday's reaction;
- a five-year-old video;
- an older photograph;
- a newly produced meme using an old image.

Chronological difference exists, but interface proximity reduces its perceptual distance. This creates a condition of **temporal co-presence**.

Different political moments appear together. The user can compare them almost instantaneously.

This has several consequences:

- First, political consistency becomes more visibly testable.
- Second, old signs can be reactivated continuously.
- Third, context can be lost when past material re-enters the present without its original circumstances.

- Fourth, political memory becomes increasingly dependent on **selection by circulation**.

Not everything from the past returns. Some signs return far more often than others. This selection process contributes to political myth. The remembered leader is not the sum of all previous representations. It is the leader reconstructed through **recurring archival highlights**.

The raised fist may return more often than ordinary campaign photographs. The chainsaw more often than technically detailed policy discussions. The iconic or spectacular fragment therefore gains disproportionate temporal longevity.

This can be described as **mnemonic inequality among political signs**. Some texts possess greater capacity to survive.

Their survival may depend on:

- visual simplicity;
- emotional intensity;
- recognizability;
- symbolic condensation;
- narrative compatibility;
- memetic adaptability.

The ten images selected for the corpus possess precisely such characteristics to different degrees. They are analytically relevant partly because they are capable of condensing broader leadership structures.

The temporal dimension strengthens that condensation. A sign repeatedly recalled becomes more than an individual representation. It becomes a **memory node**.

Other political meanings organize around it.

The relation can be represented as:

SIGN

↓

REPETITION

↓

MEMORY NODE

↓

CONNECTION TO MULTIPLE EVENTS / VALUES

↓

INCREASED SYMBOLIC CENTRALITY

This process contributes to political iconicization. Iconicity is therefore not purely a visual property. It is also temporal. An image becomes iconic partly because it survives. Because it returns. Because different contexts continue to reactivate it. Because the collective begins to recognize it without extensive explanation.

An icon is a sign that has acquired **temporal endurance through social recurrence**. This is particularly clear in **IMG 1a** and **IMG 2a**, albeit through different mechanisms.

The raised fist condenses an exceptional event. The chainsaw condenses a repeated political program. One becomes memorable through **historical punctuality**. The other through **symbolic iterativity**.

The distinction can be expressed as:

- **IMG 1a** → ONE EXTRAORDINARY MOMENT EXPANDED THROUGH MEMORY
- **IMG 2a** → ONE RECOGNIZABLE SYMBOL REPEATED ACROSS MANY MOMENTS

Both can become iconic. But their temporal paths toward iconicity differ. This comparison is highly productive because it shows that political memory can stabilize either an **event** or an **operation**.

Trump's fist remembers:

RESISTANCE AT A DECISIVE MOMENT.

Milei's chainsaw remembers:

RUPTURE AS A REPEATED POLITICAL INTENTION.

One transforms contingency into enduring identity. The other transforms a programmatic metaphor into enduring identity.

In both cases, however, personal leadership becomes easier to recognize because a complex political biography is condensed around a limited set of high-density signs.

This condensation can generate what may be called **retrospective coherence**.

Once the sign has stabilized, later events are interpreted through it. A new Trump conflict can recall the fist. A new Milei reform can recall the chainsaw. The symbol therefore becomes an interpretive template. The past acts upon the present.

The process becomes:

MEMORIZED SYMBOL

↓

NEW POLITICAL EVENT

↓

RECOGNITION OF STRUCTURAL SIMILARITY

↓

EVENT ASSIMILATED TO ESTABLISHED ETHOS

The political identity thus develops inertia. New material is drawn toward old meanings. This does not prevent change, but it makes some interpretations more immediately available than others.

The leader possesses a **temporal frame of recognizability**.

This frame also affects mutation. When a later event diverges sharply from established identity, the discrepancy becomes especially visible.

A Trumpian sign interpreted as weakness may clash with accumulated memories of strength.

A Mileian sign interpreted as institutional conformity may clash with accumulated memories of disruption.

The archive therefore creates expectations against which the present is evaluated. Memory becomes normative.

The structure is:

PAST PERSONA

↓

EXPECTATION

↓

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

↓

CONSISTENCY / INCONSISTENCY

The political subject is continually judged against his own remembered form.

This makes memory a veridictory device.

The question becomes:

IS HE STILL WHO HE APPEARED TO BE?

The answer can support or undermine authenticity.

Political leadership therefore involves **temporal self-correspondence**.

A persona must retain enough continuity with its past to remain recognizable while adapting enough to changing conditions to remain politically effective.

This creates another tension:

CONSISTENCY / ADAPTATION.

Too much change can appear opportunistic. Too little can appear rigid. The political archive increases the visibility of this problem because previous positions remain retrievable.

Trump and Milei both rely heavily on authenticity narratives that make temporal consistency especially significant.

Trump's strength must continue to look like strength.

Milei's rupture must continue to look like rupture.

Their public histories create obligations.

The past becomes a **semiotic contract with the future**.

Once an identity has been stabilized, subsequent performances are interpreted in relation to it.

This is particularly important when the outsider enters institutions.

Milei's pre-presidential anti-system imagery becomes the standard against which presidential behavior can be evaluated.

The question becomes:

HAS THE DISRUPTOR BEEN NORMALIZED?

The archive supplies evidence for comparison. The same issue operates differently for Trump, whose celebrity-business persona precedes political institutionalization.

The question can become:

DOES POLITICAL OFFICE CONFIRM OR CONTRADICT

THE WINNER / STRONG-LEADER ETHOS?

In both cases, temporality transforms leadership into a problem of **diachronic coherence**. The corpus also demonstrates that memory is inseparable from **forgetting**.

Not every political event survives. Not every image becomes iconic. Not every contradiction remains visible. Political identity depends partly on selective retention. Certain events are repeatedly recalled. Others fade. This selective process contributes to the simplification necessary for coherent narrative. The full political biography is complex. The remembered political biography is necessarily reduced.

The process can be represented as:

HETEROGENEOUS PAST

↓

SELECTIVE REPETITION

↓

DIFFERENTIAL VISIBILITY

↓

MEMORY HIERARCHY

↓

COHERENT PERSONA

This does not require a centralized strategy. Selection can emerge from many actors:

- political campaigns;
- journalists;
- supporters;
- opponents;
- platform algorithms;

- meme communities;
- institutional archives.

Political memory is therefore **distributed in production but potentially concentrated in effect**.

Many actors contribute. A small number of signs dominate. This is another important consequence of platformization. Metrics of engagement can amplify already memorable signs. A highly circulated image becomes even more likely to be encountered again.

Memory and visibility can therefore enter a feedback loop:

RECOGNIZABILITY

↓

ENGAGEMENT

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

GREATER RECOGNIZABILITY

↓

FURTHER CIRCULATION

The sign becomes culturally sticky. This process can strengthen both admiration and hostility. An iconic image does not require consensual interpretation. It requires **shared recognition**.

Supporters and opponents may disagree radically about its value while still recognizing the same sign. This is politically significant because collective memory can be common even when evaluation is polarized.

The Butler fist can be recognized across political camps. The chainsaw can be recognized across Milei’s supporters and critics.

The symbol becomes part of a shared political vocabulary. Meaning then divides at the level of evaluation.

This allows us to distinguish:

MNEMONIC CONSENSUS

from

AXIOLOGICAL CONSENSUS.

The first means:

WE KNOW WHAT SIGN THIS IS.

The second would mean:

WE AGREE ON WHAT VALUE IT HAS.

Contemporary polarization often combines the first with absence of the second. The same political sign dominates collective attention while generating opposite judgments. This produces a paradoxical form of shared political culture.

Opponents inhabit the same symbolic archive but interpret it antagonistically. The political scene becomes divided around **common objects of memory**.

This phenomenon is particularly important for Trump and Milei because both leadership styles generate high-recognition signs.

The leader becomes culturally central even among audiences who reject him. Visibility exceeds support. Memory exceeds agreement. Political centrality therefore cannot be measured solely by positive identification.

A strongly rejected leader can remain semiotically dominant if opponents continually reproduce his signs. This connects memory to the earlier discussion of involuntary amplification.

Criticism can preserve memory. Parody can preserve memory. Fact-checking can preserve memory. News coverage can preserve memory. A sign may therefore survive partly through the activity of those attempting to challenge it.

The relation becomes:

NEGATIVE ATTENTION

↓

REPRODUCTION OF SIGN

↓

CONTINUED VISIBILITY

↓

CONTINUED RECOGNIZABILITY

This does not imply that negative and positive circulation are politically equivalent. Their evaluative consequences differ. But both can contribute to **temporal persistence**.

The political image acquires longevity through conflict. This is particularly compatible with populist identities structured around antagonism. The more contested the sign, the more opportunities it may have to return.

Political conflict becomes a mnemonic engine. This helps explain why both Trumpian and Mileian leadership can benefit, at the level of recognizability, from controversy. The controversy produces repetition. Repetition produces memory. Memory stabilizes the persona.

The temporal sequence is:

CONFLICT → REPETITION → MEMORY → IDENTITY.

Again, this does not mean every controversy benefits the leader politically. It means that controversy can contribute to the **semiotic durability of leadership identity**, even when its evaluative effects remain contested.

The comparison between the two subcorpora can therefore be summarized through two different memory regimes.

TRUMPIAN MEMORY REGIME

The political past is organized around **restoration, continuity, iconic resistance, biographical success, patriotic repetition, and the preservation of threat narratives**. Memory functions primarily as a resource for showing that a valued identity existed, that the leader has already embodied competence, and that current political action can reconnect the collective to those values.

MILEIAN MEMORY REGIME

The political past is organized around **systemic failure, anti-caste continuity, disruptive novelty, bodily intensity, productive chaos, and measurable economic trajectories**. Memory functions primarily as evidence that the old order has persisted excessively and that Milei's political identity represents a discontinuity capable of inaugurating another trajectory.

The distinction can be condensed as:

- **TRUMP REMEMBERS IN ORDER TO RETURN;**
- **MILEI REMEMBERS IN ORDER TO BREAK.**

This formula captures an important difference in the political use of history.

Trumpian remembrance gives the future a recognizable origin. Mileian remembrance gives rupture a historical justification.

The past is positive in the first structure primarily insofar as it contains the values to be recovered. It is negative in the second primarily insofar as it contains the continuity that must be terminated. Both leaders also construct positive personal pasts.

Trump's biography supplies success. Milei's pre-institutional persona supplies evidence of disruptive consistency.

This means that the temporal structure contains two layers:

COLLECTIVE PAST

and

LEADER'S PAST.

For Trump:

- **collective past → valued greatness**;
- **leader's past → successful competence**.

For Milei:

- **collective/institutional past → accumulated dysfunction**;
- **leader's past → anti-system consistency**.

These layers intersect in different ways.

Trump's personal success is made compatible with the nation's desired return.

Milei's personal outsider history is made compatible with the nation's desired break.

The leader's biography therefore functions as a **temporal micro-model** of the collective transformation.

Trump has succeeded before, America can succeed again.

Milei has existed outside conventional political codes, Argentina can break with those codes.

This parallelism contributes to the personalization of history.

Collective temporal change becomes narratively anticipated in the leader's own trajectory.

The political leader thus appears not merely as someone who proposes a future, but as someone whose **past already contains signs of that future**.

This is another form of proleptic biography.

The present leader is retrospectively reconstructed as having always been moving toward the role now assigned to him. The political myth therefore acts simultaneously backward and forward. It anticipates the future by reorganizing the past.

This circular temporal structure can be represented as:

PRESENT POLITICAL IDENTITY

↓

REINTERPRETS PAST

↓

PAST NOW APPEARS TO CONFIRM PRESENT IDENTITY

↓

CONFIRMED IDENTITY MAKES FUTURE PROMISE MORE CREDIBLE

Memory therefore becomes part of the veridictory architecture. The past is mobilized as proof of what the leader is and what he may be capable of doing.

At the same time, future outcomes will eventually return to judge the present promises.

Political time is consequently **recursive**. Past validates present. Present promises future. Future will reinterpret past and present. The meaning of the political persona is never fully closed. Each later stage may modify the preceding ones.

This openness is particularly important to a longitudinal understanding of leadership.

An image that today signifies strength may later become memorialized differently.

A symbol of rupture may later become associated with institutionalization.

A graph celebrated as evidence of improvement may be reinterpreted when subsequent data are available. Political memory remains **provisional** because history continues.

This is particularly evident in **IMG 2e**. Unlike a static symbolic image, an economic trajectory remains exposed to future measurement.

A graph interpreted today as evidence of improvement can acquire a different meaning in light of later indicators.

The temporal structure is:

CURRENT INTERPRETATION

↓

FUTURE DATA

↓

POSSIBLE CONFIRMATION / REVISION

↓

RETROSPECTIVE REINTERPRETATION

The sign remains empirically open. This gives data visualization a temporal vulnerability that symbolic icons do not possess to the same degree.

The chainsaw can continue to signify rupture regardless of subsequent numerical outcomes.

The graph's political meaning is more directly answerable to later evidence.

This distinction is particularly valuable to the analysis because it demonstrates that not all political texts have the same **temporal stability of meaning**.

Some are highly mutable because future reality can challenge them directly.

Others are more symbolically resilient.

The corpus therefore contains different degrees of temporal openness:

- **IMG 1a** may retain the stable referential fact of the assassination attempt while its symbolic interpretation changes.
- **IMG 1e** may lose factual credibility while retaining symbolic circulation.
- **IMG 2a** can preserve its metaphoric meaning while acquiring new historical associations.
- **IMG 2e** remains continually vulnerable to empirical continuation.

Political temporality therefore operates differently according to the semiotic nature of the text.

This leads to a broader distinction between:

- **EVENT-BASED SIGNS**
- **IDENTITY-BASED SIGNS**
- **SYMBOLIC-OBJECT SIGNS**
- **DATA-BASED SIGNS**
- **FABRICATED OR MANIPULATED SIGNS**.

Their temporal trajectories differ. Event-based signs can become memorialized. Identity-based signs can become habitual. Symbolic objects can become conventionalized. Data-based signs can be revised by continuation. Fabricated signs can persist after factual disconfirmation through mutation of function.

The ten images therefore permit a particularly rich reconstruction of **political sign life-cycles**.

A generic life-cycle can be represented as:

EMERGENCE

↓

INITIAL INTERPRETATION

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

REPETITION

↓

STABILIZATION OR CONTESTATION

↓

MEMORY

↓

REACTIVATION

↓

RESEMANTIZATION

Not every text follows every stage. But the model highlights that political meaning is **processual**.

The sign has a history. This temporal history is indispensable for understanding post-truth environments because credibility itself can mutate over time.

An image initially believed may later be debunked. An image initially dismissed may later acquire iconic status. A joke may become an ideological marker. A campaign prop may become historical shorthand. A technical graph may become evidence in later political disputes. The meaning of a text is therefore inseparable from **when it is encountered**.

The same receiver may interpret the same image differently at different moments. Before an election. After an election. After a political crisis. After a fact-check. After policy outcomes. After years of historical distance.

Political semiotics must therefore account for **diachronic variability**. This does not negate structural analysis. On the contrary, it allows us to distinguish what remains stable from what mutates.

In Trump's corpus, relatively stable deep structures include:

- strength;
- restoration;
- success;
- patriotic identity;
- antagonism.

In Milei's:

- rupture;
- freedom;
- anti-caste opposition;
- economic competence;
- productive disruption.

Individual signs may change functions while remaining connected to these recurrent structures.

This relation can be represented as:

SURFACE MEANING MUTATES

while

DEEPER ISOTOPIC CONNECTION MAY PERSIST.

For example, **IMG 1a** moves from immediate news event toward icon, yet continues to reinforce strength and resistance.

IMG 2a moves from surprising campaign prop toward stabilized symbol, yet continues to reinforce rupture.

The temporal transformation does not necessarily erase the original axiological structure. It may intensify it.

This is precisely why repetition is so important.

Repetition removes some contextual specificity while strengthening structural association. The more the fist is repeated, the more directly it can signify resistance.

The more the chainsaw is repeated, the more directly it can signify cutting the system. Temporal circulation therefore tends toward **semantic compression**.

The process becomes:

RICH ORIGINAL CONTEXT

↓

REPEATED EXTRACTION OF SAME FEATURE

↓

REDUCED CONTEXT

↓

INCREASED SYMBOLIC DIRECTNESS

This is a fundamental mechanism of iconic and memetic political communication.

The sign becomes simpler as its history becomes longer.

Paradoxically:

MORE TEMPORAL HISTORY CAN PRODUCE LESS NEED FOR EXPLANATION.

The audience has learned the code. This compression has obvious advantages for platform circulation. A highly stabilized sign requires little processing time. Recognition becomes almost instantaneous. Compression also creates risks. Nuance disappears. Historical context fades. Contingent events become archetypes. Opponents become categories. Complexity gives way to narrative efficiency.

Political memory therefore tends toward **selective simplification**. This simplification is particularly important to populist communication because the broader political world is already structured through clear oppositions:

- people / elite;
- inside / outside;
- strength / weakness;
- freedom / constraint;

- restoration / decline;
- rupture / continuity.

Memory can progressively align heterogeneous historical events with these deep oppositions. A new event is not remembered only for itself.

It is remembered as another instance of:

- strength;
- persecution;
- caste resistance;
- economic failure;
- rupture;
- patriotic belonging.

The political archive becomes **axiologically organized**. This organization strengthens worldview coherence. The past begins to look like repeated evidence of the same structural truth.

This produces a potentially circular mechanism:

POLITICAL FRAME SELECTS MEMORABLE EVENTS

↓

MEMORABLE EVENTS APPEAR TO CONFIRM POLITICAL FRAME

↓

CONFIRMED FRAME GUIDES FUTURE SELECTION

The process is self-reinforcing. It can operate in multiple ideological directions.

The semiotic mechanism itself is not exclusive to any one political orientation.

What matters here is how the Trumpian and Mileian corpora organize the selected memories around their respective leadership structures.

Trump's archive increasingly says:

HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN STRONG / SUCCESSFUL / RESISTANT / RESTORATIVE.

Milei's increasingly says:

HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN DISRUPTIVE / ANTI-CASTE / INTENSE /

ORIENTED TOWARD BREAKING THE OLD ORDER.

The adverb **always** is analytically revealing. No empirical political biography is literally homogeneous. Retrospective narrative can create an effect of continuity so strong that heterogeneity becomes less visible.

Memory produces a simplified identity. This is one of the principal ways political ethos acquires durability. The political subject becomes **temporally typified**.

Trump becomes "the strong winner". Milei becomes "the disruptive outsider". Individual events are absorbed into those types. This typification contributes directly to credibility because the leader appears coherent across time. The audience can anticipate future action from remembered identity.

Political memory therefore has a predictive function:

HE WAS THIS BEFORE

↓

HE IS THIS NOW

↓

HE WILL PROBABLY REMAIN THIS IN THE FUTURE.

Past, present, and future become connected through ethos. The political persona provides the continuity. This is particularly important within conditions of uncertainty.

The future cannot be known. But a stable remembered identity can make it seem more predictable.

Trump's supporter may trust the future because Trump is remembered as strong. Milei's supporter may trust rupture because Milei is remembered as consistently anti-system.

The past therefore reduces future uncertainty through **characterological expectation**. This mechanism demonstrates how memory connects directly to leadership credibility.

The future promise becomes believable not only because of policy content but because the remembered persona appears compatible with the promised transformation.

The corpus therefore suggests a general temporal formula:

MEMORY OF LEADER

↓

EXPECTATION OF CONSISTENCY

↓

CREDIBILITY OF FUTURE ACTION.

This is one of the reasons why attacks on political credibility frequently target the archive.

Opponents seek old contradictions. Inconsistent statements. Failed promises. Images incompatible with current identity.

The political struggle over the future becomes a struggle over interpretation of the past:

- if the archive can be shown to contradict the persona, expectation may weaken:
- if the archive can be shown to confirm it, credibility may strengthen.

Political memory is thus not a passive residue of communication.

It is an **active resource in present and future struggles**.

Digital platforms intensify this resource by making the archive continuously accessible, but they also create a problem of decontextualization.

An old image can be recirculated without date. A clip can lose its surrounding speech. A quotation can be detached from the original issue. The past may therefore return as a **fragment without temporal coordinates**.

This can distort interpretation. The user may encounter something old as though it were new. Or may know that it is old but not why it originally mattered. Temporal context becomes another dimension vulnerable to manipulation. Post-truth therefore concerns not only whether a representation is true or false but also **whether its temporal placement is accurately preserved**.

A true image placed in a false temporal context can produce a misleading political claim. The temporal index of representation becomes epistemically relevant. This distinction is important because digital circulation can separate:

IMAGE CONTENT

from

- **DATE**
- **ORIGINAL EVENT**
- **ORIGINAL CAPTION**
- **ORIGINAL PURPOSE**.

The sign becomes temporally mobile. That mobility allows creative resemanticization but also potential misinformation.

Political verification must therefore ask not only:

IS THIS IMAGE REAL?

but:

- **WHEN WAS IT PRODUCED?**
- **WHAT DID IT ORIGINALLY REPRESENT?**
- **WHY IS IT BEING SHOWN NOW?**

Temporal context becomes part of factual meaning. This point is especially important for an analysis centered on post-truth aesthetics.

The credibility of a visual text depends partly on the relation among representation, provenance, chronology, and current framing.

An authentic image can support a misleading claim if time is manipulated. A fabricated image can imitate the visual codes of documentary immediacy. An older sign can be revived as though it described the current present. Political temporalization therefore becomes a **veridictory operation**.

The distinction between:

THEN

and

NOW

is politically consequential.

Trumpian and Mileian communication both operate within a media ecosystem where this distinction can be compressed by the interface.

Old and new content appear beside one another. The feed creates a universal present of reception. Everything is encountered **now**, even when it represents different historical moments. The viewer must reconstruct temporal distance cognitively. This produces a condition that may be termed **presentification of the archive**.

The past appears in the form of present content. This is one of the defining temporal characteristics of digital political communication. The archive no longer feels remote. It arrives through the same interface as breaking news. The political past therefore becomes increasingly easy to mobilize in immediate conflict.

This condition contributes to the **permanent contemporaneity of political personas**.

Trump’s business past, previous campaigns, the Butler image, MAGA history, and contemporary communication can coexist in the same current feed.

Milei's television performances, chainsaw imagery, earlier economic statements, presidency, and current data can similarly coexist.

The leader appears as multiple historical selves at once. Semiotic coherence can unify them. The political persona becomes a **diachronic montage**.

Different temporal fragments are assembled into one recognizable identity.

This montage is not fixed.

It changes according to which fragments circulate most intensely at a given moment. The political self is therefore continuously **re-edited**.

A current crisis may foreground earlier conflict. An economic success may foreground earlier expertise.An attack may foreground resilience.

A new institutional confrontation may reactivate outsider imagery. The relevant political past changes according to present needs.

Memory is selective and strategic even when its production is distributed across many actors.

This leads to a final distinction between **chronological continuity and semiotic continuity**.

Chronological continuity simply means that one event follows another.

Semiotic continuity means that different events can be interpreted as manifestations of the same underlying identity.

The Trumpian corpus constructs semiotic continuity through strength, success, patriotism, restoration, and antagonism.

The Mileian corpus through rupture, intensity, anti-caste conflict, libertarian transformation, and economic diagnosis.

This continuity allows temporal heterogeneity to become narratively coherent: different years, different events, different spaces, different media, the same political persona appears to persist.

This is the deeper function of memory within the corpus. Memory does not merely retain the leader. It organizes the leader as a durable structure of meaning.

The comparative result can therefore be formulated as follows:

TRUMP

Political memory tends to transform heterogeneous past events into evidence of an enduring **restorative ethos**. Success predates politics, dominance recurs across scenes, MAGA accumulates historical depth, the Butler image becomes a memory of resistance, and threatening representations can persist as elements of an antagonistic worldview.

MILEI

Political memory tends to transform heterogeneous episodes into evidence of an enduring **disruptive ethos**. The chainsaw stabilizes rupture, bodily excess becomes remembered style, the caste connects present antagonists to a rejected historical continuity, productive chaos becomes a recurring temporal atmosphere, and economic graphs turn history into measurable political trajectory.

The distinction can ultimately be condensed into two temporal operations:

- **TRUMP → THE PAST IS SELECTED, RECALLED, AND RESEMANTIZED SO THAT THE PRESENT LEADER APPEARS CAPABLE OF RESTORING A VALUED CONTINUITY.**
- **MILEI → THE PAST IS SELECTED, RECALLED, AND RESEMANTIZED SO THAT THE PRESENT LEADER APPEARS CAPABLE OF INTERRUPTING A DEVALUED CONTINUITY.**

Memory therefore confirms the central opposition governing the corpus. Trump's political temporality seeks **reconnection**. Milei's seeks **disconnection**.

Both depend upon the same deeper media mechanism: the capacity to transform previous signs into **present resources for identity and future expectation**.

At this level, political time becomes circular rather than simply linear. The past is recalled from the present; the present is interpreted through the remembered past; the future is anticipated on the basis of the resulting identity; and later events will return to reorganize the meaning of everything that came before.

The political sign therefore never reaches complete temporal closure. It can always return. It can be remembered differently: placed beside another event, converted into a meme rreactivated as proof, challenged as contradiction, elevated into an icon, reduced to stereotype. or incorporated into a new narrative.

This persistent reopenability is one of the defining conditions of platformized political memory.

Trump and Milei consequently do not inhabit political time only as historical actors. They inhabit it as **archivable, repeatable, and continuously reinterpretable semiotic personas**.

Their political identities are constructed not simply by the sequence of things they do, but by the selective survival of images, gestures, objects, conflicts, and performances capable of returning to the present and making previous moments speak again.

In this sense, memory constitutes the point at which temporality begins to converge with resemanticization.

The image survives because it can change without becoming completely unrecognizable.

The Trumpian fist can move from journalistic event to icon of resilience; the MAGA cap from campaign merchandise to historical marker of collective identity; the Mileian chainsaw from spectacular campaign prop to stabilized sign of systemic rupture; the inflation graph from technical visualization to historical evidence within a broader narrative of libertarian transformation.

Political memory therefore does not merely conserve meaning. It **produces new meaning through the continued temporal life of signs**.

This is precisely what makes the corpus diachronically productive: each image has a past, acquires a history of circulation, and remains open to future reinterpretation, while the deeper oppositions of **restoration and rupture, continuity and discontinuity, stability and disruption** provide the structural coordinates through which those transformations remain politically intelligible.

VIII. PLASTIC LEVEL: THE VISUAL ORGANIZATION

8.1. TOPOLOGICAL DIMENSION

The previous chapters have examined the corpus primarily through semantic, narrative, passional, enunciative, spatial, and temporal structures. The political meaning of the ten texts cannot be fully reconstructed without considering another fundamental dimension: the **plastic organization of the visual field**.

Political images do not communicate exclusively through recognizable figures.

A fist. A body. An airplane. A cap. A chainsaw. A graph. These figurative elements are certainly essential, but their meaning is also shaped by the way they are visually organized.

Position. Direction. Scale. Centrality. Symmetry. Contrast. Chromatic saturation. Light. Density. Continuity. Fragmentation. Verticality. Horizontality. All participate in the production of meaning.

The plastic level therefore concerns the image not simply as a representation of objects and actors, but as a **structured perceptual surface**.

Before the spectator interprets Trump as a leader, Milei as a disruptor, a chainsaw as an anti-system symbol, or a red cap as a political marker, the image already organizes relations of:

- **ABOVE / BELOW**
- **CENTER / PERIPHERY**
- **OPEN / CLOSED**
- **CONTINUOUS / DISCONTINUOUS**
- **BRIGHT / DARK**
- **SATURATED / DESATURATED**
- **STABLE / UNSTABLE**
- **DENSE / RAREFIED**

These oppositions are not automatically political.

Their political significance emerges through their association with figurative and semantic structures.

A centrally positioned body, for example, does not inherently signify political power.

When centrality systematically coincides with a dominant leader, frontal posture, low-angle framing, collective attention, and a discourse of authority, spatial centrality can become associated with **symbolic centrality**.

The plastic level therefore contributes to a process of **semiotic reinforcement**.

What is said figuratively can be intensified plastically.

What is narrated politically can be organized perceptually.

What is attributed ideologically can be made visible through form.

This relation can initially be represented as:

PLASTIC CONFIGURATION

↓

PERCEPTUAL ORGANIZATION

↓

SEMANTIC ASSOCIATION

↓

POLITICAL VALUE

The visual text consequently does not merely contain political meaning.

It **arranges the conditions under which that meaning becomes perceptually salient**.

This distinction is crucial. A leader may be represented as powerful because of what he is doing.

But the image can simultaneously make him powerful through composition.

The leader may signify disruption because he carries a disruptive object. But fragmentation, diagonal tension, saturation, or visual excess can make disruption perceptible at the level of the image itself.

The political value is therefore produced through the convergence of:

FIGURATIVE CONTENT

and

PLASTIC FORM.

This convergence is particularly evident in the comparative corpus.

At a general level, Trump's images tend to organize political meaning through configurations of **centralization, verticality, visual hierarchy, chromatic recognizability, monumentalization, and symbolic stabilization**.

Milei's images tend more strongly toward **tension, diagonalization, fragmentation, collision, saturation, bodily expansion, and perceptual intensification**.

This does not imply that every Trump image is formally stable or every Milei image visually chaotic. Such a claim would flatten the internal differences among the ten texts.

The opposition should instead be understood as a set of **recurrent tendencies** emerging across the two subcorpora.

The comparative hypothesis can therefore be formulated as:

TRUMP

PLASTIC ORDER → HIERARCHY → MONUMENTALITY → RESTORATIVE AUTHORITY

MILEI

PLASTIC TENSION → COLLISION → INTENSIFICATION → DISRUPTIVE AUTHENTICITY

The plastic level thus provides a visual correlate for the broader distinction between **restorative** and **disruptive** leadership reconstructed throughout the analysis.

The difference is not merely thematic. It becomes morphological. Spatial. Directional. Chromatic. Tensional.

The political opposition is progressively inscribed into the sensible organization of the images.

The **topological dimension** concerns the organization of elements within the visual field and the relations established among center and periphery, high and low, foreground and background, proximity and distance, enclosure and openness.

These relations are particularly important in political imagery because the distribution of space can produce hierarchies before those hierarchies are explicitly interpreted.

The question is therefore not simply:

- **WHO APPEARS IN THE IMAGE?**

but:

- **WHERE DOES THE ACTOR APPEAR?**
- **HOW MUCH SPACE DOES THE ACTOR OCCUPY?**
- **WHAT SURROUNDS THE ACTOR?**
- **WHAT IS PLACED ABOVE OR BELOW?**
- **WHAT REMAINS CENTRAL AND WHAT IS MARGINAL?**
- **HOW IS THE VISUAL FIELD ORGANIZED AROUND THE POLITICAL BODY?**

Position becomes relational meaning. The center exists because there is a periphery. The foreground because there is a background. Elevation because there is a lower zone.

The leader’s visual position therefore acquires significance through contrast with the rest of the image. Within the Trumpian corpus, **IMG 1b** offers the clearest expression of this mechanism.

Trump's posture of dominance is reinforced by visual centrality, frontal organization, and low-angle framing. The body tends to function as the compositional axis around which the surrounding visual field is organized.

The relation can be represented as:

PERIPHERAL ENVIRONMENT

↓

CENTRAL POLITICAL BODY

↓

CONCENTRATION OF ATTENTION

↓

SYMBOLIC HIERARCHY

Centrality performs an important operation. It transforms the leader from one element among others into the **organizing element of the scene**.

This has consequences at the level of political meaning. If the visual field appears to depend compositionally on the leader, the political field can analogically be imagined as depending on leadership.

The relation is not one of literal equivalence. Rather, visual hierarchy creates a perceptual condition compatible with political hierarchy. The leader occupies the center because he is the principal object of attention.

But repeated centrality can also produce a deeper association:

- **CENTER = LEADERSHIP**
- **PERIPHERY = FOLLOWERS / CONTEXT / ENVIRONMENT**

The political subject becomes the point toward which visual attention converges. This is especially effective when combined with frontality.

A lateral body can suggest movement, transition, or relational orientation. A frontal body tends instead to assert presence. The subject occupies the visual field and presents himself directly to the spectator.

In **IMG 1b**, frontality contributes to reducing the perception of mediation between leader and viewer. The body appears not merely present within an event but **available for direct recognition**.

Centrality and frontality therefore reinforce one another:

- **CENTRALITY → IMPORTANCE**
- **FRONTALITY → PRESENCE**

Together:

- **CENTRAL + FRONTAL = DOMINANT VISUAL AVAILABILITY**

Low-angle framing can further intensify this relation. When the spectator's implied position is lower than the represented political body, the visual organization creates a vertical asymmetry. The leader is literally seen from below.

The perceptual relation becomes:

- **LEADER**
- ↑
- **VIEWER**

This does not mechanically impose submission upon the spectator, but it can contribute to monumentalization. The body acquires scale. Height becomes symbolic elevation.

The political actor becomes visually larger than the ordinary horizontal relation between viewer and represented subject.

The image can therefore translate political superiority into **spatial superiority**. This mechanism is especially compatible with the ethos of strength reconstructed in previous chapters.

Trump does not only signify strength through gesture or discourse.

The image can place the viewer in a position from which strength is perceptually amplified.

The relation between topological organization and ethos becomes:

LOW-ANGLE VIEW

↓

VISUAL ELEVATION

↓

MONUMENTALIZATION

↓

COMPATIBILITY WITH DOMINANT ETHOS

This is one of the clearest examples of how the plastic level participates in political characterization.

The same logic appears, although differently, in **IMG 1a**. The Butler image is structurally more unstable because it emerges from an event of extreme contingency. The scene contains security personnel, bodily proximity, movement, danger, and an immediate post-attack condition. The raised fist creates a strong **vertical vector** capable of reorganizing the perceptual field.

The gesture projects upward. The political body has been physically endangered, but the arm rises.

This produces an important plastic opposition:

- **DOWNWARD THREAT / UPWARD GESTURE**

or, more abstractly:

- **FALL / RISE**
- **VULNERABILITY / ELEVATION**

The fist therefore operates not merely figuratively as a conventional sign of resistance but plastically as an **ascending form**. Its direction matters. An arm hanging downward would not produce the same relation.

The upward vector reorganizes the bodily configuration around vertical persistence.

This can be represented as:

ATTACK

↓

BODILY VULNERABILITY

↑

RAISED FIST

The two vectors collide. The event tends toward interruption. The gesture tends toward continuation and elevation.

The plastic configuration therefore reproduces at the perceptual level the narrative transformation reconstructed earlier:

VULNERABILITY → RESISTANCE.

The upward direction of the fist makes resistance visible as a spatial overcoming of the downward pressure of the event. This is particularly important because the image can be interpreted rapidly.

The viewer does not need to reconstruct the entire narrative before perceiving the salience of the raised arm. The gesture cuts through the surrounding density. Verticality produces recognizability.

The political body thus re-emerges from the visual disorder. In this sense, **IMG 1a** contains a productive tension between environmental instability and gestural stabilization.

The scene is chaotic. The fist is clear. The surrounding event is contingent. The gesture becomes symbolic. This relation contributes directly to iconicization. The memorable element is the one capable of organizing the disorder around itself.

A similar centralizing mechanism appears in **IMG 1d**, although here the political body is partially replaced by a symbolic object. The MAGA cap possesses an exceptional capacity for topological mobility. It can occupy the leader’s body. A supporter’s body. A crowd. A close-up. A merchandising display.

Its political function does not depend upon a single fixed spatial position. Precisely because it is portable, it allows the political center to **multiply**. This creates a significant difference from the monumental leader image.

In **IMG 1b**, centrality is concentrated.

In **IMG 1d**, symbolic centrality can be distributed.

The relation becomes:

LEADER AS CENTER → SYMBOL OF LEADER → SYMBOL REPRODUCED

The political center becomes **networked through material repetition**. This is one of the most interesting topological characteristics of MAGA. The cap allows the symbolic universe of the leader to migrate across bodies. **Each wearer becomes a local site of political inscription.**

The distinction between center and periphery is therefore partially reconfigured. The supporter may remain politically peripheral relative to the leader but becomes symbolically central within his or her immediate visual field through possession of the recognizable sign.

The MAGA universe can thus produce a structure of:

CENTRALIZED LEADERSHIP + DISTRIBUTED SYMBOLIC REPLICATION.

This relation is fundamental to collective identification. The political center does not disappear.

It reproduces itself through signs. The leader remains the principal reference, but supporters carry fragments of the central identity. The topological organization of political belonging consequently becomes scalable. From one body. To a crowd. From the rally. To the street. From the campaign stage. To social media photographs. The symbolic space expands because the object can circulate.

IMG 1c organizes topological meaning through a different relationship: that between **subject and privileged environment**. Airplanes, private interiors, gilded surfaces, and luxury spaces do not merely provide a background. They establish the spatial world in which Trump's persona is situated.

The environment functions as an extension of the subject. The relation becomes:

BODY ↔ SPACE ↔ STATUS.

Luxury surrounds the leader. The political persona is embedded in material abundance. This creates a topological form of **enclosure by value**. The subject inhabits success. The environment confirms identity. The political body does not need to display wealth abstractly because the surrounding space makes wealth perceptible.

This produces a semiotic continuity between:

WHO THE SUBJECT IS

and

WHERE THE SUBJECT APPEARS.

The space therefore becomes biographical evidence. A private aircraft is not merely a location. It establishes separation from ordinary mobility.

The distinction is spatially encoded:

- **COMMON SPACE / EXCLUSIVE SPACE**
- **PUBLIC ACCESS / PRIVILEGED ACCESS**
- **ORDINARY MOVEMENT / EXCEPTIONAL MOBILITY**

Trump occupies the second term. The topological organization of luxury thus reinforces exceptionality. The leader is not located in an interchangeable environment. He occupies a space that distinguishes him from ordinary subjects. This distinction can then be politically resemanticized as independence, achievement, or competence.

The space says:

THIS SUBJECT HAS ALREADY REACHED A POSITION OTHERS ASPIRE TO REACH.

The topological level therefore contributes to the winner ethos.

In **IMG 1e**, by contrast, spatial organization participates in the construction of political alterity. Anti-immigration imagery frequently depends upon the representation of boundaries, intrusion, proximity, displacement, or the imagined occupation of a space perceived as belonging to an in-group.

The fundamental topological opposition becomes:

INSIDE / OUTSIDE.

This is one of the deepest spatial structures of political identity. The community is imagined as an interior. The threatening other as exterior. Political conflict emerges when the exterior is represented as entering the interior.

The structure becomes:

OUTSIDE

↓

BOUNDARY

↓

INSIDE

and the threatening narrative can be represented as:

OUTSIDE → CROSSES BOUNDARY → ENTERS INSIDE.

Space is moralized.

The distinction between here and there becomes a distinction between:

- **US / THEM**
- **SECURITY / THREAT**
- **BELONGING / NON-BELONGING**
- **ORDER / INTRUSION**.

Fake images depicting immigrants allegedly “eating cats” intensify this process because the represented threat is not simply located at a geopolitical border.

It is brought into an imagined space of everyday intimacy. Domestic animals. Neighborhoods. Ordinary community life. The threat is therefore spatially proximate. The distant other becomes **near**.

This transition from distance to proximity is politically significant.

A distant problem can remain abstract. A proximate threat becomes affectively immediate.

The topological transformation is:

FAR → NEAR

and semantically:

ABSTRACT ISSUE → PERSONALIZED THREAT.

This contributes to the passional production of fear analyzed earlier.

The Trumpian corpus therefore reveals several topological mechanisms:

- **CENTRALIZATION OF THE LEADER** in **IMG 1b**;
- **VERTICAL RE-EMERGENCE OF THE POLITICAL BODY** in **IMG 1a**;
- **DISTRIBUTED REPLICATION OF POLITICAL IDENTITY** in **IMG 1d**;
- **ENCLOSURE WITHIN PRIVILEGED SPACE** in **IMG 1c**;
- **BOUNDARY CONSTRUCTION AND THREATENING PROXIMITY** in **IMG 1e**.

Despite their differences, these configurations converge around a broader spatial logic.

Trumpian political meaning repeatedly depends upon the organization of **centers, boundaries, hierarchies, and controlled spaces**.

The leader occupies the center. The nation defines an inside. The threat comes from outside. Luxury marks privileged separation. MAGA distributes the central identity while preserving its origin in the leader.

The general topological structure can therefore be represented as:

CENTER

↓

ORDER

↓

BOUNDARY

↓

PROTECTED COLLECTIVE SPACE

This is highly compatible with restorative leadership. Restoration presupposes not only a valued past but a space that can be reorganized according to recognizable hierarchies.

The spatial imaginary is therefore one of **re-centering**. The nation must recover its center. The leader must occupy the center. Threats must be returned to the outside. Boundaries must regain efficacy. Political order is spatialized.

The Mileian corpus organizes topology differently.

The dominant spatial logic is less strongly centered on enclosure and more strongly oriented toward **collision, penetration, cutting, expansion, and disruption of established configurations**.

This is already evident in **IMG 2a**. The chainsaw is a directional object. Unlike the MAGA cap, whose materiality primarily marks belonging, the chainsaw implies action upon another object or space.

It is made to cut.

Its political meaning therefore depends upon the imagined relation:

INSTRUMENT → TARGET.

Even when the target is not physically present in the image, the object evokes an absent space upon which force will be exercised. The chainsaw is consequently topologically **projective**. Its meaning extends beyond its immediate location. It points toward what must be cut.

State expenditure. Bureaucracy. The caste. Institutional structures. The object constructs an implied spatial relation between the political subject and the system to be transformed.

This can be represented as:

MILEI

↓

CHAINSAW → SYSTEM / STRUCTURE / OBSTACLE

The political body is not simply central. It is vectorially oriented toward intervention. This is a crucial distinction from Trumpian monumental centrality.

Trump's dominant image often says:

LOOK AT THE POSITION OF THE LEADER.

Milei's chainsaw says:

LOOK AT WHAT THE LEADER IS PREPARED TO DO TO THE STRUCTURE.

The spatial organization is therefore more operative. The political subject acquires meaning through an anticipated collision with the environment. The relation between body and space is transformative rather than primarily hierarchical.

The chainsaw does not simply occupy space. It threatens to modify it. This produces a topological grammar of **discontinuity**. A continuous surface is imagined. The object cuts it.

Before:

After:

The political metaphor is plastically powerful because rupture can be imagined as a literal interruption of continuity. The chainsaw therefore translates the abstract concept of systemic reform into a perceptible spatial operation.

IMG 2b develops this disruptive topology through the body itself. Milei's expansive gestures, shouting, and intense occupation of space construct a political body that tends to exceed conventional kinesic boundaries.

The body does not remain contained. It expands. Arms move outward. Facial expression intensifies. The voice, although not directly visible in a static image, can be inferred through the open mouth and bodily tension.

The subject appears to project beyond his immediate bodily limits.

The topological structure becomes:

BODY → EXPANSION → OCCUPATION OF SURROUNDING SPACE.

This expansion contributes to political intensity. Where Trumpian dominance often relies on stable centrality, Mileian dominance can emerge through **spatial overflow**. The subject occupies attention by exceeding ordinary behavioral containment.

The opposition can therefore be expressed as:

- **TRUMP → CONTROL OF CENTER**
- **MILEI → EXPANSION FROM CENTER**

Both produce salience. But through different spatial operations:

- Trump stabilizes;
- Milei radiates.

• Trump monumentalizes the body;

• Milei intensifies its boundaries.

This difference corresponds closely to the passional opposition reconstructed earlier. Trumpian strength tends toward controlled authority. Mileian anger tends toward energetic exteriorization.

IMG 2c introduces the spatial structure of antagonism between Milei and the political "caste".

Here, the essential relation is not merely:

INSIDE / OUTSIDE

but:

SYSTEM / ANTI-SYSTEM.

The "caste" is constructed as an entrenched political space. It occupies institutions. It reproduces itself. It possesses continuity. Milei's political identity is generated through a position of exteriority relative to that space.

The initial topology is therefore:

- **CASTE = INSIDE THE SYSTEM**
- **MILEI = OUTSIDE / AGAINST THE SYSTEM**.

The political objective creates a paradox. The outsider must enter the institutional space in order to transform it.

The trajectory becomes:

EXTERIORITY

↓

ENTRY

↓

CONFRONTATION WITH INSTITUTIONAL INTERIOR

↓

TRANSFORMATION FROM WITHIN

This is one of the defining spatial tensions of outsider populism.

Political legitimacy depends on maintaining symbolic exteriority while occupying institutional centrality.

The leader must be:

IN THE SYSTEM

and simultaneously

NOT OF THE SYSTEM.

The topological contradiction is productive.

Institutional position says:

INSIDE.

Political ethos says:

OUTSIDE.

The two terms coexist. This can be represented as:

INSTITUTIONAL INSIDE / SYMBOLIC OUTSIDE.

The tension becomes especially significant after electoral victory. The anti-establishment leader can no longer rely exclusively on literal exteriority because he now occupies state institutions.

The discourse must therefore preserve an **internalized frontier**. The caste can be relocated within resistant sectors of the state, opposition parties, bureaucracies, or other institutions represented as obstructing transformation. The boundary moves.

Outsider identity survives by continually redrawing the distinction between:

TRANSFORMATIVE SUBJECT

and

PERSISTENT SYSTEM.

The topology becomes mobile. This is an important difference from the more territorially stable inside/outside opposition visible in Trumpian anti-immigration imagery.

In **IMG 1e**, the frontier can be imagined geographically or communally.

In **IMG 2c**, the frontier is fundamentally political and institutional.

It can run **through the state itself**. **This creates a topology of internal antagonism.**

IMG 2d intensifies this structure through productive chaos.

Here, the visual field tends toward reduced stability. Multiple stimuli. Competing directions. Provocation. Movement. Conflict. Media fragments. The topological organization becomes less hierarchical and more **collision-based**.

The eye may encounter several points of intensity rather than one perfectly stabilized center. This produces a perceptual experience compatible with the broader semantics of disruption.

The structure can be represented as:

MULTIPLE CENTERS

+

COMPETING VECTORS

+

HIGH DENSITY

=

TOPOLOGICAL INSTABILITY

This instability should not be confused with absence of organization. Chaos can itself be organized semiotically. The crucial point is that the visual field produces the effect of instability.

The spectator experiences difficulty reducing the image immediately to a calm, ordered hierarchy. Attention moves. The image demands scanning. Different elements compete. This produces a spatial equivalent of the temporal acceleration discussed in the previous chapter.

The eye is made to **traverse** rather than simply contemplate.

The distinction is fundamental:

- **TRUMPIAN MONUMENTALITY → VISUAL CONTEMPLATION**
- **MILEIAN PRODUCTIVE CHAOS → VISUAL TRAVERSAL**

In the first, the center tends to arrest attention. In the second, competing intensities tend to move attention across the field.

This difference anticipates the broader regimes of fruition reconstructed elsewhere in the study. Plastic topology contributes directly to the spectator's mode of engagement.

A centralized image says:

LOOK HERE.

A fragmented image says:

MOVE THROUGH THIS.

The political aesthetics therefore imply different spectator behaviors.

IMG 2e introduces another topology: the **ordered space of data visualization**. At first sight, this might appear to contradict the Mileian tendency toward disruption. Graphs depend on axes, lines, numerical relations, spatial regularity, and organized comparison. This apparent contradiction is analytically productive.

The graph creates a controlled space within the wider disruptive universe. Its topology is strongly structured. Horizontal and vertical axes. Temporal progression. Quantitative differences. Directional curves. Legends. Labels. The political discourse of rupture here becomes spatially translated into **trajectory**.

The crucial opposition is no longer simply:

ORDER / CHAOS

but:

OLD DIRECTION / NEW DIRECTION.

The graph spatializes political time. A line rises. Falls. Changes inclination. Breaks a previous pattern. The topological organization of the graph therefore allows abstract economic change to become visually directional.

The relation can be represented as:

ECONOMIC HISTORY

↓

SPATIAL AXES

↓

VISIBLE TRAJECTORY

↓

POLITICAL INTERPRETATION

Time becomes horizontal extension. Quantity becomes vertical position. Political success or failure can therefore be perceived as a movement within a geometric field.

This gives **IMG 2e** an important mediating function. The broader Mileian universe valorizes rupture. The graph makes rupture **measurable as change of trajectory**.

The discontinuity becomes visual evidence. This means that Milei's plastic universe cannot be reduced to chaos.

It contains a productive alternation between:

DISRUPTIVE TOPOLOGY

and

TECHNICAL TOPOLOGY.

The first is visible in **IMG 2a**, **IMG 2b**, and especially **IMG 2d**. The second becomes particularly clear in **IMG 2e**. The two forms reinforce one another.

Disruption gives the political project energy. The graph gives it direction. The chainsaw breaks. The graph measures. The body intensifies. The chart orders.

The resulting leadership is therefore capable of moving between **spectacular disorder and epistemic organization**.

This is a crucial finding because it prevents the analysis from reducing Milei to a purely chaotic political aesthetic.

His communication can derive legitimacy precisely from the oscillation between excess and technicality.

The Mileian topological regime can therefore be summarized through:

- **PROJECTIVE INTERVENTION** in **IMG 2a**;
- **BODILY EXPANSION** in **IMG 2b**;
- **INSTITUTIONAL INSIDE / SYMBOLIC OUTSIDE** in **IMG 2c**;
- **MULTICENTRIC INSTABILITY AND VISUAL TRAVERSAL** in **IMG 2d**;
- **GEOMETRIC ORGANIZATION OF ECONOMIC TRAJECTORY** in **IMG 2e**.

The comparison with Trump reveals that both leaders make extensive use of spatial organization, but they do so according to different dominant logics.

Trump's topology tends toward:

- **CENTER**
- **VERTICALITY**
- **HIERARCHY**
- **BOUNDARY**
- **ENCLOSURE**
- **MONUMENTALIZATION**

Milei's tends toward:

- **VECTOR**
- **EXPANSION**
- **COLLISION**
- **DISCONTINUITY**
- **TRAVERSAL**
- **TRAJECTORY**

The opposition can therefore be condensed as:

TRUMP

SPACE MUST BE CENTERED AND ORDERED.

MILEI

SPACE MUST BE CROSSED, CUT, OR TRANSFORMED.

This distinction is especially significant when connected to the broader political narratives. Trump's restorative leadership requires a world in which legitimate centers and boundaries can be re-established.

The visual field therefore frequently supports:

RE-CENTERING.

Milei's disruptive leadership requires a world in which existing structures can be penetrated, interrupted, or redirected.

The visual field therefore frequently supports:

RECONFIGURATION.

The political difference becomes topological.

Trump's question is:

WHERE IS THE CENTER AND HOW CAN IT BE RESTORED?

Milei's is:

WHERE IS THE OBSTACLE AND HOW CAN IT BE CROSSED OR CUT?

This produces two distinct relationships between leader and environment:

- Trump's leader tends to **dominate space**;
- Milei's tends to **act upon space**.

• Trump becomes larger than the environment through centrality and monumentalization.

• Milei becomes transformative through vectors of intervention.

The first relation is primarily hierarchical. The second is primarily dynamic. Both share a deeper principle: **the political body must become spatially exceptional**.

Neither leader is represented as merely one ordinary body among others. The visual field differentiates him through elevation, centrality, gesture, object, expansion, directional force.

The political leader becomes perceptually salient before the viewer completes a detailed ideological interpretation. This is one of the most important functions of plastic organization.

It produces **pre-semantic hierarchy**.

The eye is directed before political reasoning is completed. Visual organization therefore participates in the production of authority at a very elementary perceptual level.

This does not mean that viewers respond automatically or identically. Interpretation remains culturally and politically variable. A low-angle image can be admired or criticized. An expansive gesture can signify authenticity to one viewer and aggression to another. A chainsaw can signify liberation or irresponsibility.

Centrality can signify leadership or narcissism. Plastic forms do not eliminate polysemy. They establish **structured possibilities of interpretation**.

The same configuration can be axiologically reversed while remaining perceptually salient. This distinction is essential.

The analysis does not claim:

FORM DETERMINES POLITICAL JUDGMENT.

Rather:

FORM ORGANIZES THE PERCEPTUAL RELATIONS

WITHIN WHICH POLITICAL JUDGMENT IS PRODUCED.

This formulation preserves the interpretive openness of the text while recognizing the material specificity of visual communication.

The topological analysis therefore confirms the broader comparative hypothesis.

Trumpian leadership tends to convert political authority into **centrality, elevation, boundary, and controlled spatial hierarchy**.

Mileian leadership tends to convert political disruption into **directionality, expansion, collision, discontinuity, and transformation of existing structures**.

These are not merely aesthetic differences. They correspond to two different models of political agency:

- the Trumpian subject restores a center;
- the Mileian subject interrupts a continuity.
    - The Trumpian subject protects an inside;
    - the Mileian subject attacks an entrenched system.
        - The Trumpian body tends toward monument;
        - the Mileian body tends toward vector.

At the deepest level, therefore, the topological dimension demonstrates that the contrast between restoration and rupture is already inscribed in the **spatial grammar of the corpus**. Political leadership becomes visible as a particular way of occupying, organizing, protecting, crossing, or transforming space. The visual field thus functions as more than a container for political representation: it becomes one of the principal semiotic devices through which the two leaders' different relations to power are made perceptible.

8.2. EIDETIC DIMENSION

The eidetic dimension concerns the formal organization of the visual text: lines, contours, volumes, geometric configurations, directional structures, angularities, curves, and relations between continuity and discontinuity.

If topology answers the question **where** visual elements are positioned, the eidetic dimension asks **what formal structures they assume and how those structures orient perception**.

A political body may appear:

- compact or expanded;
- vertical or inclined;
- stable or tension-driven;
- closed or open;
- continuous or fragmented.

An object may be:

- rounded;
- rectangular;
- elongated;
- angular;
- pointed;

- massive;
- linear.

These properties are not semantically neutral once they enter a recurrent visual system. Their meaning emerges through their relation to actors, objects, gestures, spaces, and values.

The analytical movement can therefore be represented as:

FORM

↓

PERCEPTUAL QUALITY

↓

RECURRENT ASSOCIATION

↓

POLITICAL VALUE

As with the topological level, no formal characteristic possesses an intrinsically political meaning.

Verticality is not inherently authoritative. Angular forms are not inherently disruptive. Compactness is not inherently stable. Their political significance emerges when these configurations recur in association with particular figurative, narrative, and axiological structures.

The eidetic analysis must therefore avoid a deterministic interpretation of form.

The relevant question is not:

WHAT DOES A VERTICAL LINE ALWAYS MEAN?

but:

WHAT DOES VERTICALITY DO WITHIN THIS SPECIFIC SYSTEM OF RELATIONS?

This methodological distinction is essential.

Within the Trumpian subcorpus, verticality repeatedly interacts with strength, elevation, dominance, resistance, and monumentalization.

Within the Mileian subcorpus, diagonal and angular configurations frequently interact with rupture, movement, aggression, tension, and transformation.

The formal contrast can therefore initially be expressed as:

TRUMP

VERTICALITY – COMPACTNESS – STABILITY – FORMAL RECOGNIZABILITY

MILEI

DIAGONALITY – ANGULARITY – EXPANSION – FORMAL TENSION

These should be understood as **dominant tendencies rather than absolute properties** of every individual image. The internal variation of the corpus remains essential. Indeed, some of the most analytically productive images are precisely those in which the dominant formal regime is temporarily disturbed.

Within the Trumpian corpus, **IMG 1b** offers the clearest manifestation of an eidetic organization based on bodily compactness and verticality. The political body tends to be perceived as an integrated form.

Head. Torso. Posture. Gesture. The different components contribute to the construction of a coherent bodily axis. This produces a formal relation between:

BODILY UNITY

and

POLITICAL UNITY.

Again, the relation is not automatic. Within a leadership discourse centered on strength and control, a visually compact body can become compatible with an ethos of self-possession.

The body appears to hold itself together. It does not dissolve into the environment. Its contour remains recognizable.

The political subject therefore acquires a degree of **eidetic autonomy**. The surrounding space may vary, but the leader remains formally identifiable. This distinction contributes to the stabilization of persona. The body becomes a recurring visual unit.

The relation can be represented as:

CLEAR CONTOUR

↓

FORMAL COHERENCE

↓

PERCEPTUAL AUTONOMY

↓

COMPATIBILITY WITH CONTROLLED LEADERSHIP

Verticality intensifies this effect. The upright body creates an axis. The axis organizes perception.

A strong vertical orientation can produce an effect of stability because it establishes a clear relation between ground and elevation.

The political subject appears anchored while simultaneously extending upward. This combination is important:

- pure upward movement without anchoring might suggest instability;
- pure grounding without elevation might suggest immobility.

The Trumpian dominant posture combines both:

GROUNDING + ELEVATION.

The result is a body that appears stable and imposing. This formal structure supports the monumentalization already identified at the topological level.

The monument is not merely large. It is formally self-contained, vertically organized, and resistant to perceptual dispersion.

Trump's body can consequently function as an eidetic condensation of political authority.

The relation becomes:

VERTICAL BODY

↓

STABLE AXIS

↓

FORMAL DOMINANCE

↓

POLITICAL AUTHORITY

In **IMG 1a**, however, this stability is placed under pressure. The Butler image emerges from an event characterized by movement, physical danger, protective intervention, and irregular bodily configurations.

The surrounding forms do not necessarily produce the same controlled stability found in **IMG 1b**. Bodies overlap. Movements intersect. The scene contains competing lines. Precisely within this irregularity, the raised arm acquires extraordinary formal salience.

Its significance depends partly on the contrast between:

COMPLEXITY OF SURROUNDING FORMS

and

CLARITY OF THE ASCENDING GESTURE.

The arm produces a relatively simple directional structure. It rises. The fist closes. The gesture therefore combines two eidetic properties:

- **ASCENDING LINE**
- **COMPACT TERMINAL FORM**.

The arm generates direction. The fist produces closure. This is particularly significant. The raised arm alone would produce vertical movement. The closed fist adds concentration. Energy appears to travel upward and then condense.

The gesture can therefore be represented formally as:

ASCENSION + CONCENTRATION.

This configuration contributes to the transformation of vulnerability into resistance. The body has been exposed. The gesture recomposes it symbolically. The closed fist becomes a formal sign of **non-dispersion**. It gathers. Contains. Concentrates. The political subject appears capable of converting an unstable situation into a recognizable bodily form.

This is one of the reasons why the image lends itself so effectively to iconic condensation. Its formal organization can survive contextual reduction. Even when reproduced at smaller scale or encountered rapidly, the upward arm and closed fist remain perceptually strong.

The image therefore possesses a high degree of **eidetic compressibility**.

This concept is useful for understanding digital circulation. Some visual forms retain recognizability even when:

- cropped;
- reduced;
- reposted;
- memetically transformed;
- viewed rapidly in a feed.

Simple directional configurations tend to survive these transformations more effectively than highly detailed ones. The raised fist is therefore not only symbolically powerful.

It is **formally portable**. This formal portability contributes to its capacity for repetition and iconicization.

The relation becomes:

FORMAL SIMPLICITY

↓

HIGH RECOGNIZABILITY

↓

EASY REPRODUCTION

↓

INCREASED SYMBOLIC PERSISTENCE

The plastic and temporal levels therefore intersect. The form survives because it can be recognized. It becomes memorable because it survives. It acquires symbolic density because it is repeatedly recognized.

In **IMG 1c**, the eidetic dimension shifts from bodily form to the geometry of luxury. Aircraft and gilded interiors introduce forms associated with technological precision, smooth surfaces, ordered volumes, polished contours, and controlled design.

The airplane is especially significant because its formal structure combines:

- **ELONGATION**
- **DIRECTIONALITY**
- **AERODYNAMIC CONTINUITY**
- **TECHNOLOGICAL ORDER**.

The aircraft is designed to move. Unlike the Mileian chainsaw, its movement is not represented primarily through collision. It is movement through controlled trajectory.

This distinction is fundamental:

- both airplane and chainsaw are mechanical objects;
- both can signify power;
- both extend the capacity of the human body.

But they embody radically different formal relations to the environment.

The airplane:

CROSSES SPACE.

The chainsaw:

CUTS MATERIAL.

The airplane's form minimizes resistance. The chainsaw's form produces rupture through resistance. This creates an important eidetic opposition between **IMG 1c** and **IMG 2a**:

AIRPLANE → CONTROLLED TRAJECTORY

versus

CHAINSAW → FORCED DISCONTINUITY.

In Trump's symbolic universe, the aircraft therefore contributes not only to the semantics of wealth but also to an aesthetics of **mastered mobility**.

The subject can move across large distances because technological form has been subordinated to control.

The object signifies exceptional capacity without requiring visible disorder. Its power is organized. Contained. Engineered. This formal quality corresponds closely to the broader Trumpian association between success and mastery.

The gilded interiors reinforce a different aspect of the same formal regime. Surfaces, architectural boundaries, furniture, and decorative elements create an environment of **material completion**.

Luxury is presented through finished form. The environment appears constructed, possessed, and stabilized. The political value of success therefore becomes associated with a world that looks already realized.

This differs sharply from the Mileian imagery of transformation, in which the emphasis often falls upon what must still be cut, dismantled, redirected, or changed.

Trump's luxury imagery says:

THE FORM HAS BEEN ACHIEVED.

Milei's disruptive imagery says:

THE FORM MUST BE ALTERED.

This distinction can be condensed as:

- **TRUMP → COMPLETED FORM**
- **MILEI → TRANSFORMATIVE FORCE**.

In **IMG 1d**, the MAGA cap provides perhaps the clearest example of eidetic recognizability through simplification.

The cap possesses a relatively stable outline. Its form is ordinary enough to be immediately identifiable as clothing but distinctive enough, once associated with the slogan and chromatic code, to become a political marker. Its effectiveness derives partly from this balance.

The object is not visually complex. It does not require specialized interpretive competence. Its contour can be recognized rapidly. Its physical structure supports repetition.

The cap can be represented in:

- close-up;
- crowds;
- portraits;
- merchandise;

- memes;
- photographs;
- video frames.

Its basic shape remains identifiable. The formal economy of the object therefore facilitates symbolic expansion.

This can be represented as:

SIMPLE FORM

+

STABLE COLOR

+

REPEATED TEXT

=

HIGH POLITICAL RECOGNIZABILITY.

The cap thus demonstrates that political iconicity does not require visual complexity. On the contrary, a relatively simple eidetic structure can become extremely powerful when combined with repetition and stable semantic association.

Its formal simplicity also facilitates **collective replication**.

A monument is singular. A cap can be multiplied. The object therefore produces a distributed formal identity. One cap. Ten caps. Hundreds of caps.

The same basic form repeated across a crowd. This repetition can transform individual supporters into elements of a larger visual pattern.

The crowd becomes partially homogenized through the recurrence of the same object.

The relation becomes:

INDIVIDUAL FORM

↓

REPETITION

↓

COLLECTIVE PATTERN

↓

VISIBLE POLITICAL COMMUNITY

Eidetic repetition therefore participates directly in the construction of belonging.

The political collective becomes recognizable through formal recurrence.

In **IMG 1e**, by contrast, the eidetic organization contributes to the simplification of antagonism.

Threat imagery often benefits from forms that are immediately legible and capable of producing strong differentiation between actors or categories.

In the fake anti-immigration imagery under examination, visual simplification can reduce complex social phenomena to a limited number of recognizable figures and actions.

The political other becomes a **formalized type**.

This is important because stereotyping itself possesses an eidetic dimension.

Difference is made visible through reduction.

Complexity is compressed. Individual variation becomes less relevant.

The image encourages recognition of a category rather than interpretation of a person.

The process can be represented as:

SOCIAL COMPLEXITY

↓

VISUAL REDUCTION

↓

RECOGNIZABLE TYPE

↓

POLITICAL CATEGORY

This reduction facilitates antagonistic narration. A complex phenomenon such as immigration can be condensed into a single spectacular scene.

The eidetic simplification supports narrative simplification. The viewer encounters not a statistical or sociological process but a **bounded visual episode**.

The image therefore gives form to an otherwise dispersed political issue. The threatening other becomes perceptually manageable precisely because it has been visually simplified.

This is one of the mechanisms through which fabricated imagery can acquire communicative force despite weak or absent factual grounding.

It produces a **clear form for an ideologically pre-structured fear**.

Across the Trumpian corpus, the eidetic level can therefore be summarized through several recurrent operations:

- **VERTICAL COHERENCE** in **IMG 1b**;
- **ASCENDING CONCENTRATION** in **IMG 1a**;
- **CONTROLLED TECHNOLOGICAL FORM AND COMPLETED LUXURY** in **IMG 1c**;
- **SIMPLIFIED RECOGNIZABLE FORM AND REPETITION** in **IMG 1d**;
- **FORMAL REDUCTION OF POLITICAL ALTERITY** in **IMG 1e**.

These different mechanisms converge toward a broader tendency:

FORM SHOULD BECOME RECOGNIZABLE, CONCENTRATED, AND SYMBOLICALLY STABLE.

The Trumpian visual universe tends to transform complexity into **strong forms**:

- the leader;
- the fist;
- the airplane;
- the cap;
- the threatening other.

Each becomes capable of condensed recognition. This contributes to the monumental and restorative character of the leadership model.

Restoration requires identifiable objects of value. Trumpian visual communication repeatedly gives those values **stable perceptual forms**.

The Mileian subcorpus presents a different dominant eidetic regime. Where Trumpian imagery tends toward concentration and formal stabilization, Mileian imagery frequently organizes meaning through **directional tension, angularity, interruption, expansion, and visible transformation**.

The clearest example is **IMG 2a**. The chainsaw is not merely a figurative object associated with spending cuts or anti-bureaucratic politics. Its physical design already contains an eidetic grammar of rupture. Elongated body. Handle. Blade. Chain. Teeth. Mechanical articulation.

The object possesses a direction. It has a front. It implies contact. Its form is incomplete without the imagined target toward which it is oriented. This gives the chainsaw a particularly strong **vectorial structure**.

The object says:

FROM HERE → TOWARD THERE.

But unlike a neutral arrow, its direction implies transformation through cutting.

The vector is aggressive. The formal relation is therefore:

DIRECTION + CONTACT + INTERRUPTION.

The chainsaw does not simply indicate movement. It indicates the capacity to transform continuity into discontinuity.

This can be represented as:

———————

↓

CHAINSAW

↓

——— ———.

The formal operation is almost perfectly compatible with the political metaphor. State expenditure is to be cut. Bureaucracy is to be cut. Privileges are to be cut. The "caste" is to be dismantled.

The object therefore possesses an unusually high degree of correspondence between **material affordance and political metaphor**.

Its form already suggests its narrative function. This makes **IMG 2a** particularly powerful as a political text. The viewer does not need to translate an arbitrary symbol into a political program. The physical operation of the object provides the model.

The chainsaw performs materially what the political discourse promises institutionally.

The relation can be expressed as:

- **MATERIAL CUTTING**
- ≈
- **POLITICAL CUTTING**.

The similarity is not literal identity, but it creates a highly efficient symbolic condensation.

The chainsaw therefore represents **disruption through eidetic affordance**.

Its formal structure is political because the object's possible action has been metaphorically transferred to the state.

This also explains why the chainsaw differs from conventional campaign objects.

A flag signifies belonging. A cap signifies affiliation. A microphone signifies speech. The chainsaw signifies **transformation by destruction of continuity**.

Its form contains a program.

In **IMG 2b**, the political body itself assumes a similarly dynamic structure.

Milei's bodily performance frequently involves:

- open arms;
- pointing gestures;
- inclined torso;
- open mouth;
- facial tension;
- extended hands;
- expanded bodily contours.

The body therefore tends toward **openness rather than compact closure**. This is not openness in the semantic sense of tolerance or inclusion. It is an eidetic condition.

The body projects outward. Its extremities create vectors. The contour becomes less compact. The political subject appears to exceed a stable vertical axis.

This can be represented as:

COMPACT BODY → EXPANDED BODY → MULTIPLE DIRECTIONS.

The result is visual intensity. The eye does not remain confined to the torso. It follows arms. Hands. Face. Gesture. Direction.

The body becomes a **generator of vectors**. This contributes to the passional effect of anger and urgency.

Emotion appears not only in facial expression but in the formal expansion of the entire figure.

The body looks as though it cannot contain the intensity it carries.

This is a crucial eidetic correlate of the authenticity mechanism reconstructed earlier.

The logic becomes:

INTERNAL PASSION

↓

BODILY EXPANSION

↓

VISIBLE EXCESS

↓

EFFECT OF UNFILTERED AUTHENTICITY.

The body's form therefore participates in the claim that emotion is not being institutionally contained. Milei's political body appears less like a monument and more like an **event**.

Trump's dominant body says:

I AM HERE.

Milei's intense body says:

SOMETHING IS HAPPENING THROUGH ME.

This difference can be formulated eideticly as:

- **TRUMP → BODY AS SOLID FORM**
- **MILEI → BODY AS EXPANSIVE FORCE**.

The distinction should not be absolutized, but it captures an important recurrent tendency in the corpus.

IMG 2c develops the eidetic dimension through opposition.

The representation of institutional rupture and the political "caste" depends upon the construction of **formal separation** between the disruptive subject and the system he rejects.

At the deepest level, the relevant structure is:

$$\mathbf{A \neq B}.$$

Milei must remain formally and symbolically distinguishable from the political class.

This differentiation can be constructed through contrasts of:

- gesture;
- dress;
- bodily intensity;
- visual style;
- spatial positioning;
- graphic opposition;
- linguistic labels.

The eidetic principle is **non-continuity**. The outsider must not visually merge with the system.

If the political image were to erase all perceptible differences between Milei and conventional institutional actors, the anti-caste narrative would lose part of its expressive support.

The political identity therefore depends upon maintaining **formal alterity**.

This can be represented as:

CASTE = REPEATED INSTITUTIONAL FORM

versus

MILEI = FORMAL EXCEPTION.

The outsider is the element that does not fit. This non-fit becomes meaningful.

What could otherwise appear as stylistic inadequacy can be positively resemanticized as evidence of independence.

The formal anomaly says:

HE IS NOT LIKE THEM.

The eidetic difference therefore becomes an authenticity resource.

This mechanism is especially important in outsider politics because institutional legitimacy and anti-institutional legitimacy operate according to partially opposed aesthetic expectations.

Traditional political competence may be associated with controlled presentation.

The outsider can derive legitimacy from violating that presentation.

Formal deviation becomes political proof.

IMG 2d pushes this mechanism further.

Productive chaos is characterized by the multiplication of vectors, abrupt transitions, expressive excess, competing visual elements, and an overall reduction of formal calm.

The image may therefore produce what can be described as **eidetic turbulence**.

This turbulence emerges when no single stable form completely neutralizes the movement generated by other elements.

The visual field remains active. Lines collide. Directions compete. Gestures interrupt one another. Graphic elements may intensify the fragmentation.

The formal organization produces an effect of **unfinished stabilization**.

This is highly significant. Trumpian monumental imagery often seeks to make the leader appear as a completed form. Productive chaos makes Milei's political universe appear as a **form still happening**.

The distinction can be represented as:

- **TRUMP → FORM AS STATE**
- **MILEI → FORM AS PROCESS**.

This is perhaps one of the strongest eidetic correspondences with the two political narratives:

- restoration seeks a condition;
- rupture initiates a transformation.

The first can be represented through completed forms. The second benefits from forms that appear dynamically unresolved.

In **IMG 2d**, therefore, instability does not necessarily indicate semiotic weakness.

It can itself become the expressive form of transformation.

The image does not need to resolve tension.

The tension is the message.

This produces a convergence between:

FORMAL INSTABILITY

and

POLITICAL DESTABILIZATION.

The relation is not accidental. Productive chaos works precisely because the visual text allows political disruption to become perceptually experienced.

The spectator encounters not merely a statement about instability but an image organized through tension.

This is a particularly clear example of the plastic level becoming **isomorphic with political content**:

- the image says disruption;
- the form performs disruption.

IMG 2e again complicates the pattern. Graphs depend upon formal order. Lines are disciplined. Axes stabilize relations. Quantitative values are placed within geometric coordinates. The visual field is structured according to a technical grammar.

At first glance, this seems to suspend the eidetic turbulence characteristic of **IMG 2d**.

The graph introduces a different kind of dynamism: **directional variation**. A line rises. Falls. Flattens. Changes inclination. The political meaning resides partly in the form of the curve. The graph therefore converts economic history into eidetic transformation.

The line becomes the central actor. Its shape matters. A steep rise can signify acceleration. A fall can signify reduction. A plateau can signify stabilization. A break in trend can signify discontinuity.

The eidetic structure becomes:

LINE → DIRECTION → TREND → POLITICAL VALUE.

This is particularly significant for inflation. An economic phenomenon that cannot be directly perceived as a single visual object is transformed into a line. The line gives the phenomenon a shape.

The audience can therefore see:

- increase;
- decrease;
- acceleration;

- deceleration;
- turning points.

The political argument becomes geometrically legible.

This produces a powerful transformation:

ECONOMIC ABSTRACTION

↓

GRAPHIC FORM

↓

PERCEPTUAL DIRECTION

↓

POLITICAL NARRATIVE.

The graph does not eliminate interpretation. Choices concerning scale, period, comparison, labels, and framing remain decisive. But the eidetic organization makes the argument appear perceptually immediate.

The line seems to show movement directly. This contributes to the epistemic authority of **IMG 2e**.

Milei's political discourse can therefore move from the angularity of the chainsaw to the geometry of the graph without abandoning the deeper value of transformation.

The formal regimes differ, but the narrative operation remains compatible:

- **SOMETHING MUST CHANGE** in **IMG 2a**;
- **SOMETHING IS CHANGING** in **IMG 2e**.

The chainsaw gives change the form of **cutting**.

The graph gives change the form of **trajectory**.

This creates an important internal relation:

CUT → LINE.

The first interrupts continuity.

The second shows the direction emerging after interruption.

The two images therefore participate in a larger eidetic narrative:

DISCONTINUITY → REORIENTATION.

This prevents the Mileian visual system from collapsing into pure fragmentation. Rupture has direction. Chaos is productive because it is supposed to generate another order. The graph visually anticipates or validates that order.

Across the Mileian corpus, the eidetic dimension can therefore be summarized through:

- **VECTORIAL CUTTING** in **IMG 2a**;
- **EXPANSIVE BODILY FORM** in **IMG 2b**;
- **FORMAL DIFFERENTIATION FROM THE SYSTEM** in **IMG 2c**;
- **EIDETIC TURBULENCE** in **IMG 2d**;
- **GEOMETRIC TRAJECTORY AND DIRECTIONAL CHANGE** in **IMG 2e**.

These configurations converge around a broader principle:

FORM IS VALORIZED WHEN IT MAKES TRANSFORMATION PERCEPTIBLE.

This is the central difference from the Trumpian subcorpus.

- Trumpian form tends to make **identity and authority recognizable**;
- Mileian form tends to make **rupture and transformation sensible**.

The comparison can be condensed as:

TRUMP

- **FORM → CONSOLIDATION**

MILEI

- **FORM → TRANSFORMATION**

This distinction becomes especially clear when the principal objects of the two subcorpora are compared. The fist closes. The chainsaw cuts. The cap repeats. The angry body expands. The airplane follows a controlled trajectory. The graph changes trajectory. These relations reveal a deeper eidetic opposition:

- Trump's most characteristic forms repeatedly tend toward **concentration and stabilization**;
- Milei's toward **intervention and alteration**.

This does not mean that Trump lacks movement or Milei lacks stable symbols. Rather, movement itself is differently organized:

- Trumpian movement frequently culminates in a strong form;
- Mileian form frequently points toward further movement.

The raised fist rises and closes. The chainsaw points toward the next cut.

The MAGA cap stabilizes identity. The Mileian gesture exteriorizes intensity.

The luxury environment represents achieved success. The economic graph represents a trajectory still unfolding.

The temporal and eidetic structures therefore reinforce one another:

- Trump's restorative leadership tends toward **completed symbolic forms** because the desired value is represented as recoverable and recognizable;
- Milei's disruptive leadership tends toward **transformative forms** because the desired political order is constructed through a process of breaking with an existing configuration.

The distinction can be expressed as:

TRUMP: BEING / RESTORING

versus

MILEI: DOING / BREAKING / BECOMING.

At the plastic level, this opposition becomes:

- **SOLIDITY / VECTORIALITY**
- **CLOSURE / OPENING**
- **CONTINUITY / INTERRUPTION**
- **MONUMENT / FORCE**
- **STABILIZATION / TRANSFORMATION**.

The relation between form and leadership is therefore deeper than stylistic preference. It contributes to the construction of two different political ontologies:

- in the Trumpian universe, power tends to become visible as the capacity to **stand, occupy, possess, contain, and restore**.
- in the Mileian universe, power tends to become visible as the capacity to **cut, expand, collide, interrupt, and redirect**.

The leader's competence is encoded through different formal verbs.

TRUMP:

- **TO STAND.**
- **TO HOLD.**
- **TO RISE.**
- **TO POSSESS.**

- **TO RESTORE.**

MILEI:

- **TO CUT.**
- **TO BREAK.**
- **TO EXPAND.**
- **TO ATTACK.**
- **TO REDIRECT.**

This difference is particularly significant because plastic form can communicate these relations before they are explicitly verbalized.

The viewer perceives the upward fist. The elongated chainsaw. The expanded arms. The repeated cap. The directional line. The completed luxury environment. The political world is therefore made **formally intelligible**.

The plastic organization provides a perceptual grammar for ideological meaning. A further difference concerns the relationship between **simplicity and complexity**.

Both leaders use simplified forms, but simplification performs different functions. Trumpian simplification frequently supports **identity recognition** (MAGA, the fist, the flag, the winner imagery).

Mileian simplification frequently supports **operational recognition** (the chainsaw cuts, the graph rises or falls, the gesture attacks).

The formal difference can be expressed as:

- **TRUMP → WHAT DOES THIS SIGN STAND FOR?**
- **MILEI → WHAT DOES THIS SIGN DO?**

Again, this is a dominant tendency rather than an absolute distinction.

The MAGA cap also acts by mobilizing. The chainsaw also stands for libertarian identity.

Nevertheless, the contrast helps clarify the different emphasis of the two visual systems:

- Trumpian imagery repeatedly converts political values into **objects of recognition**;
- Mileian imagery repeatedly converts political values into **operations of transformation**.

This difference also shapes the relationship with the spectator. A stable form facilitates immediate identification. A dynamic form encourages anticipation of action.

Trumpian visuality often asks:

DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS VALUE?

Mileian visuality often asks:

DO YOU WANT THIS TRANSFORMATION TO OCCUR?

One privileges recognition. The other projection.

One consolidates belonging. The other intensifies expectation.

Both operate through high perceptual efficiency. Their principal signs are visually strong precisely because they reduce complex political programs to forms that can be processed rapidly within platform environments.

The fist. The cap. The chainsaw. The graph. These are **high-density semiotic forms**.

They compress:

- values;
- narratives;
- passions;
- political identities;
- temporal orientations;
- collective oppositions.

Their effectiveness depends partly on the fact that they can function under conditions of accelerated attention.

The viewer does not require prolonged exposure to recognize the basic structure. This makes the eidetic dimension particularly relevant to digital populism.

Platformized communication rewards visual forms capable of surviving:

- rapid scrolling;
- small screens;
- repetition;
- cropping;
- remediation;
- memetic appropriation.

The political sign must remain identifiable even when its context is reduced.

This can be described as **eidetic resilience**.

A form possesses eidetic resilience when its principal perceptual structure remains recognizable across transformations of medium, scale, framing, or context.

The Trumpian fist possesses it. The MAGA cap possesses it. The Mileian chainsaw possesses it. Many simplified graphs can possess it.

This resilience contributes to virality because the sign remains functional after circulation modifies its original presentation.

The relation becomes:

FORMAL SIMPLICITY + STRONG DIFFERENTIATION + SEMANTIC DENSITY

=

HIGH CIRCULATORY POTENTIAL.

This does not mean that formal simplicity alone produces virality.

Platform algorithms, political context, emotional intensity, network structure, and media attention remain essential.

But eidetic organization contributes to the sign's **circulatory affordance**.

Some images are easier to detach, reproduce, recognize, and resemanticize than others.

This point connects the plastic analysis directly to the processes of mutation and resemanticization examined later in the study.

A formally stable sign can undergo substantial semantic mutation while preserving perceptual identity.

The MAGA cap remains recognizable while its historical associations accumulate.

The chainsaw remains recognizable while moving from campaign spectacle to a broader symbol of Mileian governance.

The fist remains recognizable while moving from event documentation to political icon.

The eidetic structure therefore provides **continuity through semantic change**.

This can be represented as:

STABLE FORM

↓

CHANGING CONTEXTS

↓

CHANGING INTERPRETATIONS

↓

CONTINUED RECOGNIZABILITY.

Form becomes the anchor that allows meaning to mutate without dissolving completely. This is a central property of political symbols in digital culture.

Their meanings are neither completely fixed nor infinitely open. They remain recognizable enough to circulate while flexible enough to be repeatedly appropriated.

The comparative corpus therefore suggests that eidetic organization performs at least three major political functions:

- First, it **differentiates the leader**. Trump's vertical and concentrated forms and Milei's expansive and disruptive ones make their respective political bodies immediately distinguishable;
- Second, it **condenses political programs**. The closed fist condenses resistance. The cap condenses belonging and restoration. The chainsaw condenses rupture. The graph condenses economic trajectory;
- Third, it **facilitates circulation**. Strong contours and simplified formal relations survive the accelerated visual conditions of platformized communication.

The eidetic dimension is therefore not an ornamental layer placed upon political meaning.

It is one of the mechanisms through which political meaning becomes **perceptually efficient, symbolically durable, and digitally reproducible**.

The comparison ultimately confirms the broader structural opposition identified throughout the study:

TRUMP

COMPACTNESS → STABILITY → RECOGNITION → RESTORATION

MILEI

TENSION → DISCONTINUITY → TRANSFORMATION → RUPTURE

Trump's visual universe tends to convert political authority into **strong, stabilized, and recognizable forms**.

Milei's tends to convert political agency into **vectors, cuts, expansions, and directional transformations**.

Trump's dominant eidetic logic constructs a leader who appears capable of giving form back to a disordered political world; Milei's constructs a leader whose legitimacy derives from his capacity to alter the existing form of that world.

At the deepest level, the distinction can therefore be summarized through two different relations between political subject and form. **Trump tends to embody the form that must be restored; Milei tends to embody the force through which an existing form must be broken and reconfigured.** The first model privileges consolidation, recognizable identity, and symbolic closure; the second privileges intervention, transformation, and productive discontinuity. The eidetic level thus confirms that the opposition between restorative and disruptive leadership is not confined to political discourse: it is materially inscribed in the lines, contours, vectors, gestures, objects, and geometric relations through which the two leaders become visible.

8.3. CHROMATIC DIMENSION

The chromatic dimension concerns the organization of color within the visual text and the relations established among hue, saturation, brightness, contrast, repetition, and symbolic association. Color does not operate as a decorative supplement to political representation. It participates directly in the construction of perceptual hierarchy, emotional intensity, collective recognition, and ideological identity.

A political image can be organized through:

- high or low saturation;
- warm or cool colors;
- strong or weak contrast;
- chromatic homogeneity or heterogeneity;
- brightness or darkness;
- recurrent palette or unpredictable variation.

These properties influence the way the visual field is experienced. A highly saturated color can attract attention. A repeated palette can stabilize identity. Strong light-dark contrast can intensify tension. Chromatic uniformity can produce coherence. Chromatic fragmentation can increase perceptual instability.

As with topology and eidetic form, however, color possesses no fixed political meaning outside the system within which it appears:

- red does not inherently signify patriotism;
- black does not inherently signify rupture;
- gold does not inherently signify success.

Their political meanings emerge through **repetition, cultural association, figurative context, and recurrent connection with particular values**.

The analytical relation can therefore be represented as:

COLOR

↓

PERCEPTUAL SALIENCE

↓

CULTURAL / TEXTUAL ASSOCIATION

↓

RECURRENT POLITICAL VALUE

The chromatic level becomes especially important in highly mediatized politics because color offers one of the fastest mechanisms of recognition.

A user scrolling through a feed may perceive a chromatic pattern before reading text or reconstructing the complete figurative scene.

Color therefore operates under conditions of **pre-attentive identification**.

The political universe can become recognizable at a glance.

This is particularly evident in the Trumpian corpus, where red, white, blue, and gold recur within highly stabilized symbolic systems.

The Mileian corpus presents a different chromatic tendency, more strongly organized around dark tones, high contrast, saturated colors, visual discontinuity, and intense illumination.

The broad comparative opposition can initially be represented as:

TRUMP

CHROMATIC STABILITY → RECOGNITION

→ IDENTITARIAN COHERENCE → RESTORATIVE ORDER

MILEI

CHROMATIC INTENSITY → CONTRAST → TENSION → DISRUPTIVE ENERGY

Again, these are dominant tendencies rather than universal properties of every individual image.

The internal diversity of the corpus remains analytically important.

Within the Trumpian corpus, **IMG 1d** provides the clearest entry point into chromatic analysis because the MAGA symbolic universe is inseparable from the repeated use of **red**.

The red cap has become one of the most recognizable chromatic objects associated with Trumpian political identity.

Its effectiveness derives partly from the relationship among:

- **COLOR**
- **FORM**
- **TEXT**
- **REPETITION**.

The cap possesses a simple and reproducible eidetic structure.

The slogan supplies explicit political meaning.

The red color makes the object immediately salient.

The repetition stabilizes the association.

The political identity therefore emerges through the convergence:

RED + CAP + MAGA + REPETITION.

Over time, the chromatic sign can become partially autonomous. The viewer may recognize the political universe before reading the words. The color begins to anticipate the text.

This produces an important semiotic transition:

COLOR SUPPORTS POLITICAL SIGN

↓

COLOR BECOMES PART OF POLITICAL SIGN

↓

COLOR CAN ACTIVATE POLITICAL RECOGNITION BEFORE FULL READING.

This process illustrates the construction of **chromatic identity**. Political belonging becomes associated with a recurrent color code.

The collective can therefore be visually unified even when individual supporters differ radically in appearance, background, or social position.

The repeated chromatic element produces a perceptual equivalence. One red cap. Many red caps. A crowd containing recurrent red elements.

The visual field begins to acquire a recognizable collective rhythm.

The relation becomes:

INDIVIDUAL CHROMATIC MARKER

↓

REPETITION

↓

COLLECTIVE PATTERN

↓

VISIBLE POLITICAL COMMUNITY.

Color therefore performs a social function. It makes collective affiliation perceptible at a distance.

The political crowd can be read before every individual sign is decoded.

Chromatic recurrence transforms dispersed bodies into a partially unified visual subject.

This mechanism connects directly to the spatial and eidetic analysis developed earlier.

Topologically, the cap allows symbolic identity to be distributed.

Eidetically, its stable form facilitates repetition.

Chromatically, red makes that repetition salient.

The three plastic levels converge.

This convergence is one of the reasons **IMG 1d** is such an efficient political text.

The object is:

- spatially portable;
- formally simple;
- chromatically intense;
- semantically condensed.

The result is a sign with high capacity for circulation and collective replication.

Red within the MAGA universe also interacts with the broader chromatic repertoire of the United States.

Red, white, and blue connect party-political communication with national symbolism.

This relationship is crucial.

The MAGA red does not exist in complete chromatic isolation.

Its meaning can be reinforced by American flags, patriotic staging, and national iconography.

The relation becomes:

CAMPAIGN COLOR

↓

CONNECTION WITH NATIONAL PALETTE

↓

PARTISAN IDENTITY ACQUIRES PATRIOTIC RESONANCE.

This produces a significant political effect.

A movement-specific sign can appear visually continuous with the nation itself.

The chromatic transition from:

TRUMP / MAGA

toward

AMERICA

becomes perceptually easy.

Red is simultaneously:

- a campaign marker;
- part of the flag;
- an attention-producing color;
- a recurrent sign of collective mobilization.

The chromatic system therefore contributes to the wider Trumpian attempt to align partisan identity with an imagined authentic national identity.

The visual logic can be represented as:

MAGA COLORS

≈

NATIONAL COLORS

↓

POLITICAL COMMUNITY

≈

AUTHENTIC NATIONAL COMMUNITY.

The equivalence is obviously ideological rather than empirically descriptive. Its semiotic importance lies in how chromatic continuity can make the political claim perceptually plausible.

The movement looks national because it adopts the nation's colors. The nation appears present inside the movement because flags and patriotic palettes saturate the visual field.

Chromatic organization therefore participates in the **nationalization of partisan identity**.

In **IMG 1b**, the national palette can reinforce another value: **authority**.

Trump's bodily centrality and dominant posture often appear within contexts rich in flags, stage lighting, institutional colors, and patriotic backgrounds.

Here color does not function primarily as an isolated symbolic object but as an **environmental frame for leadership**.

The body appears surrounded by signs of national legitimacy.

The political subject is therefore chromatically inserted into a larger symbolic order.

The relation becomes:

LEADER

inside

PATRIOTIC CHROMATIC ENVIRONMENT.

This is significant because the visual field can make the leader appear not external to national symbolism but **embedded within it**.

Trump does not merely speak about America.

The image surrounds him with America.

The political body becomes chromatically associated with the collective identity it claims to represent.

The visual relationship can therefore be described as **chromatic incorporation**.

The leader is incorporated into national signs. National signs are incorporated into the leader's image. The two become mutually reinforcing. This mechanism contributes directly to monumentalization.

A body framed by flags and strongly codified national colors can acquire ceremonial or quasi-institutional resonance even outside strictly institutional contexts.

Political spectacle borrows the visual grammar of national legitimacy.

This is especially important in populist communication because the leader often claims a privileged relationship with "the people" that exceeds ordinary party competition.

Chromatic nationalization makes this claim visually efficient.

The political subject becomes:

- not simply Republican;
- not simply candidate;
- but potentially the figure placed inside the color system of **America itself**.

In **IMG 1a**, the chromatic structure becomes more complex. The Butler image is not merely a staged campaign representation. It emerges from an exceptional event.

Here the presence of **red** can acquire an additional and dramatically different function through the visibility of blood.

This introduces a striking chromatic convergence.

The same general color that circulates through MAGA, flags, and campaign mobilization can appear in an entirely different material form:

RED AS POLITICAL SYMBOL

versus

RED AS INDEX OF BODILY INJURY.

The distinction is fundamental. One red is culturally coded.

The other possesses a strong indexical relation to physical vulnerability.

When they coexist within the broader Trumpian visual universe, their meanings may interact.

The red of political mobilization and the red of wounded corporeality can enter a new relation:

PATRIOTIC / CAMPAIGN RED + BLOOD + RAISED FIST

= INTENSIFICATION OF RESISTANCE.

This does not mean that all red elements become semantically identical.

Rather, chromatic recurrence allows different levels of meaning to resonate.

The political color acquires bodily intensity. The wounded body becomes visually compatible with an already recognizable campaign palette.

The image therefore possesses an unusual chromatic density.

The red is simultaneously:

- material;
- emotional;
- political;
- memorable.

This contributes to the exceptional iconic potential of **IMG 1a**.

The image contains a chromatic element capable of connecting the event to a broader symbolic system while preserving the irreducible intensity of physical danger.

The transition can be represented as:

RED → INJURY

but within the broader corpus:

RED → MAGA / PATRIOTISM / MOBILIZATION.

The two isotopies overlap.

The effect can be a powerful visual condensation of:

VULNERABILITY + POLITICAL IDENTITY + RESISTANCE.

The Butler image therefore demonstrates that chromatic meaning is relational and context-sensitive.

The same hue can change meaning radically depending on its material support.

A red cap is not blood. A red flag is not a wound. Political iconicity can emerge partly through the accidental or contingent convergence of colors already strongly coded elsewhere.

In **IMG 1c**, the dominant chromatic element shifts away from the national palette toward **gold**. The gilded interiors associated with Trump's airplanes and luxury environments participate in an aesthetics of abundance, opulence, and achieved success.

Gold possesses strong cultural associations with:

- wealth;
- preciousness;
- rarity;
- victory;
- prestige;
- monumentality.

Within Trump's public persona, these associations become politically productive. The color does not merely describe expensive decoration. It transforms material environment into a **chromatic statement of success**. The relation becomes:

GOLD

↓

WEALTH

↓

SUCCESS

↓

EXCEPTIONAL STATUS

↓

POTENTIAL POLITICAL COMPETENCE.

Again, the final inferential passage is not logically necessary. It is narratively constructed.

The significant point is that chromatic abundance participates in the larger winner ethos.

Gold makes success visible. It gives wealth a perceptual surface.

The viewer does not need financial records to understand that the represented environment is designed to signify luxury.

Color communicates status rapidly. The gilded aesthetic also contributes to Trumpian **monumentalization**.

Gold is not simply expensive. It can evoke ceremonial, imperial, palatial, or triumphal environments.

The political persona therefore moves toward a visual world in which private success is staged with forms traditionally associated with exceptional power.

This creates a productive ambiguity between:

- **BUSINESS LUXURY**
- **CELEBRITY SPECTACLE**
- **POLITICAL MONUMENTALITY**.

The same chromatic environment can connect all three.

This is particularly important for Trump because his political persona is inseparable from the earlier celebrity-business identity analyzed in previous chapters.

Gold becomes a chromatic bridge among those domains.

It allows:

business success;

- personal wealth;
- spectacle;

- political exceptionalism
- to appear within the same perceptual universe.

The relation can be represented as:

GOLD → TRUMP.

Through repeated association, the color itself becomes biographically saturated. It is no longer simply a generic luxury code. It participates in a recognizable Trumpian aesthetic.

This process reinforces the broader phenomenon identified with MAGA red: **chromatic personalization**.

Different colors perform different functions, but both become associated with the leader.

Red organizes collective-patriotic identity. Gold organizes exceptional-individual success.

The contrast between the two is significant:

RED

COLLECTIVE – PATRIOTIC – MOBILIZING – REPLICABLE

GOLD

INDIVIDUAL – LUXURIOUS – EXCEPTIONAL – EXCLUSIVE

Trumpian political identity therefore operates chromatically across two apparently opposed regimes:

- **BELONGING**;
- **DISTINCTION**.

The red cap says: WE SHARE THIS.

The gold interior says: HE POSSESSES WHAT OTHERS DO NOT.

The first reduces symbolic distance. The second increases material distance.

The two can coexist within the same leadership mythology. The supporter shares the political color. The leader retains the exceptional environment. The relationship becomes:

CHROMATIC PROXIMITY + MATERIAL DISTANCE.

This is another way in which populist identification can coexist with elite wealth. The visual system does not attempt to erase exceptional status. It makes exceptional status aspirational while providing another chromatic code through which collective belonging can be shared.

IMG 1e introduces a different chromatic mechanism.

Fake or manipulated anti-immigration imagery may use strong contrast, saturated colors, dramatic lighting, or visually exaggerated elements in order to increase salience and emotional immediacy.

The exact palette can vary according to the individual image, but the important analytical point concerns the relationship between color and **threat intensification**.

A highly dramatized chromatic environment can reduce documentary neutrality. The image begins to move toward spectacle.

This matters because threat communication benefits from rapid perceptual differentiation.

The other must stand out. The scene must appear unusual. The event must interrupt ordinary visual expectations.

Color can support this transformation. The relation becomes:

CHROMATIC EXAGGERATION

↓

PERCEPTUAL SALIENCE

↓

EMOTIONAL INTENSIFICATION

↓

POLITICAL POLARIZATION.

The fabricated nature of the imagery makes this especially important.

When referential truth is weak or absent, perceptual plausibility and emotional impact may perform part of the communicative work.

A visually vivid image can appear meaningful before the viewer evaluates its provenance.

This connects the chromatic level directly to post-truth veridiction.

Color does not prove factuality. But it can contribute to an **effect of immediacy**.

The spectator sees something striking. The perceptual reaction may precede factual verification.

The image therefore exploits the temporal asymmetry already discussed:

PERCEPTION FIRST

↓

EMOTION

↓

POSSIBLE BELIEF / INTERPRETATION

↓

VERIFICATION LATER.

Chromatic intensity can strengthen the first stages of this sequence.

This is one reason why visual misinformation can possess high affective efficiency.

Across the Trumpian corpus, the chromatic dimension can therefore be summarized through several major operations:

- **PATRIOTIC RED-WHITE-BLUE RECURRENCE** in **IMG 1d** and broader campaign imagery;

- **CHROMATIC EMBEDDING OF THE LEADER WITHIN NATIONAL SYMBOLISM** in **IMG 1b**;
- **MATERIAL RED OF VULNERABILITY AND RESISTANCE** in **IMG 1a**;
- **GOLDEN AESTHETICS OF SUCCESS AND EXCEPTIONALITY** in **IMG 1c**;
- **CHROMATIC INTENSIFICATION OF THREAT AND POLARIZATION** in **IMG 1e**.

These configurations converge around a broader Trumpian principle:

COLOR STABILIZES POLITICAL IDENTITY

BY MAKING VALUES IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZABLE.

Patriotism has colors. Success has a color.

Threat can be chromatically intensified.

The leader occupies a visual universe in which political values repeatedly receive chromatic form.

Trumpian color therefore tends toward **semantic consolidation**.

It helps the political world remain recognizable.

The Mileian corpus presents a different dominant chromatic regime.

Rather than relying primarily on a stable national palette, Milei's visual identity is more strongly associated with **dark tonalities, high saturation, contrast, harsh or dramatic lighting, and chromatic configurations capable of intensifying tension**.

This does not mean that Milei lacks stable identifying colors or that every image is dark.

The important comparative point is that chromatic organization more frequently contributes to an aesthetics of **energy, confrontation, instability, and perceptual acceleration**.

The general relation can be expressed as:

HIGH CONTRAST / SATURATION

↓

PERCEPTUAL INTENSITY

↓

TENSION

↓

COMPATIBILITY WITH DISRUPTIVE ETHOS.

Within the Mileian corpus, **IMG 2b** offers a particularly productive case because bodily anger interacts strongly with chromatic intensity.

Milei's gestures, facial expressions, shouting, and expansive posture already produce high kinesic tension.

Color can amplify this intensity by increasing separation between:

- body and background;
- light and shadow;
- skin tones and surrounding environment;
- clothing and stage elements.
- Strong contrast isolates the political body.
- The figure becomes perceptually forceful.

The relation can be represented as:

BODILY EXCESS + CHROMATIC CONTRAST = HEIGHTENED VISUAL INTENSITY.

This is significant because Milei's authenticity is constructed partly through the perception that emotion exceeds conventional political restraint.

A chromatically intense image can make that excess appear even more immediate. The body is not simply expressive. It becomes visually **charged**.

The political performance appears to possess energy. This differs from Trumpian monumentalization. Trump's chromatic environment often frames a stable body within recognizable national or luxurious codes.

Milei's color more frequently intensifies the impression that the body is **in motion or under tension**, even within a still image.

The contrast can therefore be expressed as:

- **TRUMP → COLOR FRAMES AUTHORITY**
- **MILEI → COLOR AMPLIFIES INTENSITY**.

This distinction is especially useful because it shows that color performs different relationships with the body.

In Trump's imagery, chromatic order can stabilize. In Milei's, chromatic contrast can activate.

IMG 2a, centered on the chainsaw, similarly benefits from strong chromatic differentiation because the object must remain perceptually salient.

The chainsaw is already eideticly powerful. Its elongated structure, mechanical teeth, and directional orientation make it immediately recognizable.

Color can reinforce this objecthood by distinguishing the tool sharply from the body and surrounding environment.

The result is a high-salience object. The viewer sees not simply Milei.

The viewer sees **Milei-with-chainsaw** as an integrated political configuration.

Chromatic contrast assists this integration through differentiation.

The object must be distinct enough to attract attention but close enough to the body to become part of the persona.

The relation becomes:

BODY + CONTRASTED OBJECT

↓

DUAL SALIENCE

↓

POLITICAL COUPLING OF LEADER AND SYMBOL.

The chainsaw therefore becomes chromatically available for symbolic extraction. It can be cropped.

Reposted. Turned into a meme. Isolated from the background. Its strong visual identity facilitates circulation. This chromatic and eidetic resilience reinforces the symbol's political durability. The object comes to function as an extension of Milei's political body. The chainsaw is no longer merely held. It becomes almost worn as an **ideological attribute**.

Its visibility therefore contributes to a process of symbolic personification:

CHAINSAW = MILEI

and reciprocally:

MILEI = CHAINSAW POLITICS.

Color supports this fusion by preserving strong perceptual distinction within a unified scene.

IMG 2c introduces the chromatic construction of opposition.

The anti-caste universe depends on clear differentiation between the disruptive subject and the institutional system he rejects.

Color can contribute by assigning perceptually distinct environments or tonal registers to the two sides.

The important mechanism is **chromatic separation**.

The political opposition becomes easier to perceive when the visual text creates a strong contrast between:

- Milei;
- the old political establishment;
- institutional settings;
- representations of the “caste”.

The general structure becomes:

CHROMATIC DIFFERENCE

↓

PERCEPTUAL DIFFERENCE

↓

POLITICAL DIFFERENCE.

Again, color does not independently create the antagonism. It supports an antagonism already established narratively and figuratively. This process is especially important for outsider politics. The disruptive actor must remain visually distinct from the system.

If all political figures inhabit an identical visual code, the claim of radical difference becomes more difficult to sustain at the perceptual level.

Mileian communication therefore benefits from a chromatic aesthetic that avoids excessive assimilation to conventional institutional imagery.

Dark tones, saturated contrasts, unconventional staging, or visually aggressive lighting can all contribute to the effect:

THIS IS NOT ORDINARY POLITICS.

Chromatic deviation becomes another sign of anti-formality.

What would appear excessive within a conventional institutional aesthetic can become positive evidence of difference. This relation can be expressed as:

CHROMATIC NON-CONFORMITY

↓

DISTANCE FROM INSTITUTIONAL AESTHETIC

↓

ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT AUTHENTICITY.

The political difference is therefore not simply spoken. It is **seen**. **IMG 2d** constitutes the clearest case of chromatic instability and intensity.

Productive chaos is not merely narratively or eideticly fragmented. It can also be chromatically heterogeneous. Strong saturation. Competing colors. Abrupt light-dark contrasts. Different visual sources. Screens. Graphic overlays. Media fragments. The visual field may contain a high density of chromatic stimuli.

This contributes to what can be described as **chromatic turbulence**. The eye is exposed to multiple competing intensities. No single tonal environment necessarily stabilizes the image completely.

The relation becomes:

MULTIPLE CHROMATIC STIMULI

↓

REDUCED VISUAL REST

↓

PERCEPTUAL ACTIVATION

↓

COMPATIBILITY WITH PRODUCTIVE CHAOS.

This is one of the clearest points of contact between plastic organization and political meaning.

Chaos is not only represented. It is experienced through the visual field. The image creates the sensation of informational excess. Color contributes to that excess.

The spectator's eye must move among competing chromatic zones. The visual process becomes accelerated. This corresponds closely to the temporal rhythm reconstructed in Chapter VII.

The same political identity is therefore encoded at several levels:

- **TEMPORAL ACCELERATION;**
- **EIDETIC FRAGMENTATION;**
- **CHROMATIC COMPETITION;**
- **PASSIONAL INTENSITY;**
- **NARRATIVE RUPTURE.**

These structures reinforce one another. The result is a particularly strong case of **multi-level semiotic coherence**.

Milei's productive chaos is not merely a thematic label. It becomes a mode of organization extending across time, space, form, color, body, and circulation. This convergence helps transform what could otherwise appear as simple disorder into a recognizable political style. The chaos has a code. The paradox becomes:

VISUAL DISORDER → STABLE RECOGNITION OF DISRUPTIVE IDENTITY.

The disorder at the level of individual elements produces order at the level of persona. The viewer learns:

THIS CHAOS IS MILEIAN.

Chromatic turbulence therefore contributes to the stabilization of a leadership identity precisely by repeating instability. This is structurally analogous to the temporal paradox identified earlier:

DISCONTINUITY BECOMES CONTINUOUS.

At the chromatic level:

VARIABILITY BECOMES RECOGNIZABLE STYLE.

This is one of the most important characteristics of Milei's media aesthetic.

IMG 2e again introduces a productive counterpoint. Economic charts require chromatic differentiation in a more controlled form.

Colors may distinguish:

- different periods;
- different indicators;
- before and after;
- competing trajectories;
- positive and negative values.

The chromatic function therefore becomes **analytical rather than primarily affective**.

Color separates data. Organizes comparison. Guides the gaze. Creates hierarchy. The graph uses chromatic difference to produce intelligibility.

The relation becomes:

COLOR

↓

CATEGORY DIFFERENTIATION

↓

VISUAL COMPARISON

↓

POLITICAL INTERPRETATION.

This controlled use of color is crucial because **IMG 2e** complicates the association between Milei and pure chromatic excess.

Within the technical-economic register, color can become disciplined. The palette serves argument.

This creates an important internal opposition within the Mileian subcorpus:

IMG 2d

COLOR → INTENSITY / CHAOS / COMPETITION

IMG 2e

COLOR → DISTINCTION / ORDER / EPISTEMIC CLARITY

The difference does not weaken the overall leadership identity. It strengthens it by allowing Milei to occupy two visual registers. The disruptive leader can appear:

AFFECTIVELY EXCESSIVE

and

TECHNICALLY ORGANIZED.

The same political persona can move between:

- chaos;
- calculation;
- rage;
- data;
- provocation;
- economic expertise.

Chromatic organization helps differentiate these registers while preserving their inclusion within the same broader political narrative. This alternation is crucial.

If Milei's entire visual universe were equally chaotic, the claim to economic competence could become harder to sustain.

If it were entirely technical, the disruptive authenticity of the persona would weaken.

The corpus instead constructs a **chromatic oscillation between intensity and order**.

The two registers correspond to different leadership competences:

- **INTENSE COLOR → PASSIONAL COMPETENCE;**
- **ORDERED COLOR → EPISTEMIC COMPETENCE**.

The leader can therefore appear as both:

the subject who feels the crisis intensely;

and

the subject who can explain it technically.

This duality is central to Milei's ethos.

Across the Mileian corpus, the chromatic dimension can therefore be summarized through:

- HIGH CONTRAST AND BODILY INTENSIFICATION in **IMG 2b**;
- OBJECT SALIENCE AND SYMBOLIC FUSION in **IMG 2a**;
- CHROMATIC DIFFERENTIATION FROM THE INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEM in **IMG 2c**;
- SATURATION AND CHROMATIC TURBULENCE in **IMG 2d**;
- CONTROLLED COLOR-CODING OF ECONOMIC TRAJECTORIES in **IMG 2e**.

These configurations converge around a broader principle:

COLOR MAKES DIFFERENCE AND TRANSFORMATION PERCEPTUALLY INTENSE.

Where Trumpian chromaticity tends primarily to stabilize recognition, Mileian chromaticity tends more strongly to intensify differentiation.

The comparison can therefore be represented as:

TRUMP

COLOR → IDENTITY

MILEI

COLOR → INTENSITY

This formulation should not be understood absolutely.

Trump also uses color to intensify. Milei also develops recognizable chromatic patterns.

The distinction concerns the dominant semiotic function revealed by the corpus.

Trumpian color repeatedly answers:

- WHO ARE WE?
- WHAT NATION DO WE BELONG TO?
- WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Mileian color more frequently answers:

- WHERE IS THE CONFLICT?
- WHAT STANDS OUT?
- WHERE IS THE RUPTURE?
- WHAT MUST THE EYE FOLLOW?

The first has a stronger identitarian function.

The second a stronger tensional function.

The comparison also reveals a close relation between chromatic organization and the passional systems reconstructed earlier.

Trumpian colors are strongly associated with:

- pride;
- belonging;
- confidence;
- success;
- resistance.

Mileian chromatic intensity is more strongly associated with:

- anger;
- urgency;
- conflict;
- shock;
- transformative energy.

These associations emerge because color operates together with bodies, objects, gestures, and narrative contexts.

The relation can be represented as:

TRUMP

- RED / WHITE / BLUE → PATRIOTIC RECOGNITION
- GOLD → SUCCESS / EXCEPTIONALITY
- RED OF INJURY IN **IMG 1a** → VULNERABILITY TRANSFORMED INTO RESISTANCE

MILEI

- DARKNESS / HIGH CONTRAST → CONFLICTUAL INTENSITY

- SATURATION → EMOTIONAL ACTIVATION
- ORDERED GRAPHIC COLOR → TECHNICAL DIFFERENTIATION AND EPISTEMIC AUTHORITY

The chromatic level therefore does not merely reflect passions.

It contributes to their **perceptual preparation**.

The viewer may experience visual intensity before assigning a precise political emotion to it.

Color helps create the affective atmosphere within which later interpretation occurs.

This is particularly important in digital environments characterized by limited attention.

The political image must often generate perceptual salience before semantic processing is complete.

Color can perform that first operation.

This creates a sequence:

CHROMATIC IMPACT

↓

ATTENTION

↓

FIGURATIVE RECOGNITION

↓

POLITICAL INTERPRETATION

↓

AFFECTIVE / AXIOLOGICAL RESPONSE.

The chromatic level therefore participates in what may be described as the **economy of attention** of platformized politics.

Highly recognizable palettes can stop scrolling through familiarity. Strong contrasts can stop scrolling through surprise.

Trump and Milei exploit different versions of the same perceptual problem.

Trump:

RECOGNIZE ME IMMEDIATELY.

Milei:

DO NOT IGNORE ME.

The difference is revealing:

- Trumpian political visibility often benefits from the repetition of already established chromatic codes;
- Mileian visibility more strongly benefits from chromatic tension capable of interrupting perceptual routine.

The contrast can therefore be expressed as:

- TRUMP → ATTENTION THROUGH RECOGNITION;
- MILEI → ATTENTION THROUGH INTENSIFICATION.

Both mechanisms are compatible with platform circulation.

A familiar sign arrests attention because it activates memory.

An intense sign arrests attention because it creates contrast with its environment.

The two leadership models therefore develop different visual strategies for occupying the feed.

Another important feature of the corpus concerns the convergence between political identity and **brand-like chromatic consistency**.

Contemporary leaders increasingly operate within media environments where recognizability depends upon recurrent visual codes similar to those used in commercial branding.

This does not mean that political communication can be reduced to marketing. The social, ideological, institutional, and historical stakes are radically different. Nevertheless, the semiotic mechanism of chromatic consistency can operate similarly.

Repeated color:

- reduces recognition time;
- stabilizes associations;
- connects heterogeneous texts;
- facilitates memory;
- creates continuity across media.

Trump's MAGA universe demonstrates this mechanism with particular clarity.

The same red can appear across:

- caps;
- banners;
- stages;
- social posts;
- merchandise;
- crowds.

The color becomes a transversal element linking different textual environments.

The relation is:

DIFFERENT MEDIA + SAME CHROMATIC CODE

= CONTINUOUS POLITICAL IDENTITY.

This is especially important in a fragmented media ecology.

The text changes. The platform changes. The format changes. The color returns. Chromatic recurrence therefore produces **transmedial coherence**.

Milei's visual identity is less reducible to one equally dominant standardized color, but a comparable mechanism can emerge through repetition of **high-intensity contrast and dark-saturated aesthetics**.

Here what stabilizes may not be one exact hue but a **chromatic regime**. This distinction is important. Political visual identity can be stabilized either through:

REPETITION OF A SPECIFIC COLOR

or through

REPETITION OF A PARTICULAR WAY OF USING COLOR.

Trump's MAGA red exemplifies the first. Mileian high contrast and visual intensity more strongly exemplify the second.

The comparison can therefore be formulated as:

- TRUMP → CHROMATIC LEXEME;
- MILEI → CHROMATIC SYNTAX.

Trump possesses a highly recognizable individual color-sign. Milei possesses a more variable but recurrently intense mode of chromatic articulation. This difference corresponds closely to their broader semiotic identities:

- Trumpian communication tends toward stable signs;
- Mileian communication tends toward stable operations.

The same distinction already emerged at the eidetic level:

- Trump stabilizes objects of recognition;
- Milei stabilizes modes of transformation.

Chromatic analysis confirms this structural opposition.

The chromatic dimension also includes relations between **light and darkness**. These relations contribute to the construction of political visibility in ways that exceed specific hues.

Brightness can expose. Darkness can dramatize. Strong directional lighting can monumentalize a face. High contrast can create tension. Evenly distributed light can produce informational clarity.

Lighting therefore establishes a **regime of visibility**. What is illuminated becomes salient. What remains dark becomes secondary, threatening, mysterious, or simply less available.

In Trumpian imagery, controlled illumination can reinforce the separation of the leader from the surrounding environment.

The political body becomes clearly visible. The spectator's gaze is directed toward the central figure. This is especially compatible with **IMG 1b**, where monumentalization benefits from controlled hierarchy.

The relation becomes:

ILLUMINATED BODY

↓

VISUAL PRIORITY

↓

CENTRALITY

↓

POLITICAL AUTHORITY.

Luxury imagery in **IMG 1c** similarly benefits from light reflecting on polished or gilded surfaces. The environment does not simply possess gold. It shines. Reflectivity intensifies the perception of abundance. Luxury becomes luminous.

This creates an important association:

LIGHT → VISIBILITY OF WEALTH → SPECTACLE OF SUCCESS.

The successful leader inhabits a world that visually displays itself. Wealth must be seen to perform its political symbolic function.

In Mileian imagery, strong light-dark opposition can more frequently intensify bodily tension. Faces become sharply modeled. Gestures separate from backgrounds. The body appears more dramatic.

In **IMG 2d**, changing or heterogeneous lighting sources can contribute to fragmentation and perceptual acceleration. In **IMG 2e**, by contrast, lighting and screen luminosity may serve informational clarity.

The chart must be readable. The data must become perceptually available. Once again, the Mileian corpus alternates between:

DRAMATIC VISIBILITY

and

ANALYTICAL VISIBILITY.

The first intensifies the person. The second clarifies the argument. This oscillation mirrors the broader tension between Milei as performer and Milei as economist.

The deepest comparative distinction can therefore be reformulated through the opposition between **chromatic stabilization** and **chromatic rupture**.

Trump's palette tends to organize visual identity through recognizable recurrence. The same colors continually return and connect heterogeneous texts. The visual world is brought toward chromatic coherence.

The process can be represented as:

COLOR RECURRENCE → FAMILIARITY → IDENTITY → STABILITY.

Milei's palette more frequently organizes visual experience through differentiation and contrast. Color separates. Highlights. Collides. Intensifies.

The process becomes:

COLOR CONTRAST → TENSION → ATTENTION → TRANSFORMATION / CONFLICT.

The opposition can therefore be summarized as:

TRUMP

CHROMATIC COHERENCE

MILEI

CHROMATIC TENSION

This distinction aligns closely with the broader contrast between restoration and rupture. Trump's political universe seeks to recover a coherent national identity. Its colors return repeatedly.

Milei's seeks to disrupt an inherited political order. Its colors more frequently create perceptual discontinuity. The visual form and ideological structure therefore correspond.

The chromatic dimension also contributes strongly to **semiotic condensation**.

A complex political universe can become attached to a simple hue. Red can activate MAGA. Gold can activate Trumpian success. A dark, high-contrast Mileian image can activate confrontation before every semantic detail is processed.

Color therefore shortens the pathway between perception and political recognition. This can be expressed as:

CHROMATIC CUE

↓

MEMORY

↓

POLITICAL FRAME

↓

INTERPRETATION.

Such condensation is particularly important to the visual politics of the feed. The user may encounter an image for only a few seconds. Color can provide immediate orientation.

This contributes to the transformation of political identities into **perceptual brands** without reducing them to commercial brands.

The essential point is that contemporary political communication increasingly depends on the capacity to create recognizable visual universes capable of surviving fragmented attention. Color is one of the most efficient tools for doing so.

Trump's visual universe possesses a particularly high degree of chromatic coding through:

- red;
- white;
- blue;
- gold.

Milei's visual universe is more strongly coded through:

- dark tonalities;
- saturation;
- strong contrast;
- aggressive illumination;
- technical graphic differentiation.

These palettes generate different perceptual expectations.

When the user encounters Trumpian red or gold, recognition can precede interpretation.

When the user encounters Mileian visual intensity, affective activation can precede interpretation.

The two processes can be expressed as:

TRUMP

COLOR → RECOGNITION → IDENTITY

MILEI

COLOR → ACTIVATION → INTENSITY

The chromatic analysis ultimately confirms the broader opposition running through the corpus.

Trump's visual politics repeatedly transforms color into a device of **continuity**. National colors connect leader, movement, and country. MAGA red creates collective recognizability. Gold stabilizes the mythology of the successful winner.

Even the red of injury in **IMG 1a** can be absorbed into the larger visual narrative of resistance. Color participates in the construction of a political world whose values must be recognized, recovered, and stabilized.

Milei's visual politics more strongly transforms color into a device of **intensification**. Dark tones, strong contrasts, saturation, chromatic collision, and dramatic illumination amplify the perception of confrontation and rupture.

At the same time, the controlled palette of **IMG 2e** demonstrates that disruption is complemented by technical organization.

The chromatic world therefore oscillates between excess and analytical clarity. This duality is crucial to Milei's ethos. The disruptive leader must not merely destroy. He must also demonstrate that another trajectory can be rationally represented.

The overall comparison can therefore be summarized as follows:

TRUMP

- **RED / WHITE / BLUE**
  → national identity and patriotic continuity;

- **RED MAGA**

  → mobilization and collective belonging;

- **GOLD**

  → wealth, success, exceptionality;

- **CONTROLLED CHROMATIC RECURRENCE**

  → recognizability and symbolic stabilization.

MILEI

- **DARK / SATURATED TONES**

  → intensity and anti-formality;

- **STRONG CONTRAST**

  → confrontation and perceptual activation;

- **CHROMATIC HETEROGENEITY**

  → productive chaos and acceleration;

- **CONTROLLED GRAPHIC COLOR**

  → economic intelligibility and epistemic authority.

The difference can be condensed into two formulas:

- **TRUMP → COLOR MAKES IDENTITY STABLE;**

- **MILEI → COLOR MAKES TRANSFORMATION INTENSE.**

This distinction should not be interpreted as a rigid binary. Rather, it identifies the dominant operation through which chromatic structures participate in the construction of the two leadership models.

Trump's palette repeatedly leads the spectator toward **recognition**. Milei's toward **activation**.

Trump's colors tell the viewer where the symbolic center is. Milei's contrasts tell the viewer where the tension is.

Trumpian chromaticity tends to build a visual home. Mileian chromaticity tends to produce a visual field of forces.

The first corresponds to restoration. The second to rupture.

At the deepest level, therefore, the chromatic dimension confirms that political identity is not merely represented through images but **materially organized through perceptual regularities**. Trump's leadership is embedded within recurrent national and luxury palettes that stabilize patriotism, success, belonging, and authority; Milei's leadership is embedded within chromatic regimes that intensify conflict, emotional excess, differentiation, and transformative energy while retaining the capacity to shift into ordered technical visualization when economic legitimacy is at stake.

Color thus becomes one of the principal points at which ideology enters perception. The viewer does not encounter only political propositions but **chromatically structured political worlds**. In Trump's corpus, that world tends toward **recognizable order, patriotic continuity, and monumentalized success**. In Milei's, it tends toward **contrast, tension, perceptual acceleration, and the visible energy of rupture**. The opposition between restorative and disruptive leadership is therefore not only narrative, passional, spatial, or temporal: it is also **chromatically inscribed in the sensible surface of the political image**.

8.4. PLASTIC RHYTHM, DENSITY, AND VISUAL TENSION

The topological, eidetic, and chromatic dimensions examined in the previous sections do not operate independently. Within the visual text, position, form, direction, color, brightness, contrast, and density interact continuously, producing an overall **plastic rhythm** through which the spectator's gaze is oriented, accelerated, slowed, concentrated, or dispersed.

This level is particularly important for the comparative analysis of Trump and Milei because their respective political aesthetics cannot be adequately described by isolating individual visual properties. The distinction between the two leaders emerges more clearly when these properties are considered as **systems of perceptual relations**.

A centralized composition may become more stable when reinforced by vertical forms and chromatic coherence.

A fragmented composition may become more tense when combined with diagonal vectors, high saturation, and multiple competing focal points.

The plastic text therefore produces a rhythm. This rhythm is not temporal in exactly the same sense as the aspectual and temporal structures examined in Chapter VII. It is instead a **rhythm of perception**: the way the image organizes the movement of the gaze and distributes visual intensity across its surface.

The spectator may be encouraged to:

- stop;
- focus;
- scan;
- compare;
- follow;
- return;
- move rapidly between elements;
- or concentrate on a dominant visual nucleus.

The plastic organization consequently regulates not only **what is visible**, but also **how visibility is experienced**.

The relation can be represented as:

- TOPOLOGY → DISTRIBUTION OF VISUAL INTENSITY
- EIDETIC FORM → PERCEPTUAL RHYTHM
- COLOR → MODE OF SPECTATOR ENGAGEMENT

This allows the analysis to move from individual plastic categories toward a more integrated account of the visual experience produced by the corpus.

At the broadest comparative level, Trumpian imagery tends more frequently toward a regime of **concentration and stabilization**, while Mileian imagery tends more strongly toward **activation and tension**.

The distinction can initially be expressed as:

TRUMP

CONCENTRATION → HIERARCHY → STABILIZATION → RECOGNITION

MILEI

MULTIPLICATION → TENSION → ACTIVATION → TRANSFORMATION

These formulas do not imply that Trump's images are always visually calm or that Milei's are always chaotic. **IMG 1a**, for example, emerges from an exceptionally unstable event, while **IMG 2e** relies upon the disciplined geometry of statistical visualization.

The comparison therefore concerns the way instability and order are **semiotically processed**, rather than the simple presence or absence of visual complexity.

This distinction is fundamental. Trumpian imagery can contain disorder and transform it into a strong center. Mileian imagery can contain order and transform it into evidence of change.

The question is not simply:

IS THE IMAGE ORDERED OR DISORDERED?

but:

WHAT DOES THE IMAGE DO WITH ORDER AND DISORDER?

Within the Trumpian corpus, **IMG 1b** provides the clearest example of a plastic rhythm organized around **concentration**. Centrality directs the gaze toward the political body. Verticality stabilizes it. Frontality reinforces perceptual presence.

The surrounding visual field tends to become secondary relative to the leader. The image therefore establishes a hierarchy of attention. The spectator does not encounter all elements with equal intensity. Instead, the visual field is organized around a dominant nucleus.

The structure becomes:

PERIPHERY

↓

CONVERGENCE

↓

CENTRAL BODY

↓

ATTENTIONAL STABILIZATION

The gaze is progressively arrested. This arrest is politically meaningful because it reinforces the construction of leadership as centrality. The political subject does not merely occupy the center of the image.

He becomes the element capable of **reducing the complexity of the image around himself**. This is a crucial semiotic operation. Political reality may be complex. The visual text simplifies that complexity by producing a perceptual center. The leader becomes the answer to visual dispersion.

The same structure is compatible with the narrative role reconstructed in earlier chapters: the leader who promises to restore political order is represented through an image capable of producing **perceptual order**.

The relation becomes:

VISUAL COMPLEXITY

↓

LEADER AS ORGANIZING CENTER

↓

PERCEPTUAL ORDER

and, at the semantic level:

POLITICAL CRISIS

↓

LEADER AS TRANSFORMATIVE OPERATOR

↓

RESTORED ORDER.

Plastic organization and narrative program therefore become partially homologous. The leader organizes the image as he claims to organize the political world. This does not mean that composition directly proves political competence. It means that the visual text provides a **perceptual model compatible with that competence**. In **IMG 1a**, the operation is even more striking because concentration emerges from instability.

The Butler scene contains multiple bodies, movements, security personnel, physical proximity, and the immediate aftermath of violence. Its visual density is therefore higher and its organization less ceremonially controlled than that of **IMG 1b**. The raised fist functions as a powerful device of **perceptual extraction**.

From a dense and unstable field, one gesture becomes dominant. The image can therefore be described through the transformation:

DENSITY

↓

EMERGENCE OF A SALIENT VECTOR

↓

GESTURAL CONCENTRATION

↓

SYMBOLIC STABILIZATION.

This is essential to the image's political productivity. The visual field contains chaos, but the remembered form is clear. The historical event is complex, but the symbolic condensation is simple.

The political body therefore appears capable of producing a recognizable sign **from within contingency**. This creates a particularly powerful relation between plastic rhythm and narrative meaning.

The attack introduces rupture. The raised fist reorganizes rupture around resistance. At the plastic level:

DISPERSION → CONCENTRATION.

At the narrative level:

VULNERABILITY → RESISTANCE.

At the axiological level:

WEAKNESS → STRENGTH.

The three transformations reinforce one another. This convergence helps explain why **IMG 1a** can acquire iconic force. The image does not eliminate the surrounding disorder. Its power derives partly from the fact that the dominant sign emerges **against** that disorder.

The contrast intensifies the gesture. The fist is strong because the scene is unstable. The political body appears resistant because the surrounding configuration makes resistance necessary.

Plastic tension therefore becomes a resource for stabilization. This reveals an important characteristic of the Trumpian visual regime: disorder can be incorporated without becoming the final value of the image.

The instability is subordinated to the emergence of a center. This distinction separates **IMG 1a** from the productive chaos of **IMG 2d**.

In **IMG 1a**, chaos is the condition from which symbolic order emerges. In **IMG 2d**, chaos itself becomes part of the stabilized identity of the leader.

The comparison can therefore be expressed as:

- **TRUMP: CHAOS → CENTER**
- **MILEI: CHAOS → ENERGY**.

This is one of the clearest differences between the two plastic regimes. **IMG 1c** introduces a different form of density.

Luxury imagery may contain numerous decorative details, reflective surfaces, gilded elements, furniture, technological objects, and markers of material abundance.

The visual field can therefore be relatively rich. This richness does not necessarily produce perceptual disorder. Instead, density becomes **abundance**. This distinction is crucial.

A large number of visual elements can signify either:

- chaos;
- complexity;
- wealth;
- excess;
- information;
- or saturation.

In **IMG 1c**, material density tends to be semantically absorbed into the isotopy of luxury.

The multiplicity of objects and decorative surfaces does not primarily say:

THE WORLD IS DISORDERED.

It says:

THE WORLD IS FULL.

Filled with wealth. Filled with signs of possession. Filled with visible success. The plastic operation can therefore be represented as:

HIGH MATERIAL DENSITY

↓

ORDERED ABUNDANCE

↓

LUXURY

↓

SUCCESS.

This is particularly important because it demonstrates that visual density is not intrinsically disruptive. The same formal quantity can produce radically different meanings depending on its organization.

Trumpian luxury converts multiplicity into possession. The environment appears rich because it contains more. But the "more" remains controlled. The abundance belongs to the subject.

The objects do not compete with the leader as autonomous centers of political agency. They function as extensions of his status. The visual density therefore remains **hierarchically subordinated**.

This reinforces the winner ethos. Success becomes perceptible as the capacity to inhabit and control an environment saturated with value.

The difference from Mileian productive chaos can be formulated as:

- **TRUMP → DENSITY AS POSSESSION**
- **MILEI → DENSITY AS ACTIVATION**.

In the first, abundance confirms achieved status. In the second, multiplicity generates movement.

The MAGA universe of **IMG 1d** produces plastic rhythm through **repetition**. Repeated red caps. Repeated slogans. Repeated flags. Repeated campaign signs. Repeated chromatic units. The visual field can therefore become highly populated without losing coherence.

Indeed, multiplicity may increase coherence because the same sign returns. This creates a rhythm based on:

UNIT → REPETITION → PATTERN.

The individual cap remains recognizable. But when multiplied, it also becomes part of a collective texture. This transition is politically important.

The singular sign says:

AFFILIATION.

The repeated sign says:

COMMUNITY.

Plastic repetition therefore transforms individual political identity into visible collective scale.

The relation becomes:

ONE

↓

MANY

↓

SAME FORM

↓

COLLECTIVE COHERENCE.

This rhythm has a strong ritual dimension. Repetition produces familiarity. Familiarity produces expectation. Expectation stabilizes recognition.

The MAGA visual universe therefore becomes increasingly predictable in a positive semiotic sense: the spectator knows what belongs to it.

Red. Cap. Flag. Slogan. Crowd. The political identity develops a **visual grammar of recurrence**. This recurrence contributes to the temporal sedimentation examined earlier.

Every new appearance recalls previous appearances. Plastic repetition therefore becomes temporal repetition. The sign occupies space and history simultaneously. The cap repeats across bodies. The slogan repeats across events. The colors repeat across campaigns. The movement becomes visually durable because it is plastically repetitive.

The structure can be represented as:

PLASTIC REPETITION

↓

PERCEPTUAL FAMILIARITY

↓

MNEMONIC STABILIZATION

↓

POLITICAL IDENTITY.

This is a crucial mechanism of Trumpian visual coherence. The movement does not require a new visual language for every event. Its power partly derives from the recurrence of an already recognizable language.

The plastic rhythm is therefore **iterative rather than disruptive**.

IMG 1e presents the most internally conflictual plastic regime within the Trumpian corpus.

Fake anti-immigration imagery depends upon the construction of threat and therefore often benefits from perceptual interruption. Something must appear wrong. Unexpected. Disturbing. Out of place. The image can therefore introduce strong visual tension. This tension performs a function different from Mileian productive chaos.

It is not primarily attributed to the leader. It is attributed to the **threatening other**. This distinction is fundamental.

Within the Trumpian system, disorder tends to be **externalized**. The leader represents the possibility of order. The threatening figure represents the possibility of disorder.

The plastic opposition can therefore become:

TRUMP / MAGA → COHERENCE

versus

THREAT → DISRUPTION.

This creates a visual distribution of political values. Stability belongs to the in-group. Instability is projected onto the out-group.

The threatening image interrupts ordinary expectations precisely because it must demonstrate why intervention is necessary.

The visual shock becomes evidence within the narrative of danger. The structure can be represented as:

ORDINARY EXPECTATION

↓

VISUAL INTERRUPTION

↓

THREAT

↓

DEMAND FOR RESTORED ORDER.

The image therefore does not terminate in chaos. It uses chaos to justify order. This is structurally consistent with the broader Trumpian model. The enemy creates disruption. The leader promises restoration.

The plastic tension generated by **IMG 1e** thus remains narratively subordinated to the restorative program.

Across the Trumpian corpus, plastic rhythm can therefore assume several forms:

- CONCENTRATION in **IMG 1b**;
- STABILIZATION OF DISORDER THROUGH A DOMINANT GESTURE in **IMG 1a**;
- ORDERED ABUNDANCE in **IMG 1c**;
- ITERATIVE COHERENCE in **IMG 1d**;
- EXTERNALIZATION OF DISRUPTION in **IMG 1e**.

These differences converge toward one broader principle:

VISUAL COMPLEXITY TENDS TO BE ORGANIZED AROUND A STABILIZING STRUCTURE.

The center may be the leader. The gesture. The winner ethos. The collective symbol. The distinction between community and threat. Trumpian visuality therefore tends to reduce dispersion by constructing recognizable nuclei. This is the plastic counterpart of restorative leadership.

The Mileian corpus develops a substantially different relation to visual tension.

Rather than consistently reducing tension toward a stable center, Mileian imagery more frequently allows tension to remain **active within the visual identity itself**.

This is particularly evident in **IMG 2a**, **IMG 2b**, and **IMG 2d**.

The leader is not simply the solution to visual disruption. He may become its principal source. This difference is essential:

- Trumpian imagery often constructs the leader as the figure capable of mastering instability;
- Mileian imagery can construct the leader as the figure capable of **producing necessary instability**.

The relation becomes:

TRUMP

DISORDER → LEADER → ORDER

MILEI

OLD ORDER → LEADER → DISRUPTION → TRANSFORMATION

The role of tension is therefore inverted:

- for Trump, tension is frequently a problem to overcome;
- for Milei, tension can become an instrument.

This difference is already visible in **IMG 2a**. The chainsaw creates an anticipatory tension between object and target. Its form implies action. The object appears ready to cut. Even before actual contact occurs, the viewer can infer the transformation. This produces what may be described as **potential plastic energy**. The chainsaw contains a future action in its present form.

The relation is:

OBJECT AT REST

but

ACTION IMPLICIT IN OBJECT.

This is important because the image can remain static while generating dynamic expectation. The spectator sees a still representation but perceives an implied operation. The chainsaw therefore introduces **virtual movement** into the image.

The political meaning depends partly on this potentiality.

The object says:

THIS CAN CUT.

The political metaphor says:

THIS LEADER CAN CUT THE SYSTEM.

The plastic tension therefore lies between:

CURRENT CONTINUITY

and

ANTICIPATED INTERRUPTION.

The image is temporally charged. Its form contains a before and an after. Before the cut. After the cut. The present image occupies the threshold between them.

This makes **IMG 2a** a particularly efficient representation of disruptive competence.

The leader is shown not simply possessing an object but possessing the **capacity for transformation** condensed in that object.

In **IMG 2b**, plastic tension is transferred from the object to the body.

Milei's gestures, open mouth, facial expression, expanded arms, bodily inclination, and intense occupation of space produce a figure whose internal organization appears dynamically charged.

The body is not simply located within the image. It generates forces. The arms create directions.

The face concentrates emotional intensity. The torso may establish another vector. The body therefore becomes a **field of tensions**.

This can be represented as:

BODY

↗ ↑ ↖

MULTIPLE EXPRESSIVE VECTORS

The political subject appears to project outward. The gaze does not necessarily terminate at the body's contour. Gesture carries it beyond.

This is the plastic correlate of emotional exteriorization. Passion becomes directional. Anger acquires form. Intensity acquires extension.

The relation can therefore be expressed as:

PASSIONAL ENERGY

↓

BODILY TENSION

↓

EIDETIC EXPANSION

↓

VISUAL ACTIVATION.

This is one of the strongest points of convergence between the passional and plastic levels.

Milei's authenticity does not depend only on what he says or on the fact that he expresses anger.

It is supported by a visual organization in which the body appears unable—or unwilling—to remain within the restrained forms associated with conventional political performance.

The political body exceeds. The excess becomes visible. The spectator encounters a leader who appears **plastically uncontained**.

This can be positively interpreted as sincerity or negatively interpreted as aggression. The axiological evaluation remains contested.

But the intensity itself is difficult to ignore. This is important because the plastic level produces **salience without determining approval**.

The same bodily tension can mobilize supporters and critics. It can authenticate and alarm.

Its political productivity lies partly in this capacity to sustain opposed evaluations while remaining highly visible.

In **IMG 2c**, tension emerges primarily from opposition.

Milei and the political "caste" occupy antagonistic semantic positions.

The plastic organization can reinforce this antagonism through separation, contrast, juxtaposition, or other forms of perceptual differentiation.

The essential structure becomes:

POLE A ↔ POLE B.

The image is organized not around one uncontested center but around a **relation of incompatibility**. This is significant because antagonism requires at least two positions.

The political meaning is relational. Milei is anti-caste because the caste exists as the opposite term.

The visual text can therefore organize attention through polarization.

The gaze moves between:

- subject;
- opponent;
- symbol;
- institution;
- label;
- contrasting spaces.

The rhythm becomes **binary and conflictual**.

This can be represented as:

MILEI ↔ CASTE.

The space between the poles is not neutral. It is the site of political conflict. Plastic separation becomes ideological distance. The greater the perceived incompatibility, the stronger the anti-system identity.

This produces a visual grammar of **non-reconciliation**.

The two poles are not simply different. They are constructed as structurally opposed. The relation therefore supports the narrative opposition:

- **TRANSFORMATION / CONSERVATION;**
- **OUTSIDER / SYSTEM;**
- **FREEDOM / CASTE;**
- **NEW / OLD.**

Plastic polarization helps make these abstract oppositions perceptually manageable. Political complexity is condensed into a field of opposing forces.

The most complete expression of Mileian plastic tension appears in **IMG 2d**.

Productive chaos involves shouting, provocations, hyperbole, spectacular confrontations, accelerated circulation, and an aesthetic of communicative overload.

At the plastic level, this can translate into:

- multiple focal points;
- heterogeneous forms;
- competing vectors;
- high density;
- strong contrasts;
- fragmentation;
- irregular visual rhythms;
- reduced perceptual rest.

The result is not simply an image containing many elements.

It is a visual field in which **relations among elements remain tensional**.

The eye is continually redirected. The spectator does not settle immediately into one stable viewing position. The image demands movement.

The relation can be represented as:

POINT A ↔ POINT B ↔ POINT C ↔ POINT D ↔ POINT E.

The gaze circulates. This produces a visual analogue of platformized acceleration.

The image behaves like a feed compressed into a single field: multiple stimuli compete for attention.

The political persona becomes compatible with this perceptual regime because Milei himself functions as a generator of media events.

Provocation produces reaction. Reaction produces circulation. Circulation produces further provocation. The plastic rhythm can therefore reproduce the broader communicative rhythm:

STIMULUS

↓

REACTION

↓

NEW STIMULUS

↓

ESCALATION.

This is why "productive chaos" should not be understood as simple absence of structure. Its structure lies in **recurrent activation**. The stable element is not calm. The stable element is the production of further tension.

This is a crucial semiotic paradox:

INSTABILITY BECOMES THE STABLE PRINCIPLE OF THE SYSTEM.

At the plastic level:

TENSION REPEATS.

At the temporal level:

ACCELERATION REPEATS.

At the passional level:

INTENSITY REPEATS.

At the political level:

RUPTURE REPEATS.

The result is a coherent leadership identity constructed through the recurrence of discontinuity.

This is one of the most important findings of the comparative analysis:

- Trump stabilizes through repeated symbols;
- Milei stabilizes through repeated destabilization.

The two leaders therefore achieve recognizability through opposite plastic operations.

Trump:

REPEAT THE FORM.

Milei:

REPEAT THE FORCE.

The distinction can be represented as:

TRUMP

RECURRING OBJECT / COLOR / POSTURE → IDENTITY

MILEI

RECURRING TENSION / COLLISION / INTENSITY → IDENTITY

This helps explain why Mileian communication can remain recognizable even when its individual images are visually heterogeneous.

The identity does not depend exclusively on the recurrence of one exact form.

It can depend on the recurrence of a **tensional relation**.

The spectator recognizes not merely what is shown but **how the visual field behaves**.

This is a more abstract form of stylistic coherence.

IMG 2e again provides the internal counterpoint necessary to understand the Mileian system.

Inflation charts and economic visualizations reduce informational complexity through formal organization.

Axes stabilize space. Lines organize change.

Colors differentiate variables.

Labels identify values.

The visual field becomes more controlled.

The plastic rhythm shifts from:

MULTIPLE COMPETING INTENSITIES

to

GUIDED COMPARISON.

The spectator is encouraged to follow a trajectory.

The gaze moves according to an analytical sequence:

AXIS

↓

DATA POINT

↓

LINE

↓

COMPARISON

↓

TREND.

This is a slower and more regulated visual rhythm than the one found in **IMG 2d**.

The graph remains dynamic because the line represents change.

The difference is that change has become **disciplined**.

Chaos becomes trajectory.

The economic crisis is converted into measurable form.

This operation is politically important because it allows Milei's communication to perform a transition from:

DISRUPTION

to

LEGIBILITY.

The leader who dramatizes crisis also claims to explain it.

The leader who generates symbolic rupture also claims to provide a measurable direction.

The relation becomes:

CHAOS

↓

DIAGNOSIS

↓

GRAPHIC ORDER

↓

TRANSFORMATIVE TRAJECTORY.

This creates an internal complementarity between **IMG 2d** and **IMG 2e**.

IMG 2d produces the affective experience of a system in crisis.

IMG 2e produces the epistemic representation of that crisis and its possible transformation.

One intensifies. The other organizes. One accelerates. The other compares. One produces perceptual excess. The other reduces complexity.

Together, they construct a leadership capable of claiming both:

PASSIONAL AUTHENTICITY

and

TECHNICAL COMPETENCE.

This dual structure is essential to Milei's political persona.

Without **IMG 2e**, the corpus could risk presenting disruption as an end in itself.

The economic visualizations instead show that disruption is narratively oriented toward another configuration.

The chaos is described as productive because it is supposed to lead somewhere.

Plastic order therefore returns, but as the **result or instrument of transformation**, not as the preservation of an inherited structure.

This is the crucial distinction from Trump.

Trumpian order is predominantly restorative.

Mileian order is predominantly **post-disruptive**.

The first says:

RETURN TO THE VALUED FORM.

The second says:

BREAK THE EXISTING FORM SO THAT ANOTHER TRAJECTORY CAN EMERGE.

The comparison between the two subcorpora reveals that **visual density** itself can become politically meaningful.

Density concerns the quantity and concentration of perceptually salient elements within the visual field.

A low-density image can create:

- clarity;
- isolation;
- monumentality;
- concentration.

A high-density image can create:

- abundance;
- collectivity;
- complexity;

- overload;
- chaos.

Density has no fixed semantic value. Its political meaning depends upon how it is organized.

The corpus demonstrates at least four different functions of density.

1. DENSITY AS COLLECTIVITY

In **IMG 1d**, repetition of caps, flags, and supporters can transform density into visible political mass. The crowd says:

WE ARE MANY.

2. DENSITY AS ABUNDANCE

In **IMG 1c**, multiple luxury signs can transform density into wealth. The environment says:

THERE IS MORE THAN ORDINARY LIFE PROVIDES.

3. DENSITY AS THREAT

In **IMG 1e**, visual concentration or spectacularization of threatening elements can intensify the perception of danger. The image says:

THE PROBLEM IS PRESENT AND SALIENT.

4. DENSITY AS ACTIVATION

In **IMG 2d**, competing stimuli transform density into communicative acceleration. The image says:

EVERYTHING IS HAPPENING AT ONCE.

These differences demonstrate that plastic density must always be interpreted relationally. The same formal property can support radically different ideological meanings.

This is particularly important methodologically because it prevents the analysis from assigning universal meanings to perceptual categories.

The relevant question is always:

- DENSITY OF WHAT?
- ORGANIZED HOW?
- CONNECTED TO WHICH ACTORS?
- WITHIN WHICH NARRATIVE?
- VALUED POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY?

Only through these relations does plastic density acquire political significance.

A further distinction useful for the corpus is that between **tension and relaxation**.

Visual tension emerges when the image produces unresolved directional, chromatic, spatial, or formal relations.

Relaxation emerges when these relations appear stabilized.

The two can be represented as:

- **TENSION → EXPECTATION / INSTABILITY / ACTIVATION**;
- **RELAXATION → COMPLETION / STABILITY / CONTROL**.

Trumpian imagery tends more frequently to transform tension into relaxation.

The Butler event moves from attack toward the stabilized raised fist.

Political threat is answered by restoration.

The crowd is unified through repeated signs.

Luxury is organized as completed possession.

Mileian imagery tends more frequently to preserve tension as an active value.

The chainsaw remains oriented toward a target.

The body remains expanded.

The caste remains an antagonist.

Productive chaos remains unresolved.

Even the graph retains movement because the trajectory continues.

This produces a fundamental opposition:

TRUMP

TENSION → RESOLUTION

MILEI

TENSION → CONTINUATION / TRANSFORMATION

This difference corresponds closely to their respective political temporalities.

Trump's narrative seeks the completion of restoration.

Milei's narrative depends upon continued rupture with the inherited system.

The Trumpian ideal tends toward a recovered condition.

The Mileian ideal tends toward an ongoing process of transformation.

Plastic rhythm therefore becomes another site where political temporality is encoded.

Plastic rhythm also affects the spectator at a bodily level. A highly centralized image can encourage visual stillness. The gaze settles. A fragmented image encourages ocular movement. The gaze travels.

A repeated pattern can create perceptual rhythm. A strong diagonal can produce directional anticipation. A high-contrast field can generate alertness.

The political image therefore organizes not only cognition but **micro-movements of perception**.

This is especially relevant in digital environments where images compete for extremely short intervals of attention.

The visual text must quickly establish a relation with the spectator's gaze.

Trumpian and Mileian imagery often do so differently.

Trumpian visuality frequently produces what can be described as **centripetal attention**.

The gaze moves toward a center.

Mileian visuality more frequently produces **centrifugal or vectorial attention**.

The gaze is pushed across the field.

The distinction can be represented as:

TRUMP

→ ● ←

MILEI

← ↗ ↑ ↘ →

The first concentrates. The second disperses and activates. This difference is particularly evident when comparing **IMG 1b** and **IMG 2b**.

Trump's dominant posture tends to make the body a perceptual destination.

Milei's expansive gesture tends to make the body a perceptual source from which vectors emerge.

This is a subtle but important distinction.

Trump:

GAZE → LEADER.

Milei:

LEADER → DIRECTION OF GAZE.

The Trumpian body attracts. The Mileian body projects.

The first becomes a center of gravity. The second becomes a generator of movement.

This difference reinforces the broader distinction between **monument and force** developed in the eidetic analysis.

The importance of plastic rhythm becomes even greater when the images are considered within digital platforms.

The feed is itself a rhythmic environment. Scroll. Pause. Swipe. Click. Replay. Share. The image must interact with these interface rhythms.

A centralized, highly recognizable Trumpian sign can produce a **pause through immediate recognition**.

A highly tense Mileian image can produce a **pause through perceptual interruption**.

The two strategies can therefore be summarized as:

TRUMP

FAMILIARITY INTERRUPTS SCROLLING.

MILEI

INTENSITY INTERRUPTS SCROLLING.

This difference parallels the chromatic distinction identified earlier between recognition and activation.

Both are adapted to the same structural problem:

HOW CAN A POLITICAL IMAGE OCCUPY ATTENTION

WITHIN A COMPETITIVE VISUAL ENVIRONMENT?

Trumpian communication often answers through iconic stability.

Mileian communication often answers through disruptive salience.

The first creates a visual anchor. The second creates a visual event.

The distinction can be formulated as:

- TRUMP → IMAGE AS ANCHOR
- MILEI → IMAGE AS EVENT.

This does not mean that Trump lacks spectacular events or Milei lacks stable icons. **IMG 1a** is clearly event-based, and **IMG 2a** has become a highly stable symbolic object.

Rather, the formula identifies two dominant perceptual tendencies.

Trump's signs tend to become **objects to which attention returns**.

Milei's signs tend to become **forces capable of repeatedly generating attention**.

At this point, the three principal dimensions of the plastic level —topological, eidetic, and chromatic— can be integrated with rhythm and density.

The Trumpian subcorpus can be represented through the following dominant relations:

- **IMG 1a**
  instability → upward vector → gestural concentration → iconic resistance;
- **IMG 1b**
  centrality → vertical compactness → controlled hierarchy → monumental authority;
- **IMG 1c**
  material density → polished and completed forms → gold / luminosity → successful exceptionality;
- **IMG 1d**
  distributed repetition → simple recurring form → patriotic chromatic coherence → collective belonging;
- **IMG 1e**
  perceptual interruption → threatening alterity → visual tension → demand for restored boundaries.

The Mileian subcorpus presents a different organization:

- **IMG 2a**
  projective direction → cutting form → object salience → anticipated rupture;
- **IMG 2b**
  bodily expansion → multiple vectors → chromatic contrast → passional intensity;
- **IMG 2c**
  polarized positions → formal differentiation → perceptual opposition → anti-system antagonism;
- **IMG 2d**
  multicentricity → fragmentation → chromatic turbulence → productive chaos;
- **IMG 2e**
  geometric ordering → directional line → controlled differentiation → measurable transformation.

These relations show that the plastic level does not merely duplicate what has already been established narratively. It provides an additional layer of evidence.

The same political distinction reappears through different semiotic substances.

At the axiological level:

RESTORATION / RUPTURE.

At the narrative level:

RECOVER / DISMANTLE.

At the passional level:

PRIDE-CONFIDENCE / ANGER-URGENCY.

At the temporal level:

RETURN / BREAK.

At the topological level:

CENTER / VECTOR.

At the eidetic level:

STABLE FORM / TRANSFORMATIVE FORCE.

At the chromatic level:

RECOGNITION / INTENSIFICATION.

At the rhythmic level:

CONCENTRATION / ACTIVATION.

The recurrence of the opposition across different levels is analytically significant because it suggests that the two leadership models possess a relatively high degree of **semiotic coherence**.

Their identities are not constructed by isolated signs. They emerge through the convergence of multiple formal and semantic structures.

The comparison can therefore be represented as two semiotic chains:

TRUMP

CENTER

↓

VERTICALITY

↓

COMPACTNESS

↓

CHROMATIC RECOGNITION

↓

CONCENTRATION

↓

STABILITY

↓

RESTORATION

MILEI

VECTOR

↓

ANGULARITY

↓

EXPANSION

↓

CHROMATIC CONTRAST

↓

TENSION

↓

TRANSFORMATION

↓

RUPTURE

These chains should not be treated as mechanical equivalences. They are analytical syntheses of recurrent tendencies. Their value lies in showing how different semiotic levels can converge around broader political configurations.

The analysis also reveals that the plastic level is inseparable from **political performance**.

Trump and Milei do not merely appear inside visual structures created externally by photographers, editors, campaign teams, media organizations, or platform users.

Their bodies and objects actively participate in producing those structures.

Trump raises the fist. Milei holds the chainsaw.

Trump adopts a dominant posture. Milei expands his gestures.

The plastic form is therefore partly **performed by the political actor**.

This creates an important relation:

POLITICAL BODY

↓

GESTURE / POSTURE / OBJECT

↓

VISUAL FORM

↓

MEDIA IMAGE

↓

CIRCULATING POLITICAL SIGN.

The leader’s body becomes a material resource for visual semiotization.

This is especially important within platformized politics because bodily performances can be designed—or retrospectively selected—for their capacity to produce memorable frames.

A gesture that lasts only seconds can become an image that circulates for years.

The transient body becomes a durable plastic sign.

The relation is:

EPHEMERAL PERFORMANCE

↓

VISUAL CAPTURE

↓

FORMAL STABILIZATION

↓

REPETITION

↓

POLITICAL MEMORY.

This connects the plastic level directly to the temporal analysis developed in the previous chapter.

The body produces form. The image preserves form. Circulation repeats form. Memory attaches meaning to form. Political identity emerges through the accumulation of these operations.

A final issue concerns the capacity of plastic organization to make political values appear **perceptually self-evident**:

- when a leader is repeatedly central, centrality can begin to feel natural;
- when a political movement is repeatedly represented through the same colors, those colors can begin to feel inseparable from the movement;
- when rupture is repeatedly visualized through cutting, angularity, tension, and expansion, disruption can begin to appear as the natural mode of that leadership.

This process does not eliminate cultural mediation. On the contrary, it is produced through repetition. But repetition can obscure its own constructed character.

The relation becomes:

FORMAL CHOICE → REPETITION → FAMILIARITY → NATURALIZATION

↙ ↘

“THIS IS SIMPLY WHAT THE LEADER IS LIKE”.

Plastic organization therefore contributes to ethos by transforming contingent representational choices into apparently intrinsic properties of the political subject.

Trump appears naturally monumental. Milei appears naturally disruptive. These effects are produced through recurrent semiotic operations. The analytical task is precisely to recover those operations. The image must be denaturalized.

The question becomes:

- WHICH VISUAL RELATIONS MAKE MONUMENTALITY APPEAR NATURAL?
- WHICH PLASTIC STRUCTURES MAKE DISRUPTION APPEAR AUTHENTIC?

This is where plastic analysis becomes politically important. It reveals that visual credibility is constructed not only through statements about the leader but through the organization of perception itself. The plastic analysis conducted across Sections 8.1–8.4 allows the two visual regimes to be reconstructed with greater precision.

Trumpian visuality tends toward **centripetal organization**. The leader, the gesture, the symbol, or the collective identity functions as a point of perceptual convergence. Even when instability enters the image, it tends to be reorganized around a stabilizing sign.

The plastic world therefore favors:

- centrality;
- verticality;
- compactness;
- repetition;

- chromatic coherence;
- symbolic closure;
- controlled hierarchy.

Mileian visuality tends more strongly toward **vectorial and tensional organization**. The body, object, opponent, or data trajectory generates movement across the visual field. Even when order enters the image, as in **IMG 2e**, it tends to represent transformation rather than static completion.

The plastic world therefore favors:

- directionality;
- angularity;
- expansion;
- collision;
- contrast;
- fragmentation;
- trajectory.

The distinction can ultimately be summarized as:

- **TRUMP: THE POLITICS OF THE VISUAL CENTER**
  Political authority becomes visible through the capacity to **concentrate, stabilize, occupy, protect, and monumentalize.**
- **MILEI: THE POLITICS OF THE VISUAL VECTOR**
  Political authority becomes visible through the capacity to **project, cut, expand, collide, destabilize, and redirect.**

The two regimes correspond directly to the broader categories developed in the study:

- Trump's restorative leadership requires the perceptual possibility of a center that can be recovered and stabilized;
- Milei's disruptive leadership requires the perceptual possibility of a force capable of transforming an inherited configuration.

The distinction is therefore not simply stylistic. It concerns the **plastic representation of political agency itself**.

Trumpian agency is represented predominantly as mastery. Mileian agency predominantly as intervention. One controls the field. The other changes the field. One becomes the center. The other becomes the vector.

This opposition provides the most concise synthesis of the plastic level and prepares the transition toward the next analytical problem: **how these already structured signs change meaning through circulation, repetition, manipulation, appropriation, and collective reinterpretation**.

The plastic form makes the political sign recognizable, but recognizability does not guarantee semantic stability. On the contrary, precisely because a sign is recognizable, it can be extracted from its original context, repeated in new environments, memetically transformed, ideologically appropriated, or connected to new events while retaining enough formal continuity to remain identifiable.

The next level of the analysis must therefore move from the question:

HOW IS POLITICAL MEANING VISUALLY ORGANIZED?

to a different one:

WHAT HAPPENS TO THAT MEANING WHEN

THE SIGN BEGINS TO CIRCULATE, REPEAT, AND CHANGE?

This transition leads directly to the processes of **resemanticization and mutation**, where the corpus can be examined not only as a system of structured visual texts but as a set of **dynamic signs whose meanings are continuously renegotiated within the digital media ecosystem**.

IX. RESEMANTIZATION, MUTATION, AND CIRCULATION

9.1. REPETITION, REFRAMING, REMEDIATION, EDITING, REINTERPRETATION

Political images do not remain semantically fixed after their first appearance. Once they enter the media ecosystem, they become exposed to processes of repetition, reframing, remediation, editing, commentary, parody, contestation, and collective reinterpretation.

A political image can therefore change function without necessarily changing its visible form.

The same photograph can be used as:

- documentation;
- celebration;
- criticism;
- evidence;
- meme;
- propaganda;
- historical memory;
- symbolic shorthand.

This transformation is particularly significant in platformized communication because circulation multiplies contexts.

An image originally produced in one situation may later appear:

- in a news article;
- on a campaign page;
- in a supporter’s post;
- in an oppositional meme;

- inside a short-form video;
- in a retrospective thread;
- in a fact-check;
- in political advertising;
- in a journalistic archive.

The sign moves. And when the sign moves, its meaning can move with it.

The basic process can be represented as:

ORIGINAL TEXT

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

NEW CONTEXT

↓

NEW RELATIONS

↓

POSSIBLE RESEMANTIZATION

Resemanticization therefore concerns the transformation of meaning produced when a sign enters a new interpretive environment.

The image does not need to become visually unrecognizable.

Indeed, one of the conditions that makes resemanticization politically powerful is often **continuity of form combined with change of meaning**.

The same sign remains identifiable. Its function changes.

The relation becomes:

FORMAL CONTINUITY + CONTEXTUAL CHANGE

= SEMANTIC MUTATION.

This is one of the central mechanisms of digital political imagery.

The corpus provides particularly clear examples because many of its signs possess high formal recognizability:

- the raised fist;
- the MAGA cap;
- the luxury aircraft;
- the anti-immigration image;
- the chainsaw;
- the angry body;
- the caste opposition;
- the productive-chaos performance;
- the inflation graph.

These texts are therefore capable of surviving movement across communicative environments while retaining enough identity to remain politically legible.

The analysis of resemanticization must consequently distinguish at least three levels:

- THE SIGN AS ORIGINALLY PRODUCED,
- THE SIGN AS CIRCULATED,
- THE SIGN AS REINTERPRETED.

These levels do not always coincide.

A political actor may produce an image with one preferred meaning. Journalists may frame it differently. Supporters may intensify its preferred interpretation. Opponents may invert it. Meme cultures may transform it into something partially autonomous. Platform algorithms may increase the visibility of some reinterpretations more than others.

The resulting political meaning is therefore **distributed across multiple enunciative acts**.

This makes contemporary political communication increasingly difficult to understand through a simple sender-message-receiver model.

The politician is not the sole producer of meaning. Meaning emerges through a **circulatory chain**.

The process can be represented as:

POLITICAL ACTOR

↓

ORIGINAL SIGN

↓

MEDIA REFRAMING

↓

PLATFORM CIRCULATION

↓

USER RE-ENUNCIATION

↓

NEW POLITICAL MEANING.

The sign becomes socially productive because it can be appropriated.

This is particularly important in populist communication, where political identity often depends on high recognizability, emotional intensity, and the capacity to travel beyond institutional settings.

Trump and Milei both benefit from signs capable of circulation, but their signs mutate according to different dominant logics.

Trumpian signs tend to be resemanticized around **strength, success, patriotic identity, antagonism, and restoration**.

Mileian signs tend to mutate around **rupture, anti-caste conflict, productive chaos, authenticity, and libertarian transformation**.

The comparative distinction can initially be represented as:

TRUMP

RESEMANTIZATION TENDS TO STABILIZE A MYTH

OF THE STRONG, SUCCESSFUL, RESTORATIVE LEADER

MILEI

RESEMANTIZATION TENDS TO STABILIZE A MYTH

OF THE DISRUPTIVE, ANTI-SYSTEM, TRANSFORMATIVE LEADER

The key point is that stabilization can emerge through mutation.

This apparent paradox is fundamental.

The surface meaning changes. The deeper leadership structure may become stronger.

A gesture can acquire new interpretations while continuing to reinforce the ethos of strength.

A chainsaw can be used in different contexts while continuing to reinforce rupture.

A graph can be repurposed while continuing to reinforce technical competence.

Resemanticization therefore does not necessarily dissolve identity.

It can **expand it**.

9.2. RESEMANTIZATION

Resemanticization refers to the process through which an already recognizable sign acquires a new or modified meaning as a result of changed context, circulation, narrative framing, collective interpretation, or media reuse.

The sign does not necessarily lose its previous meaning. More often, new meanings are layered onto earlier ones. The process is therefore frequently cumulative rather than substitutive.

A useful distinction can be made among:

- **SEMANTIC EXPANSION**
  The sign retains its original meaning but acquires additional associations.
- **SEMANTIC SHIFT**
  The dominant meaning gradually moves toward another function.
- **SEMANTIC INVERSION**
  A sign is reinterpreted against its original preferred value.
- **SEMANTIC CONDENSATION**
  Multiple meanings become compressed into a single recognizable symbolic form.

These processes can coexist. The Trumpian and Mileian corpora provide different examples.

The transformation of **IMG 1a** is one of the clearest cases of resemanticization in the corpus: : from event documentation to iconic resilience.

At the moment of the assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania, the image belongs initially to a specific news event. Its first function is strongly referential.

It documents what has happened. Trump has been attacked. He is surrounded by security personnel. He raises his fist.

The image therefore initially participates in the representation of a contingent historical event. The first semantic level can be represented as:

ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT → DOCUMENTARY IMAGE → NEWS VALUE.

Circulation rapidly opens additional meanings. The raised fist begins to be interpreted not only as something Trump did but as evidence of what Trump **is**. The image shifts from:

EVENT toward CHARACTER.

The relation becomes:

HE RAISED HIS FIST AFTER BEING ATTACKED

↓

HE IS RESILIENT

↓

HE IS STRONG

↓

HE IS A FIGHTER.

This is a major semantic transformation. A punctual bodily action becomes a durative character trait. The image therefore moves from **episodic meaning** to **ethotic meaning**.

The event describes one moment. The resemanticized image describes the person. This process can be represented as:

PUNCTUAL ACT

↓

REPEATED CIRCULATION

↓

ABSTRACTION OF TRAIT

↓

ETHOS.

The more the image circulates in connection with resilience, defiance, strength, or survival, the more these associations can become sedimented.

The image ceases to require complete narrative reconstruction. The gesture increasingly performs the meaning directly.

This is an example of semantic condensation.

The complexity of the event contracts into:

FIST = RESISTANCE.

The image may then acquire an even broader political function.

Trump's personal resistance can become a metaphor for the resistance of the political movement.

The semantic scale expands:

TRUMP RESISTS

↓

MAGA RESISTS

↓

AMERICA RESISTS.

The individual body becomes collectively appropriable.

This transformation is particularly important in populist politics because leader and people are often represented as sharing the same conflict.

The attack on the leader can therefore be interpreted symbolically as an attack on the political community he claims to represent.

The image acquires a collective layer.

The semantic trajectory becomes:

INDIVIDUAL BODY

↓

LEADER

↓

MOVEMENT

↓

NATION / PEOPLE.

This expansion dramatically increases the sign's political density.

IMG 1a is no longer simply about Trump's body. It can become a representation of collective perseverance. This is one of the mechanisms of iconicization.

The image moves from:

THIS HAPPENED TO HIM

toward:

THIS REPRESENTS US.

At the same time, oppositional circulation can produce semantic inversion.

The same image may be criticized as:

- spectacularization;
- heroic self-construction;
- political exploitation;
- personalization of violence.

Thus the image can support competing readings while retaining its central recognizability. This is crucial.

Resemanticization does not require interpretive consensus. The sign becomes politically powerful when it becomes a **shared object of disagreement**.

Supporters and critics may assign opposite values. Both recognize the same image.

The image becomes culturally central because the conflict occurs **around it**.

The relation can therefore be expressed as:

SHARED RECOGNITION + CONFLICTING EVALUATION

= HIGH POLITICAL CENTRALITY.

This mechanism is common to many strongly iconic political texts.

The resemanticization of **IMG 1b** is less event-dependent.

Trump's posture of dominance emerges across multiple rallies, debates, photographs, and public appearances. The process is therefore cumulative.

At an initial level, the image may simply show:

- frontality;
- centrality;
- low-angle framing;
- dominant posture.

These are formal properties. Repeated circulation can gradually transform them into a typified political identity.

The movement becomes:

DOMINANT POSTURE → REPEATED DOMINANT POSTURE

↙ ↘

RECOGNIZABLE BODILY STYLE → CHARISMATIC LEADER TYPE.

The sign therefore shifts from:

WHAT THE BODY IS DOING

to

WHAT KIND OF LEADER THIS BODY REPRESENTS.

This is a process of **semantic abstraction**. The specific event becomes less important.

The posture becomes representative of a broader persona. Trump is no longer simply standing in a certain way. He is visually coded as:

- strong;
- central;
- dominant;
- in control.

The visual text becomes a **template of leadership**. This allows different images to reinforce one another. A new dominant posture is not interpreted from zero.

It enters an already stabilized field. The earlier images supply meaning to the later one. The later image confirms the earlier interpretation.

The process becomes circular:

PAST POSTURE → PRESENT EXPECTATION

and

PRESENT POSTURE → CONFIRMATION OF PAST ETHOS.

Resemanticization here works through accumulation rather than dramatic mutation. The image becomes increasingly abstract. The specific body becomes the **type of the strong leader**.

This abstraction contributes to monumentalization. Trump's physical presence begins to stand for an idea of political authority.

The resemanticization of **IMG 1c** operates through a particularly clear shift between social domains. Airplanes, gilded interiors, personal wealth, and luxury originally belong primarily to the semantic universe of:

- business;
- status;
- celebrity;
- economic success;
- personal branding.

When Trump enters politics, these signs can be transferred into another domain.

The process becomes:

ECONOMIC SUCCESS

↓

CELEBRITY-BUSINESS IDENTITY

↓

POLITICAL RESEMANTIZATION

↓

COMPETENCE / INDEPENDENCE / CAPACITY TO GOVERN.

This is a classic case of **cross-domain semantic transfer**. Success in one field becomes evidence of competence in another.

The transfer is not logically guaranteed. A successful businessman is not automatically a successful political leader. Political communication can construct the connection semiotically.

The luxury environment becomes proof-like.

Its meaning changes from:

HE IS RICH

toward:

HE KNOWS HOW TO WIN.

And from:

HE KNOWS HOW TO WIN

toward:

HE CAN MAKE THE COUNTRY WIN.

The semantic progression can therefore be represented as:

PERSONAL WEALTH

↓

PERSONAL SUCCESS

↓

GENERALIZED COMPETENCE

↓

NATIONAL POLITICAL PROMISE.

This transformation is central to Trump's winner mythology. The leader's material environment becomes an **argument by visual analogy**.

His life is presented as the completed version of the future he promises to the nation. Luxury therefore moves from biography to politics. The aircraft and gold cease to be simply signs of private wealth.

They become signs of **politically usable success**. This is resemanticization through ideological appropriation of biography.

The MAGA cap in **IMG 1d** undergoes another type of transformation. At the most immediate level, it is campaign merchandise. A wearable object. A carrier of text. A red cap. Its initial function may appear straightforward:

DISPLAY SUPPORT FOR TRUMP / MAGA.

Repetition transforms the object into something much more complex. The cap becomes:

- identity marker;
- group membership device;
- ideological shorthand;
- media icon;
- historical sign;
- object of support;
- object of hostility;
- meme element;
- portable political boundary.

The semantic trajectory can therefore be represented as:

MERCHANDISE

↓

POLITICAL MARKER

↓

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

↓

CULTURAL SYMBOL.

This is an example of **semantic thickening**.

The sign does not lose its material function. It continues to be a cap. But its political associations become increasingly dense.

The object begins to organize social recognition. The wearer can be categorized politically before speaking. The cap therefore becomes a device of **instant political legibility**.

The relation becomes:

OBJECT → IDENTITY.

This is particularly significant in platform environments because the object can function even when verbal political discourse is absent.

A photograph containing the cap already activates a political frame. The sign therefore becomes an **identity infrastructure**. It allows political belonging to travel with the body. The body wears the political world.

This is one of the strongest cases in the corpus of a material object becoming a persistent ideological sign through circulation.

The resemanticization of **IMG 1e** is especially important for the analysis of post-truth. Fake images depicting immigrants allegedly “eating cats” do not remain confined to the literal truth-value of the represented scene.

At an initial stage, the content may be presented or circulated as evidence supporting a specific claim. The first relation is:

IMAGE → CLAIM ABOUT IMMIGRANTS.

Once the factual status is challenged, one might expect the sign to lose political relevance. This does not necessarily happen.

The image can mutate. It can become:

- meme;
- provocation;

- ironic shorthand;
- symbol of immigration anxiety;
- marker of political polarization;
- reference to an existing antagonistic narrative.

The relation therefore shifts from:

IS THIS TRUE?

toward:

WHAT POLITICAL WORLD DOES THIS IMAGE ACTIVATE?

This is the crucial transformation. The sign can survive factual disconfirmation by changing function.

It moves from PROPOSITIONAL EVIDENCE toward IDEOLOGICAL SYMBOL.

The semantic sequence becomes:

FABRICATED IMAGE

↓

VIRAL CLAIM

↓

CONTESTATION

↓

MEMETIC / POLARIZING CIRCULATION

↓

STABILIZED SYMBOL OF ANTAGONISM.

This is a particularly clear example of **veridictory resemanticization**. The sign's relationship with truth changes.

It may cease to function primarily as a supposedly documentary text and begin to function as a marker of identity or conflict.

This does not make its factual status irrelevant. On the contrary, the distinction between false representation and symbolic persistence is essential.

The image's political effectiveness after debunking demonstrates that **semiotic life can exceed propositional truth-value**.

This is one of the defining features of post-truth environments. The sign can continue operating because what matters to its later circulation is no longer exclusively whether the depicted event occurred.

Its function becomes:

- TO NAME A THREAT;
- TO MARK A SIDE;
- TO PROVOKE;
- TO POLARIZE;
- TO REACTIVATE AN ANTAGONISTIC FRAME.

The image therefore becomes a **condensator of political alterity**. The complexity of immigration policy is reduced to an emotionally intense symbolic scene.

Resemanticization converts a false representation into a durable cultural reference. This process is not unique to Trumpian communication, but **IMG 1e** provides a particularly clear example.

The Mileian corpus follows an analogous process, but its dominant semantic mutations revolve around the progressive conversion of disruptive elements into stable signs of leadership.

This is paradoxical. The more frequently rupture is repeated, the more recognizable it becomes. The more recognizable it becomes, the more it risks becoming conventional.

Mileian resemanticization therefore continually negotiates the tension between:

NOVELTY

and

STABILIZATION.

This tension is central to **IMG 2a**, from mechanical object to political doctrine. The chainsaw begins as a material tool. Its ordinary function belongs to practical action. Cutting wood. Separating material. Producing discontinuity through mechanical force. Within Milei's political communication, however, the object is resemanticized.

Its material function becomes political metaphor. The transformation can be represented as:

CHAINSAW AS TOOL

↓

CUTTING

↓

METAPHORICAL TRANSFER

↓

CUTTING STATE EXPENDITURE / BUREAUCRACY / POLITICAL PRIVILEGE

↓

ANTI-CASTE POLITICAL SYMBOL.

This is already a major semantic shift. The object leaves the domain of practical labor and enters the domain of ideology. Circulation produces further transformation. The chainsaw gradually becomes inseparable from Milei himself.

The relation moves from MILEI HOLDS A CHAINSAW

toward THE CHAINSAW REPRESENTS MILEI.

The object becomes an **attribute**. This is comparable to traditional iconographic systems in which a figure is identified through a recurring object.

The political leader acquires an emblem. The chainsaw therefore becomes a device of rapid recognition. The sequence is:

OBJECT

↓

METAPHOR

↓

POLITICAL EMBLEM

↓

LEADERSHIP IDENTITY.

The process goes even further. As Milei moves from candidate to office-holder, the chainsaw can become a shorthand for governmental action.

The object begins to signify not merely campaign promise but actual political cuts.

Its semantic field expands:

CAMPAIGN PERFORMANCE

↓

PROGRAM

↓

GOVERNMENTAL STYLE

↓

HISTORICAL MARKER OF MILEIAN POLITICS.

This is a remarkable resemanticization because the physical object becomes the condensed name of a wider policy orientation.

The sign begins to replace complex institutional language. Instead of explaining every reform, public discourse can refer to “the chainsaw”.

The metaphor acquires autonomy. This is a case of **political lexicalization through visual symbolism**.

The object becomes a word-like sign in political discourse. Its semantic efficiency derives from its ability to condense:

- cuts;
- anti-state politics;
- anti-caste ideology;
- fiscal austerity;
- rupture;
- Milei himself.

The chainsaw therefore becomes one of the highest-density signs in the corpus.

The bodily anger represented in **IMG 2b** undergoes another important resemanticization.

Within conventional political norms, shouting, expansive gesture, intense facial expression, or apparent loss of composure can be interpreted negatively.

They may signify:

- instability;
- aggression;
- lack of restraint;
- lack of institutional decorum.

Mileian communication can invert this reading. The same signs are resemanticized as:

- sincerity;
- passion;
- courage;
- anti-formality;
- refusal of political hypocrisy.

The semantic inversion can be represented as:

EXCESS

↓

(traditional reading)

LACK OF CONTROL

but within Mileian code:

PROOF OF AUTHENTICITY.

This is one of the most important value inversions in the corpus. A trait conventionally associated with political weakness can become political capital. The transformation depends upon the anti-establishment frame.

If established politics is represented as:

- artificial;
- scripted;
- hypocritical;
- over-mediated;
- empty,

then lack of conventional restraint can become evidence of distance from that system.

The structure becomes:

FORMALITY = CASTE

therefore

ANTI-FORMALITY = AUTHENTICITY.

The body participates directly in ideological inversion. Anger ceases to be merely an emotion. It becomes a political credential. This is a powerful example of resemanticization because the visible behavior itself does not need to change.

What changes is the **code through which it is interpreted**.

The political struggle therefore occurs at the level of semantic framing.

Milei's communication works to stabilize the preferred interpretation.

The more the bodily excess is repeated and associated with anti-caste identity, the more it can become legible as an ethos. The process becomes:

ANGER

↓

REPETITION

↓

ANTI-INSTITUTIONAL FRAME

↓

AUTHENTICITY

↓

LEADERSHIP STYLE.

The term and imagery of the “caste” in **IMG 2c** involve another powerful resemanticization. A political class can be described neutrally or institutionally (parties, politicians, officials, representatives). Once reclassified as “caste”, however, the same actors acquire a radically different semantic position.

The category introduces:

- closure;
- privilege;
- distance;
- self-interest;
- reproduction;
- parasitism;
- moral illegitimacy.

The semantic shift can be represented as:

POLITICAL CLASS

↓

“CASTE”

↓

MORALIZED CLOSED SYSTEM

↓

LEGITIMATE TARGET OF RUPTURE.

This transformation is essential because it converts ordinary political competition into **systemic antagonism**. The opponent is no longer simply wrong. The opponent is structurally illegitimate.

The term changes the narrative status of the actor. A rival party can be defeated electorally. A "caste" must be dismantled.

The semantic category therefore determines the appropriate political action.

The sequence becomes:

CATEGORY

↓

VALUE

↓

NARRATIVE ROLE

↓

PROGRAM OF ACTION.

This demonstrates the performative power of resemanticization. To rename the political class is to reorganize the political field. The word creates a different object.

The same institutional actors now appear through a new moral topology. This transformation is central to the construction of Milei's outsider identity.

He becomes legitimate because he is not part of the category he has negatively redefined.

The "caste" therefore produces both antagonist and protagonist simultaneously.

It says:

THEY ARE CASTE

and by implication:

I AM NOT.

The semantic boundary constructs the leader.

The resemanticization of **IMG 2d** is perhaps the clearest expression of the Mileian logic.

At first glance, shouting, provocation, hyperbole, media conflict, visual fragmentation, and constant confrontation can be interpreted as communication failure.

Disorder. Noise. Excess. Lack of coherence. The political operation consists in transforming this negative interpretation.

The semantic movement becomes:

CHAOS

↓

(traditional negative reading)

DISORGANIZATION

but within Mileian code:

ENERGY

AUTHENTICITY

BREAK WITH FORMAL POLITICS

TRANSFORMATIVE FORCE.

The critical transition is:

CHAOS

↓

PRODUCTIVE CHAOS.

The adjective changes the entire semantic status of the phenomenon.

Chaos is no longer absence of political order.

It becomes the mechanism through which an obsolete order can be destabilized.

The relation is:

DISORDER

↓

RESEMANTIZATION

↓

TRANSITIONAL ENERGY

↓

POLITICAL PRODUCTIVITY.

This is structurally analogous to the resemanticization of anger in **IMG 2b**.

A conventionally negative trait becomes positive within the disruptive value system.

The broader pattern is:

- EXCESS → AUTHENTICITY;
- CHAOS → TRANSFORMATION;
- AGGRESSION → COURAGE;
- RUPTURE → LIBERATION.

Mileian political semiotics therefore depends heavily on **axiological inversion**. Values are not merely added. Existing evaluations are reversed. What conventional politics calls disorder, the disruptive leader can call vitality. What conventional institutions call irresponsibility, supporters may call courage. What critics call destruction, the political narrative can call necessary dismantling.

The conflict is therefore a struggle over the value assigned to the same sign. This is one of the most important mechanisms through which populist communication can transform criticism into reinforcement.

The opponent says:

THIS IS CHAOTIC.

The Mileian code can respond:

EXACTLY, BECAUSE THE OLD SYSTEM MUST BE DESTABILIZED.

The criticism is absorbed. This can be described as **semantic counter-appropriation**. A negative label is taken up and placed inside a positive narrative. The sign becomes resistant to criticism because the criticism confirms the preferred identity. This is a particularly powerful form of resemanticization.

The inflation charts of **IMG 2e** undergo another kind of semantic transformation. At the most basic level, a graph is an instrument for representing data. Its conventional function is informational. It organizes values. Makes comparison possible. Shows trends. Within Milei's media communication, the graph can become more than a technical device.

It can be theatricalized. Displayed. Pointed at. Simplified. Placed inside confrontational rhetoric. Used as proof against previous governments. Shared in platform environments.

The semantic trajectory can therefore be represented as:

DATA VISUALIZATION

↓

ECONOMIC EXPLANATION

↓

POLITICAL DIAGNOSIS

↓

MEDIA PERFORMANCE

↓

IDEOLOGICAL LEGITIMATION.

The graph moves from information to performance. This is a crucial shift. Technicality itself becomes spectacular.

The image says not only:

HERE ARE THE NUMBERS.

It can also say:

I AM THE SUBJECT WHO UNDERSTANDS THE NUMBERS.

The graph therefore contributes to the leader's ethos. Economic knowledge becomes embodied. The political subject stands beside the evidence. Explains it. Frames it. Uses it against opponents.

The chart becomes an **epistemic prop**. This does not eliminate its informational function. Rather, information is resemanticized as a component of leadership performance.

The result is a hybrid:

TECHNICAL OBJECT + MEDIA SPECTACLE.

This hybridization is particularly important for Milei because it allows a leader strongly associated with emotional excess to also claim rational expertise.

The graph performs the opposite semiotic function of the shout. The two can coexist.

Anger says:

I FEEL THE CRISIS AUTHENTICALLY.

The graph says:

I UNDERSTAND THE CRISIS TECHNICALLY.

Together:

I FEEL + I KNOW.

This dual competence strengthens the political persona.

The graph also undergoes ideological resemanticization.

Economic indicators are not simply descriptive. They become evidence within the libertarian worldview.

The data are narratively organized into a contrast:

OLD SYSTEM → FAILURE

versus

LIBERTARIAN DIRECTION → SOLUTION / IMPROVEMENT.

The visualization therefore becomes a symbolic instrument of **libertarian legitimation**.

The technical object enters the ideological system. This is particularly significant because it complicates the distinction between “fact” and “performance”.

Facts can be performed. Data can be spectacularized. Technical knowledge can become identity. The post-truth environment is therefore not defined by the disappearance of facts.

It is also characterized by the **strategic incorporation of factual forms into broader regimes of credibility**.

IMG 2e demonstrates precisely this. The graph does not stand outside politics. Its visual authority becomes part of political theater.

The ten images reveal several distinct mechanisms of resemanticization:

(Trump)

- **IMG 1a**
  event → resistance → heroic ethos;
- **IMG 1b**
  posture → dominance → leadership type;

- **IMG 1c**

  wealth → success → political competence;

- **IMG 1d**

  merchandise → affiliation → collective identity;

- **IMG 1e**

  fabricated claim → viral conflict → symbolic polarization;

(Milei)

- **IMG 2a**

  tool → metaphor → governmental doctrine;

- **IMG 2b**

  anger → excess → authenticity;

- **IMG 2c**

  political class → "caste" → moralized enemy;

- **IMG 2d**

  disorder → productive chaos → transformative energy;

- **IMG 2e**

  data → explanation → spectacularized epistemic legitimacy.

The comparison shows that resemanticization performs different dominant operations in the two subcorpora:

- Trumpian resemanticization frequently moves from **personal or material signs toward political monumentalization**;
- Mileian resemanticization frequently moves from **negative or technical forms toward disruptive legitimation**.

The difference can be expressed as:

TRUMP

SIGN → EVIDENCE OF WHO THE LEADER IS

MILEI

SIGN → EVIDENCE OF WHAT THE LEADER CAN BREAK OR TRANSFORM

Trumpian resemanticization tends toward **ethotic consolidation**. Mileian resemanticization tends toward **operational legitimation**.

Trump's sign says:

HE IS STRONG / SUCCESSFUL / PATRIOTIC.

Milei's says:

HE CUTS / CONFRONTS / BREAKS / UNDERSTANDS / TRANSFORMS.

Again, the distinction is not absolute, but it captures a recurrent difference.

These transformations depend heavily on **circulation**. Without repetition, the sign may remain tied to its original event. Through circulation, it enters new contexts and acquires new relations.

The process can be represented as:

SIGN

↓

REPOSTING

↓

REFRAMING

↓

COMMENTARY

↓

MEMETIC APPROPRIATION

↓

SEMANTIC EXPANSION.

Circulation therefore does not merely distribute meaning. It **produces meaning**.

This is one of the key theoretical implications of the corpus. Traditional communication models often treat distribution as what happens after a message has been produced.

In platformized politics, distribution becomes part of production. The political text is completed only provisionally at the moment of publication. Its later meanings emerge through circulation.

The sign is therefore **open to secondary enunciation**. A user who reposts with a caption becomes a new enunciator. A journalist who embeds the image in an article supplies another frame. A critic who turns it into a meme produces another text. A supporter who uses it as a profile image transforms it into identity. A fact-checker who reproduces it places it inside a veridictory dispute.

The same visual object becomes part of multiple discourses. The political sign is therefore **poly-enunciated**. Its meaning emerges through a network of voices.

This is particularly important to post-truth because truth claims are increasingly embedded in environments where different frames compete around the same sign.

The viewer may encounter:

- the image;
- the denial;
- the parody;
- the correction;
- the defense;
- the reinterpretation
- within the same platform environment.

Meaning becomes a **contest of framings**. The sign remains constant enough to anchor the dispute. The discourse around it changes. This produces a new form of political centrality.

The most powerful sign may be the one around which the largest number of competing interpretations can organize themselves.

A crucial finding emerging from the corpus is that political signs often survive not by preserving one fixed meaning but by **remaining adaptable**. A rigid sign can become obsolete when context changes. A flexible sign can mutate. The fist can move from event to icon. The cap from campaign object to historical symbol. The chainsaw from prop to governmental shorthand. The graph from information to ideological performance.

This adaptability can be represented as:

RECOGNIZABLE CORE + SEMANTIC FLEXIBILITY

=

LONG POLITICAL LIFE.

The political sign therefore requires both:

STABILITY

and

MUTABILITY.

Too much stability makes it context-bound. Too much mutability destroys recognition. Successful political symbols often occupy the interval between the two. They remain identifiable while allowing new associations.

This is one of the reasons the corpus's material objects are so analytically productive.

A cap. A fist. A chainsaw. A graph. Each possesses a strong formal identity. Each can enter multiple political narratives.

This combination produces **semiotic resilience**.

Resemanticization also contributes directly to **authenticity**. A leader's preferred identity becomes stronger when multiple heterogeneous signs can be interpreted as evidence of the same ethos.

For Trump:

- raised fist;
- dominant posture;
- wealth;
- MAGA;
- antagonistic imagery

CAN ALL BE CONNECTED TO:

- strength;
- success;
- restoration;
- patriotic leadership.

For Milei:

- chainsaw;
- anger;
- caste;
- chaos;
- graphs

CAN ALL BE CONNECTED TO:

- rupture;

- anti-system authenticity;
- libertarian transformation;
- economic competence.

The signs are heterogeneous. The ethos unifies them.

This process can be represented as:

MULTIPLE SIGNS

↓

RESEMANTIZATION AROUND COMMON VALUES

↓

ETHOTIC COHERENCE.

The leader therefore appears coherent not because every sign is identical but because different signs can be made to tell the same deeper story.

This is a central mechanism of political myth.

Heterogeneity is absorbed into a recognizable persona.

The political subject becomes the semantic center connecting otherwise different objects, events, and performances.

At the deepest level, **resemanticization helps explain why post-truth cannot be reduced to the simple opposition**:

TRUE / FALSE.

The corpus shows that political images often operate along multiple axes simultaneously.

An image can be factually true but symbolically manipulated. Factually false but culturally powerful. Accurately sourced but ideologically reframed. Technically informative but theatrically performed. Authentic as an event but mythologized through repetition.

The relevant structure therefore involves at least:

- REFERENTIAL STATUS;
- ENUNCIATIVE FRAME;
- EMOTIONAL FUNCTION;
- SYMBOLIC VALUE;
- CIRCULATORY HISTORY.

These dimensions can diverge:

- **IMG 1a** is grounded in a real historical event but can become mythologized;
- **IMG 1e** contains fabricated imagery but can remain politically operative after disconfirmation;
- **IMG 2e** can contain real statistical data while still being selected, framed, simplified, and spectacularized within a political argument.

This demonstrates that the aesthetics of post-truth concern not merely whether reality is falsified but **how reality is reorganized into persuasive forms**.

The central question becomes:

WHAT REGIME OF CREDIBILITY DOES THE IMAGE PRODUCE?

- A true image can produce heroic credibility;
- a false image can produce emotional credibility;
- a graph can produce technical credibility;
- a bodily outburst can produce authentic credibility.

Different signs establish different relationships between:

- **truth**

- **appearance**
- **belief**
- **identity**
- **emotion**.

Resemanticization is the process through which these relations can change over time.

The comparative corpus therefore reveals two different dominant modes of semantic transformation:

- **(A) TRUMP: RESEMANTIZATION THROUGH MONUMENTALIZATION**
  Heterogeneous signs are progressively reorganized around the figure of the strong, successful, patriotic, and resistant leader. A contingent event becomes heroism. A posture becomes dominance. Wealth becomes competence. Merchandise becomes collective identity. Fabricated imagery becomes polarizing antagonism. The overall trajectory is:
  SIGN → ETHOS → MYTH OF RESTORATIVE LEADERSHIP.

- **(B) MILEI: RESEMANTIZATION THROUGH DISRUPTIVE LEGITIMATION**
  Heterogeneous signs are progressively reorganized around the capacity to break, confront, destabilize, and refound. A tool becomes political doctrine. Anger becomes authenticity. Political competitors become a caste. Chaos becomes productive. Data become spectacularized proof of libertarian competence. The overall trajectory is:
  SIGN → OPERATION → MYTH OF DISRUPTIVE LEADERSHIP.

The distinction can therefore be condensed as:

TRUMP → RESEMANTIZATION PRODUCES A MONUMENTAL SUBJECT.

MILEI → RESEMANTIZATION PRODUCES A TRANSFORMATIVE OPERATOR.

Trump’s signs increasingly answer: WHO IS THE LEADER?

Milei’s increasingly answer: WHAT DOES THE LEADER DO TO THE SYSTEM?

Both processes ultimately converge in the production of a simplified and highly recognizable political identity.

The sign becomes efficient because it no longer needs to carry the entire argument.

The fist says strength. The cap says MAGA. The gold says success.

The chainsaw says rupture. The shout says authenticity. The graph says economic diagnosis.

Resemanticization therefore tends toward **symbolic abbreviation**.

The political world becomes expressible through increasingly compact visual units.

This abbreviation is especially compatible with digital circulation because the platform environment rewards signs capable of maintaining meaning under conditions of fragmentation.

The longer the political sign circulates, the more it can become detached from its initial context and connected to the leader's broader persona.

At that point, the sign no longer merely represents one event.

It becomes a **portable fragment of political mythology**.

This is the fundamental function of resemanticization within the corpus: it transforms contingent images into durable elements of a larger system of leadership, allowing Trumpian restoration and Mileian rupture to remain recognizable across heterogeneous events, media formats, and interpretive contexts.

The next step is therefore to examine more specifically the process already implicit in many of these transformations: **mutation**, that is, the point at which repetition and circulation do not merely add meanings to the sign but progressively alter its political function, its value, and its relation to the broader media ecosystem.

9.3. MUTATION

Resemanticization and mutation are closely related processes, but they should not be treated as synonymous.

Resemanticization primarily concerns a transformation in meaning: a recognizable sign enters a new context and acquires additional, modified, or inverted semantic values.

Mutation involves a further step. It occurs when circulation, repetition, appropriation, remediation, or changing political circumstances progressively alter not only **what a sign means**, but also **what the sign does within the communicative system**.

The distinction can therefore be represented as:

RESEMANTIZATION

↓

CHANGE IN MEANING

whereas:

MUTATION

↓

CHANGE IN SEMIOTIC FUNCTION

A photograph can become an icon. A campaign object can become an identity marker. A mechanical tool can become the visual name of an economic program. A statistical graph can become a performative instrument of political legitimation. A fabricated image can cease to operate primarily as purported evidence and survive instead as a meme, provocation, or marker of ideological antagonism. **In all these cases, the transformation exceeds the addition of a new connotation.**

The sign changes its **position within the political semiotic system**.

This distinction is particularly important in digital environments, where signs rarely remain confined to the communicative situation in which they originated. They are extracted. Reposted. Cropped. Captioned. Combined with other texts. Inserted into videos. Converted into memes. Quoted by journalists. Reproduced by supporters. Reappropriated by opponents. Fact-checked. Parodied. Archived. Rediscovered.

The digital sign therefore exists within a potentially continuous process of transformation.

A useful general model is:

ORIGINAL SIGN

↓

REPETITION

↓

CONTEXTUAL DISPLACEMENT

↓

RESEMANTIZATION

↓

FUNCTIONAL TRANSFORMATION

↓

MUTATION

Mutation should consequently not be understood as the disappearance of the original sign.

On the contrary, political mutation is frequently effective precisely because **recognition survives transformation**.

The sign must change enough to acquire a new function while remaining sufficiently stable to activate its previous history.

This creates a tension between:

IDENTITY

and

VARIATION.

If identity disappears completely, the new text can no longer activate the symbolic capital accumulated by the previous sign.

If variation is absent, the sign may remain confined to its original function.

Political mutation therefore operates within an intermediate zone:

- **RECOGNIZABLE ENOUGH TO REMEMBER**
- **DIFFERENT ENOUGH TO FUNCTION AGAIN**

This relationship is especially relevant to the ten texts examined in the present study because several of them display a remarkable capacity to move from a specific event, object, or representation toward increasingly autonomous political functions.

The trajectory of **IMG 1a** provides a particularly clear example of functional mutation. At its point of origin, the raised-fist image following the assassination attempt in Butler possesses a strong indexical dimension.

It is connected to an actual event. The bodily signs visible within the scene belong to the material aftermath of the attack. The image initially functions as documentation.

Its relationship with the event can therefore be represented as:

EVENT

↓

PHOTOGRAPHIC TRACE

↓

DOCUMENTATION.

The repeated circulation of the raised-fist configuration progressively modifies this function. The image begins to be extracted from the temporal specificity of the assassination attempt. The gesture becomes increasingly autonomous.

The spectator may still know what happened, but the political effectiveness of the image no longer depends entirely on reconstructing the complete event.

The sign begins to operate as:

- RESISTANCE;
- COURAGE;
- DEFIANCE;
- SURVIVAL;
- LEADERSHIP UNDER THREAT.

The functional transformation can therefore be represented as:

DOCUMENT

↓

EMBLEM

↓

ICON.

This is more than resemanticization. The image no longer merely communicates a different meaning. It performs a different cultural operation.

Originally, it answers:

WHAT HAPPENED?

After mutation, it increasingly answers:

WHO IS TRUMP?

and potentially:

WHAT DOES TRUMPIAN RESISTANCE LOOK LIKE?

The transition from event to identity is fundamental.

A photograph tied to a specific historical instant becomes a reusable visual resource for the construction of political ethos.

The temporality of the sign changes as well.

Initially:

PAST EVENT.

After mutation:

DURATIVE POLITICAL ATTRIBUTE.

The image becomes capable of projecting a momentary action into an apparently stable characteristic of the leader.

The raised fist therefore no longer needs the assassination attempt to perform all of its political functions.

The event remains part of its memory, but the image acquires a degree of **semiotic autonomy**. This autonomy is one of the clearest indicators that mutation has occurred. The sign begins to survive beyond the situation that produced it.

A comparable but less event-specific mutation occurs in **IMG 1b**. The original material consists of bodily postures produced within rallies, debates, public appearances, and media events.

At the level of individual occurrence, each posture belongs to a specific communicative situation.

Repetition can progressively detach the bodily configuration from those individual contexts.

Frontality, centrality, low-angle framing, and dominant posture become components of a recognizable visual type.

The mutation can be represented as:

SITUATED POSTURE

↓

RECURRENT BODILY CONFIGURATION

↓

VISUAL PROTOTYPE

↓

LEADERSHIP CODE.

At this stage, the political function of the posture changes. It no longer simply accompanies discourse. It can begin to **pre-classify the speaker**.

Before the viewer processes the verbal message, the body already supplies an interpretive frame.

The posture says:

- CONTROL;
- DOMINANCE;
- CERTAINTY;
- CENTRALITY.

The body therefore becomes a form of political metadata. It tells the spectator how the represented subject is to be read.

This is a particularly important mutation because it demonstrates how political performance can become **self-indexing**.

The leader’s body increasingly carries its own interpretive instructions.

Repeated formal configurations teach the spectator how to recognize the persona.

The process becomes:

REPETITION OF FORM

↓

EXPECTATION

↓

AUTOMATIC RECOGNITION

↓

PROTOTYPICAL LEADERSHIP IMAGE.

Mutation therefore transforms the posture from an episodic bodily configuration into a durable component of Trump's mediatized ethos.

The airplanes and luxury imagery associated with **IMG 1c** undergo a different functional transformation.

Initially, such signs can operate as evidence of a biographical condition: Trump possesses wealth. He inhabits luxurious environments. He travels through spaces associated with economic privilege.

The initial function is therefore predominantly descriptive:

OBJECTS → SOCIAL STATUS.

Political circulation changes this relation. Once the businessman-celebrity becomes a political leader, the same objects are inserted into a different semiotic system.

They begin to operate as **credentials**.

The function becomes:

OBJECTS → SUCCESS → COMPETENCE.

With continued repetition, however, another mutation becomes possible. Luxury no longer needs to prove a specific economic proposition.

It becomes part of a mythology of the **winner**.

The aircraft, gold, and opulent environment function as an atmospheric system surrounding the leader. The transformation can be represented as:

POSSESSION

↓

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

↓

POLITICAL CREDENTIAL

↓

MYTHOLOGICAL ATTRIBUTE.

At the final stage, the objects become less important as objects. What matters is the world they construct. The political subject inhabits a universe in which success appears already realized.

The material environment therefore changes function from **biographical documentation** to **mythological scenery**.

This mutation is particularly relevant to the relationship between celebrity culture and political leadership. The visual codes developed before the political career do not disappear when the subject enters politics. They migrate. Their function changes. Celebrity visibility becomes political recognizability. Business success becomes political competence. Luxury becomes exceptional leadership.

The mutation therefore crosses institutional domains:

BUSINESS

↓

CELEBRITY

↓

POLITICS

while preserving the same recognizable subject.

This continuity enables Trump's earlier media persona to function as semiotic capital within the later political persona.

The mutation of **IMG 1d** is particularly significant because it involves a material object whose political function expands dramatically through repetition.

A campaign cap is initially merchandise. Its practical and communicative functions are relatively simple:

- it can be purchased;
- worn;
- displayed;
- used to express support.

The MAGA cap progressively exceeds this initial status. Through repetition, it becomes a device of immediate political categorization.

The transformation can be represented as:

MERCHANDISE

↓

CAMPAIGN SIGN

↓

IDENTITY MARKER

↓

MEMBERSHIP DEVICE.

The final transformation is especially important.

The cap does not merely communicate a political proposition. It participates in the social organization of political belonging. It can allow subjects to recognize one another. It can allow opponents to categorize wearers. It can create visual homogeneity inside crowds. It can mark political territory. It can be reproduced in photographs, videos, memes, and other cultural texts.

The object therefore acquires a **relational function**. It connects:

- wearer to movement;
- wearer to leader;
- wearer to other supporters;
- supporters to opponents;
- individual identity to collective identity.

The cap becomes what may be described as a **portable interface of political belonging**. Its semiotic effectiveness derives precisely from its material simplicity. The wearer does not need to explain the entire political program. The object performs categorization.

The mutation can therefore be summarized as:

OBJECT THAT CARRIES A MESSAGE

↓

OBJECT THAT IDENTIFIES A SUBJECT.

This is a substantial functional change. The slogan originally exists on the cap. Eventually, the cap itself can become the slogan. The verbal content and material support fuse. Even when the text is not completely readable, shape and color may remain sufficient for recognition. This indicates a high degree of semiotic autonomy.

The object has mutated from a carrier of discourse into a **political sign capable of functioning independently of complete verbal decoding**.

IMG 1e presents a different and particularly significant form of mutation because the process can continue even after the original referential claim has been challenged.

Fake images depicting immigrants allegedly “eating cats” initially function within a quasi-evidential regime. They appear to show something. Their persuasive force depends partly on the visual impression:

I CAN SEE IT, THEREFORE IT MAY HAVE HAPPENED.

The initial function is therefore:

IMAGE AS PURPORTED EVIDENCE.

Once the image is identified as fabricated or otherwise loses its documentary credibility, its original function becomes unstable. The sign does not necessarily disappear. Instead, it can mutate into:

- meme;
- ironic reference;
- provocation;
- partisan marker;
- symbol of misinformation;
- symbol of immigration fear;
- shorthand for the controversy itself.

The transformation becomes:

PURPORTED EVIDENCE

↓

CONTESTED IMAGE

↓

CIRCULATING CONTROVERSY

↓

POLARIZING SYMBOL.

This functional mutation is crucial to understanding the persistence of post-truth imagery. A false sign does not necessarily become politically inert once falsity is established. It may simply stop doing one thing and begin doing another.

Initially:

THIS IMAGE PROVES THE CLAIM.

Later:

THIS IMAGE REPRESENTS OUR CONFLICT ABOUT THE CLAIM.

The object of reference changes. At first, the image supposedly refers to an external event.

After mutation, it may refer primarily to the **political controversy itself**.

This creates a second-order sign. The image no longer merely signifies immigrants.

It signifies:

- Trumpian immigration discourse;
- media conflict;
- fact-checking;
- partisan polarization;
- the dispute between supporters and opponents.

The mutation can therefore be represented as:

SIGN OF EVENT

↓

SIGN OF DISPUTE

↓

SIGN OF POLITICAL IDENTITY.

This is particularly characteristic of digital post-truth environments. The political life of the image can continue independently of its original truth claim because the controversy itself becomes a source of meaning.

The Mileian corpus presents an especially interesting problem of mutation because Milei's rise from outsider candidate to president changes the institutional position from which the signs operate.

A disruptive sign used against the political system cannot retain exactly the same function once the political actor himself occupies the highest executive office.

The relationship between:

OUTSIDER

and

INSTITUTION

necessarily changes.

This creates a structural problem for disruptive leadership:

HOW CAN RUPTURE REMAIN CREDIBLE

AFTER THE DISRUPTIVE SUBJECT ENTERS THE INSTITUTION?

The Mileian signs respond to this tension through different forms of functional mutation. The chainsaw can move from promise to policy. Anger can move from outsider protest to governing style. The caste can be redefined from external political class to residual institutional resistance. Productive chaos can move from electoral disruption to permanent method. Economic charts can move from criticism of previous governments to evidence of governmental performance.

The corpus therefore makes it possible to observe a broader transformation:

DISRUPTIVE CAMPAIGN SEMIOTICS

↓

GOVERNING SEMIOTICS OF CONTINUED DISRUPTION.

This is particularly important because the transition from opposition to government often threatens populist outsider identity.

Once the outsider becomes institutionally central, the old opposition:

PEOPLE / POWER

can become difficult to maintain.

The semiotic solution consists in **relocating the system**. The leader may govern while continuing to represent himself as fighting structures that exceed his own institutional position.

The antagonist becomes:

- bureaucracy;
- political class;
- Congress;
- privileged interests;
- state structures;
- economic inheritance;
- cultural elites;
- other institutional constraints.

The disruptive narrative can therefore survive institutionalization by mutating its object.

This broader process is visible across the Mileian subcorpus. The chainsaw in **IMG 2a** provides the clearest example.

During the campaign, the chainsaw functions primarily as a promise. It signifies what Milei intends to do.

The temporality is prospective:

CHAINSAW

↓

FUTURE CUTS.

Once governmental action begins, the same sign can acquire a retrospective or descriptive function.

The chainsaw can now be invoked to interpret actual policies.

The relation becomes:

CHAINSAW

↓

CURRENT / IMPLEMENTED CUTS.

The object therefore moves from:

PROMISE

to

POLICY METONYMY.

This is a genuine functional mutation. Before government, the sign anticipates action. During government, it can summarize action. The temporal transformation can be represented as:

WILL CUT

↓

IS CUTTING

↓

HAS CUT.

The symbolic object accompanies the political subject across different phases.

Its durability derives from its capacity to change temporal function while preserving semantic continuity. This makes the chainsaw particularly powerful.

It does not need to be abandoned once the campaign ends. Instead, it can be updated.

The campaign prop becomes a governmental interpretant. Complex policy decisions can be retrospectively classified as manifestations of “the chainsaw”.

The object therefore functions increasingly as a **metonymic label for a governing project**.

This mutation greatly expands its political reach. The chainsaw ceases to be merely something Milei once held. It becomes a conceptual category through which his presidency can be interpreted.

The bodily intensity of **IMG 2b** faces a more difficult transition. Anger is easily compatible with opposition. The outsider can shout because he is excluded from power.

But what happens when the outsider governs? The function of anger must mutate.

It can no longer signify only:

ANGER AT THOSE IN POWER.

The leader is now himself in power.

The emotional structure therefore requires a new object.

The anger can be redirected toward:

- institutional resistance;
- the inherited system;
- political opponents;
- bureaucracy;
- economic constraints;
- actors represented as obstructing reform.

The transformation becomes:

OUTSIDER ANGER

↓

GOVERNING ANGER

↓

ANGER AGAINST OBSTACLES TO TRANSFORMATION.

The body preserves its intensity. The antagonist changes. This allows the leader to remain performatively anti-system while institutionally occupying the system. The paradox becomes:

INSTITUTIONAL POWER + ANTI-INSTITUTIONAL ETHOS.

Mutation makes the coexistence possible. The same bodily code that originally signified exclusion from power can later signify refusal to be absorbed by power. The new message becomes:

I GOVERN, BUT I HAVE NOT BECOME LIKE THEM.

This is a crucial function of performative continuity. The persistence of anger can operate as evidence that institutionalization has not domesticated the outsider.

The body becomes proof of ideological continuity. The emotional excess therefore mutates from a sign of insurgency into a sign of **resistance to institutional normalization**.

A comparable process affects **IMG 2c**. During electoral competition, the "caste" can refer broadly to the political establishment. Once Milei occupies the presidency, however, a simple opposition between:

MILEI

and

POLITICAL POWER

becomes structurally problematic.

The category must therefore remain flexible. Its referent can shift. The "caste" can increasingly signify not simply those who govern, but those who allegedly preserve the old system. The mutation is:

CASTE = RULING POLITICAL CLASS

↓

CASTE = ACTORS WHO DEFEND THE OLD ORDER.

This shift is politically productive because it detaches the category from institutional position. One can hold office without being "caste". One can be outside the executive and still belong to the "caste". The category becomes ideological rather than purely institutional.

This allows the antagonism to survive changes in political position. The opposition is no longer:

POWER / OUTSIDER.

It becomes:

OLD SYSTEM / TRANSFORMATIVE SUBJECT.

The mutation therefore protects the anti-caste narrative from the contradiction generated by Milei's own institutional ascent. The leader enters power without symbolically entering the category of power he condemns. This is possible because the semantic boundary itself has moved.

The mutation of productive chaos in **IMG 2d** is especially important. During an outsider campaign, chaotic communication can function as disruption of conventional political discourse. Its function is to break routines. Interrupt expectations. Generate attention. Destabilize competitors. The initial structure is:

CONVENTIONAL POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

↓

DISRUPTIVE INTERVENTION

↓

MEDIA ATTENTION.

But repeated disruption creates a paradox. Once disruption becomes expected, it is no longer entirely disruptive. The unexpected becomes predictable. The extraordinary becomes stylistic. Chaos becomes recognizable. This produces the mutation:

DISRUPTIVE EVENT

↓

REPEATED DISRUPTION

↓

RECOGNIZABLE METHOD

↓

STABLE LEADERSHIP STYLE.

The paradox can be formulated as:

RUPTURE BECOMES ROUTINE.

This does not necessarily eliminate its political effectiveness. Instead, the function changes.

The individual provocation may become less surprising, but the continuous capacity to produce conflict can become evidence of consistency.

The political value shifts from:

HE SHOCKED THE SYSTEM

toward:

HE CONTINUES TO REFUSE NORMALIZATION.

Productive chaos therefore mutates from episodic rupture into a **durative governing style**. This is one of the deepest transformations in the Mileian corpus. Disruption becomes institutionalized without being represented as institutional. The political subject can occupy the presidency while maintaining a communicative aesthetic of permanent insurgency.

The structure becomes:

POWER + PERMANENT CONFLICT

=

INSTITUTIONALIZED DISRUPTION.

This configuration demonstrates how contemporary populist communication can partially dissolve the traditional temporal distinction between campaign and government.

Campaign-like antagonism continues after electoral victory. The leader remains in mobilizational mode. The communicative system requires continuous activation. Conflict therefore ceases to be merely a means of reaching power. It becomes a way of exercising and representing power.

The mutation of **IMG 2e** follows a different trajectory. Before governmental responsibility, economic charts can function predominantly as instruments of accusation.

They show:

- inflation;
- economic deterioration;
- state failure;
- the consequences attributed to previous governments.

The graph therefore initially operates as:

DIAGNOSIS OF THEIR FAILURE.

After Milei assumes office, the same visual form can acquire another function.

Economic data can now be used to demonstrate:

- policy results;
- change of trajectory;

- reduction of indicators;
- governmental competence;
- validation of the libertarian program.

The mutation becomes:

ACCUSATORY GRAPH

↓

PERFORMANCE GRAPH.

The same epistemic form changes political direction.

Before:

THE DATA PROVE THAT THEY FAILED.

After:

THE DATA PROVE THAT WE ARE SUCCEEDING.

This transformation is particularly significant because it changes the leader's narrative role. The outsider economist diagnoses. The governing economist must demonstrate.

The graph moves from:

KNOWLEDGE

to

ACCOUNTABILITY / LEGITIMATION.

Its political burden therefore increases.

The data visualization no longer merely explains why rupture is necessary.

It must contribute to showing that rupture works.

The narrative sequence becomes:

CRISIS → DIAGNOSIS → DISRUPTION → MEASURABLE RESULT.

This makes **IMG 2e** particularly important within the overall Mileian corpus because it provides the possible endpoint toward which the other disruptive signs are oriented. The chainsaw cuts. The angry body mobilizes. The caste is confronted. Productive chaos destabilizes. The graph is expected to demonstrate the result.

The five images can therefore be reorganized into a functional sequence:

- **IMG 2c**
  IDENTIFY THE ENEMY

  ↓

- **IMG 2b**
  MOBILIZE PASSIONAL ENERGY

  ↓

- **IMG 2a**
  CONDENSE THE TRANSFORMATIVE OPERATION

  ↓

- **IMG 2d**
  MAINTAIN DISRUPTIVE INTENSITY

  ↓

- **IMG 2e**
  VISUALIZE AND LEGITIMATE THE RESULT.

This sequence does not imply a literal chronology among the individual images. It reconstructs their **functional relations within the political semiotic system**.

The distinction is essential.

The corpus is organized according to semiotic relevance rather than chronological succession, as established in the methodological section.

The sequence therefore describes a system of roles, not a historical timeline.

Mutation and the problem of symbolic exhaustion

Repeated political signs face another problem: **symbolic exhaustion**.

The more frequently a sign circulates, the more recognizable it becomes.

But increasing recognizability can reduce novelty.

This produces a tension:

REPETITION → RECOGNITION

but also potentially:

REPETITION → HABITUATION.

Political communication must therefore maintain a balance between stability and renewal.

A symbol that changes too much loses identity. A symbol that never changes may lose attention. Mutation offers one solution. The sign can preserve a recognizable core while entering new situations.

The raised fist can be attached to new narratives of resistance. The MAGA cap can move across electoral cycles. The chainsaw can move from campaign promise to governmental action. The graph can move from diagnosis to performance evaluation.

The relation becomes:

STABLE FORM + VARIABLE FUNCTION

=

RENEWED POLITICAL RELEVANCE.

This mechanism helps explain why certain political signs survive longer than individual media cycles. They possess **functional elasticity**. Their meanings and uses can adapt without destroying recognition.

Digital mutation is particularly compatible with **memetic circulation**. A meme depends upon the coexistence of repetition and variation. Something must remain recognizable. Something must change. The basic logic is:

TEMPLATE + VARIATION

= NEW INSTANCE.

Political signs with strong formal identities are especially suitable for this process.

The fist. The red cap. The chainsaw. The angry face. The graph. Each can function as a template. The surrounding caption changes. The context changes. The speaker changes. The ideological evaluation changes. But the core remains identifiable. This allows the political image to acquire what can be described as **memetic productivity**.

The sign generates further signs. Its importance is no longer measured only by how many times the original image is viewed. It can also be measured by how many new texts it makes possible.

The relation becomes:

ORIGINAL SIGN

↓

RECOGNIZABLE TEMPLATE

↓

USER APPROPRIATION

↓

VARIANTS

↓

EXPANDED SEMIOTIC PRESENCE.

This is a crucial transformation in platformized political communication.

Political visibility no longer depends solely on controlling the original message.

It can also depend on producing signs that others want to reproduce.

The leader's communication becomes culturally productive when audiences participate in its mutation.

Mutation is not controlled exclusively by supporters. Opponents also participate.

A sign can mutate through:

- parody;
- satire;
- criticism;
- detournement;
- hostile remixing;
- fact-checking;
- ironic appropriation.

This produces an important paradox. Negative circulation can increase symbolic visibility.

A critic who reproduces the chainsaw to condemn Milei still contributes to the chainsaw's association with Milei.

A parody of the MAGA cap may attack Trump while simultaneously confirming the cap's recognizability.

A critical reproduction of **IMG 1a** may reject its heroic interpretation while reinforcing its iconic status.

The relation becomes:

NEGATIVE EVALUATION

≠

SEMIOTIC ERASURE.

Indeed:

NEGATIVE REPRODUCTION

can produce

INCREASED RECOGNITION.

This does not mean that all publicity is politically beneficial. Negative framing can damage credibility, mobilize opposition, or transform the sign against the leader.

The important analytical point is narrower: **symbolic centrality and positive evaluation are different variables**.

A sign can become more culturally central while becoming more contested. This distinction is essential to polarized political communication.

The most visible signs may be precisely those around which incompatible communities organize opposite interpretations.

The processes examined above also **challenge the idea of a single author** of political imagery. The initial political actor may produce or perform the sign.

But later transformations involve:

- campaign professionals;
- photographers;
- journalists;
- editors;
- platforms;

- supporters;
- opponents;
- meme creators;
- fact-checkers;
- algorithmic systems of distribution.

Mutation is therefore a product of **distributed authorship**. No single actor completely controls the final political meaning.

The process can be represented as:

PRIMARY ENUNCIATOR

↓

MEDIA INTERMEDIARIES

↓

PLATFORM INFRASTRUCTURE

↓

USER APPROPRIATIONS

↓

COLLECTIVE SEMIOSIS.

The final term is particularly important. Political meaning becomes the product of an ongoing social process.

The sign is continuously rewritten through use. This does not eliminate strategic communication. Campaigns still attempt to guide interpretation. Leaders still produce preferred readings. But strategy operates inside an environment where signs can escape their original authors.

Mutation is therefore both:

RESOURCE

and

RISK.

A highly mutable sign can circulate widely. But the same mutability makes it vulnerable to hostile appropriation. The political actor benefits from recognizability but cannot completely determine what recognition will mean.

Platform circulation adds another dimension. Not every mutation receives equal visibility. Digital platforms organize attention through technical systems that select, rank, recommend, and amplify content. Mutation therefore occurs within an **algorithmically structured environment**.

The process is not simply:

USER CREATES VARIANT → PUBLIC SEES VARIANT.

Between production and visibility lies a system of selection. The broader sequence becomes:

SIGN

↓

VARIATION

↓

PLATFORM SELECTION

↓

DIFFERENTIAL VISIBILITY

↓

FURTHER REPRODUCTION.

This matters because highly affective, conflictual, surprising, humorous, or easily recognizable variants may possess strong circulatory potential.

The semiotic properties of the sign and the technical properties of the platform can therefore interact.

A visually simple symbol is easy to recognize. A provocative variation is easy to react to. A polarizing interpretation generates commentary. Commentary produces additional circulation. The sign can enter a feedback loop:

RECOGNITION

↓

REACTION

↓

ENGAGEMENT

↓

VISIBILITY

↓

MORE RECOGNITION.

Mutation is therefore not merely cultural. It is also infrastructurally conditioned. The digital ecosystem creates specific opportunities for certain mutations to become more visible than others.

This contributes to the stabilization of particular political interpretations without requiring a single centralized producer.

At the deepest level, mutation contributes to the construction of **political myth** because it allows contingent signs to survive changing circumstances.

Myth requires repetition. But repetition alone is insufficient. A durable political mythology must also remain capable of absorbing new events.

Trump's strong-leader mythology can incorporate:

- an assassination attempt;
- a rally posture;
- wealth;
- MAGA symbolism;
- immigration conflict.

Milei's disruptive mythology can incorporate:

- the chainsaw;
- anger;
- anti-caste antagonism;
- productive chaos;
- economic charts.

The signs differ radically. They are repeatedly reorganized around a common political structure.

The process can be represented as:

NEW EVENT

↓

INCORPORATION INTO EXISTING MYTH

↓

MODIFICATION OF MYTH

↓

REINFORCED POLITICAL IDENTITY.

The relationship is reciprocal. The myth interprets the sign. The sign updates the myth.

Trump's pre-existing ethos of strength helps audiences interpret **IMG 1a** as resilience.

IMG 1a, in turn, supplies new material evidence for the ethos of strength.

Milei's pre-existing ethos of rupture helps audiences interpret the chainsaw as legitimate political symbolism. The chainsaw, in turn, gives rupture a concrete and reproducible form.

The process is circular:

ETHOS → SIGN → ETHOS.

Mutation is what allows this circle to continue across time.

The comparison between the two leaders reveals two distinct dominant trajectories.

For Trump, mutation frequently converts contingent signs into **durable attributes of the political subject**.

The general structure is:

EVENT / OBJECT / POSTURE

↓

REPETITION

↓

ATTRIBUTE

↓

ICONIC LEADERSHIP IDENTITY.

For Milei, mutation more frequently converts disruptive signs into **durable instruments of political action**.

The structure becomes:

OBJECT / GESTURE / CONFLICT / DATA

↓

REPETITION

↓

OPERATION

↓

TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IDENTITY.

This difference reproduces the broader opposition already identified:

TRUMP

MUTATION TENDS TOWARD ICONIZATION

MILEI

MUTATION TENDS TOWARD OPERATIONALIZATION

Trump's signs progressively say:

THIS IS WHO HE IS.

Milei's signs progressively say:

THIS IS HOW HE ACTS.

The raised fist becomes Trumpian resilience. The dominant posture becomes Trumpian authority. Gold becomes Trumpian success. MAGA becomes Trumpian collective identity.

The chainsaw becomes Mileian cutting. Anger becomes Mileian confrontation. The caste becomes the object of Mileian rupture. Productive chaos becomes Mileian method. The graph becomes Mileian economic legitimation.

The distinction remains analytical rather than absolute, but it provides a useful synthesis of the corpus.

Mutation appears, at first, to be opposed to stabilization. Mutation implies change, stabilization implies continuity. The corpus demonstrates, however, that the two processes can be **complementary**.

Repeated mutation can stabilize a **deeper identity.**

Trump's images change while repeatedly returning to:

- strength;
- success;
- dominance;
- national restoration.

Milei's images change while repeatedly returning to:

- rupture;
- anger;
- anti-caste antagonism;
- transformation;
- libertarian competence.

The surface varies. The deep structure persists.

The relation can therefore be represented as:

SURFACE MUTATION

↓

RECURRENT AXIOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

↓

DEEP STABILIZATION.

This is one of the most important findings of the analysis. Political identity in digital environments does not require visual immobility. It can emerge precisely through the ability to **organize change around recurrent values**.

The leader remains recognizable not because every image is the same but because heterogeneous images repeatedly reactivate the same underlying political grammar.

Trump's grammar is predominantly **restorative**. Milei's predominantly **disruptive**.

Mutation therefore does not dissolve the distinction between the two leadership models. It contributes to reproducing it.

This process also illuminates the construction of authenticity. Authenticity is commonly imagined as the opposite of repetition or strategic performance.

Something appears authentic because it seems spontaneous, unplanned, or unmediated.

The corpus reveals a paradox. A spontaneous gesture can become authenticating precisely through **repetition after the event**.

A provocative performance can become evidence of authenticity precisely because it conforms to an already recognizable style. The process becomes:

CONTINGENT ACT

↓

MEDIA CAPTURE

↓

REPETITION

↓

CONSISTENCY WITH ETHOS

↓

AUTHENTICITY EFFECT.

The more the sign corresponds to what audiences already believe the leader to be, the more it can appear authentic. This means that authenticity does not require absence of mediation.

It can be **produced through mediated consistency**.

For Trump, **IMG 1a** becomes particularly powerful because the spontaneous event appears to confirm an already established ethos of strength.

For Milei, **IMG 2b** and **IMG 2d** can reinforce authenticity because anger and communicative excess correspond to an already established anti-formal persona.

The mutation of the image therefore helps convert contingency into character.

The event says:

IT HAPPENED.

Repeated mutation says:

IT REVEALED WHO HE REALLY IS.

This is a crucial mechanism of performative authenticity.

The analysis of mutation also complicates the concept of **post-truth**. If a sign changes function over time, its political effectiveness cannot be assessed exclusively through the truth-value of its initial proposition.

This is particularly evident in **IMG 1e**.

A fabricated image may fail as factual evidence once its status is established.

It may continue to succeed as:

- a symbol;
- a meme;
- a provocation;
- a partisan marker;

- a trigger of antagonistic discourse.

Its referential truth has collapsed. Its political function has mutated. This distinction should not be confused with the claim that factual truth is irrelevant. It is precisely because referential and political functions can diverge that analytical separation is necessary.

The structure becomes:

REFERENTIAL FAILURE

does not necessarily imply

SEMIOTIC DISAPPEARANCE.

Likewise, factual accuracy does not prevent mutation.

The economic data of **IMG 2e** may remain factually grounded while their political function shifts from description to legitimation.

The Butler photograph may remain an accurate record while becoming iconic. Mutation therefore cuts across the true/false opposition.

The more relevant distinction is:

WHAT FUNCTION DOES THIS TEXT PERFORM NOW?

This question is indispensable for understanding post-truth as a dynamic media condition rather than simply a collection of false statements.

The analysis allows a general model to be proposed.

Political visual mutation can be reconstructed through six stages:

- **1. EMERGENCE**

  A sign appears within a specific political or media context.

  ↓

- **2. RECOGNITION**

  Formal or emotional salience makes the sign identifiable.

↓

- **3. CIRCULATION**

  The sign moves across media, platforms, and audiences.

↓

- **4. RESEMANTIZATION**

  New contexts generate additional or altered meanings.

↓

- **5. FUNCTIONAL MUTATION**

  The sign begins to perform roles different from those of its initial appearance.

↓

- **6. STABILIZATION**

  Repeated mutations become incorporated into a durable political identity.

This sequence is not necessarily linear. A sign can move backward. Lose visibility. Re-emerge. Acquire contradictory functions. Be reactivated years later.

The model therefore describes an analytical logic rather than an irreversible chronology.

Its principal value lies in showing that the political image should be studied as a **process rather than a static object**.

The image has a semiotic biography. It is born within one context. It travels. It accumulates interpretations. It changes function. It can become detached from its origin. It may eventually become part of collective political memory.

Across the corpus, mutation reveals a fundamental characteristic shared by Trump and Milei: both leadership models depend upon signs capable of surviving the event that initially produced them.

They organize this survival differently.

Trump’s visual system tends to convert events, bodies, objects, and conflicts into **stable attributes of a monumentalized political persona**.

The dominant trajectory is:

CONTINGENCY

↓

ICONIZATION

↓

CHARACTER

↓

RESTORATIVE LEADERSHIP.

Milei's visual system tends to convert objects, passions, antagonisms, communicative disorder, and technical representations into **repeatable operations of transformation**.

The dominant trajectory is:

DISRUPTION

↓

OPERATIONALIZATION

↓

METHOD

↓

DISRUPTIVE LEADERSHIP.

The distinction can therefore be condensed into two formulas:

- TRUMP: THE MUTATING SIGN BECOMES AN ATTRIBUTE OF THE LEADER;
- MILEI: THE MUTATING SIGN BECOMES A METHOD OF THE LEADER.

This difference provides another layer of support for the broader comparative model developed throughout the study.

Trump's leadership seeks to stabilize the political world around the figure of a subject represented as already possessing strength, success, and the competence required for national restoration.

Milei's leadership seeks to maintain the political world in a state of transformative tension, where legitimacy derives from the capacity to cut, confront, destabilize, explain, and redirect.

Mutation therefore does not simply alter individual images. It helps construct the **durability of the leadership model itself**.

A political sign survives when it can change without becoming unrecognizable.

A political identity survives when new events can be absorbed without destroying its underlying grammar.

In this sense, mutation constitutes one of the principal mechanisms connecting **digital circulation and political continuity**. The apparent instability of platform communication—its rapid cycles, remixes, controversies, memes, appropriations, and constant contextual shifts—does not necessarily prevent stable political identities from emerging. Paradoxically, it can provide the very conditions through which those identities are continuously renewed.

Trumpian restoration and Mileian disruption are therefore not stabilized **despite** the mutation of their signs.

They can be stabilized **through** mutation.

The sign changes so that the political mythology can persist.

9.4. CIRCULATION, REMEDIATION, AND COLLECTIVE REINTERPRETATION

The transformations examined in the previous sections become fully intelligible only when the political image is considered as a **circulating object**. Resemanticization and mutation do not occur in an abstract space. They are produced within concrete chains of mediation in which the same sign moves across different media, platforms, institutional contexts, social groups, and interpretive communities.

Circulation is therefore not simply the technical transportation of a message from one location to another. It is a **semiotic operation**.

When a political image moves, it enters new relations. Those relations can modify:

- its enunciator;
- its addressee;
- its temporal position;
- its surrounding discourse;
- its truth status;
- its emotional value;
- its ideological function.

The same image does not necessarily remain the same text once its context changes.

The relation can be represented as:

SIGN A IN CONTEXT 1

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

SIGN A IN CONTEXT 2

↓

NEW RELATIONAL SYSTEM

↓

MODIFIED MEANING / FUNCTION

What remains materially recognizable can therefore become semiotically different. This distinction is especially important in contemporary platformized politics because a single visual text may rapidly pass through numerous communicative environments.

A photograph taken at a rally can become:

- a news photograph;
- a campaign post;
- a supporter's profile image;
- a meme;
- a critical montage;
- a television screenshot;
- a short-form video thumbnail;
- a fact-check illustration;
- a historical retrospective;
- a visual reference in another political controversy.

Each displacement creates a different **discursive neighborhood**.

The image is surrounded by new words. New images. New captions. New voices. New evaluations.

Meaning therefore emerges not only from the internal properties of the image but from the relations established during its circulation.

This process can be described as **contextual rearticulation**.

The image is reinserted into another textual environment and made to speak again.

The resulting structure becomes:

VISUAL CORE

+

NEW CONTEXT

=

NEW ENUNCIATIVE CONFIGURATION.

This is one of the key reasons why digital political imagery possesses such high semantic mobility.

The same visual sign can support incompatible arguments. Circulation does not guarantee semantic continuity.

It guarantees only the possibility of **recognizable recurrence**.

Every act of recirculation can be treated as a form of **secondary enunciation**.

The original political actor, photographer, campaign, journalist, or media organization may establish the first frame.

But the subject who subsequently republishes the image performs another act.

The user decides:

- what to reproduce;
- what to crop;
- what caption to add;
- what comment to write;
- what audience to address;
- what other content to place beside it.

The circulator therefore becomes an enunciator.

The sequence can be represented as:

PRIMARY ENUNCIATION

↓

IMAGE PRODUCED

↓

SECONDARY ENUNCIATION

↓

IMAGE REFRAMED

↓

NEW INTERPRETIVE CONTRACT.

This is a fundamental transformation of political communication. The distinction between producer and receiver becomes unstable. The receiver can become producer.

Consumption becomes potential redistribution. Interpretation becomes potential publication.

The political text therefore enters a chain of **recursive enunciation**.

A user receives. Interprets. Reposts. Another user receives the repost. Adds commentary. Produces another version. The sequence can continue.

The sign thus develops a social trajectory that exceeds the intentions of its original producer.

This makes contemporary political visibility both powerful and unstable.

The leader can generate a sign. But cannot completely determine its future.

Circulation is frequently accompanied by **remediation**, understood here as the movement of political content from one media form into another.

A photograph enters video. A television clip becomes a meme. A speech becomes text superimposed over an image. A statistical graph becomes a screenshot. A still image becomes a looping GIF. A rally gesture becomes a sticker.

The sign therefore does not merely change context. Its **material form of presentation** may also change.

The relation becomes:

MEDIUM "A"

↓

EXTRACTION

↓

MEDIUM "B"

↓

FORMAL ADAPTATION

↓

NEW MODE OF FRUITION.

This process is particularly significant because different media impose different temporal and perceptual structures.

A photograph allows prolonged inspection. A short video restores movement. A GIF produces repetition. A meme adds textual anchoring. A screenshot freezes audiovisual flow. A vertical short-form video reorganizes framing around the smartphone screen.

The political sign acquires new formal properties through each remediation. This means that circulation can alter the relationship between:

- **movement and stillness;**
- **duration and punctuality;**

- **context and fragmentation;**
- **speech and image;**
- **individual interpretation and collective recognition**.

The ten texts in the corpus are especially suitable for this type of transformation because many possess highly recognizable formal cores.

The raised fist. The dominant posture. The MAGA cap. The chainsaw. The angry face. The graph. These signs can survive changes of format.

Their formal resilience allows them to move across media without losing all recognizability.

IMG 1a: from news image to circulating icon

IMG 1a illustrates particularly clearly how circulation can transform the relationship between event, image, and audience. At the moment of the assassination attempt in Butler, the image is tied to breaking news.

The primary interpretive context is:

WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

The photograph appears within the information cycle. Its initial relevance is strongly event-based.

As the image begins to circulate, however, its surrounding context progressively changes.

In journalistic coverage, the emphasis may remain on documentation.

In campaign communication, the image can be framed as resilience.

In supportive social circulation, it can become a sign of courage.

In oppositional discourse, it can be framed as political spectacularization.

In retrospective contexts, it can become a historical marker of the campaign.

The same visible configuration therefore enters multiple regimes:

- **JOURNALISTIC REGIME**
  → documentation;
- **CAMPAIGN REGIME**
  → heroic resilience;
- **SUPPORTER REGIME**
  → identification and admiration;
- **CRITICAL REGIME**
  → contestation of heroic framing;
- **MEMORIAL REGIME**
  → historical icon.

The political image becomes **multi-contextual**. Its significance increasingly depends on the interpretive community encountering it.

The raised fist remains recognizable across these frames. This creates what may be described as a **stable visual nucleus surrounded by variable discourse**.

The nucleus stabilizes recognition. The discourse differentiates interpretation.

The structure becomes:

SAME IMAGE

↓

DIFFERENT CAPTIONS

↓

DIFFERENT EVALUATIONS

↓

SAME POLITICAL CENTRALITY.

This is one of the defining properties of iconic political imagery.

The image becomes important not because everyone interprets it identically, but because multiple communities continually return to it.

Circulation therefore converts **IMG 1a** into a site of interpretive struggle.

IMG 1b: circulation and the accumulation of a bodily archive

IMG 1b operates through another form of circulation. Because it condenses a posture of dominance recurring across rallies and debates, its political significance depends less on one single original frame and more on the accumulation of comparable representations.

The audience encounters:

- Trump centrally framed here;
- Trump seen from below there;
- Trump frontal in another rally;
- Trump dominant in another debate.

The images circulate separately. The viewer can connect them.

The result is a **distributed bodily archive**.

The sequence becomes:

IMAGE 1 + IMAGE 2 + IMAGE 3 + IMAGE 4

↙ ↘

RECOGNITION OF RECURRENCE

↓

STABILIZED BODILY ETHOS.

Circulation therefore does not merely disseminate one image. It produces meaning through **inter-image comparison**. This is especially important to digital communication because platforms make visual accumulation unusually easy.

The political subject is encountered repeatedly. Each new image is interpreted against memories of previous ones. The current body is read through the archived body. The image therefore participates in a process of **serial confirmation**.

A posture acquires political meaning because other images appear to repeat it.

The result is a visual generalization:

TRUMP LOOKS LIKE THIS.

The political body becomes a prototype through circulation. This prototype can subsequently guide the selection of future images.

Photographers, journalists, supporters, and opponents may become more likely to identify or reproduce frames that fit the already recognizable persona.

Circulation can therefore produce a feedback loop:

RECURRING IMAGE

↓

STABILIZED EXPECTATION

↓

SELECTION OF SIMILAR IMAGES

↓

FURTHER STABILIZATION.

The archive begins to reproduce itself.

IMG 1c: remediation between celebrity, business, and politics

The circulation of **IMG 1c** is particularly important because it crosses **discursive domains**. Aircraft and luxury environments can circulate first within celebrity culture, lifestyle media, business profiles, entertainment coverage, or personal branding.

When Trump becomes a political actor, the same visual material can be remediated into:

- political journalism;
- campaign narratives;
- social media posts;
- critical commentary;
- biographical retrospectives.

The image therefore moves between systems that assign different meanings to wealth.

Within celebrity culture:

wealth = fascination / status.

Within business discourse:

wealth = economic success.

Within populist political communication:

wealth = possible evidence of independence or competence.

Within critical political discourse:

wealth = elite privilege / contradiction with populist positioning.

The same material can therefore support opposite political readings.

This produces a complex circulation:

LUXURY IMAGE

↙ ↘

WINNER NARRATIVE **ELITE-PRIVILEGE CRITIQUE**

The semantic conflict is enabled precisely by the same visual evidence.

Both interpretations depend on recognition of wealth. The disagreement concerns its value. This demonstrates that circulation can preserve **denotation while reversing axiology**.

Everyone sees luxury. One frame says:

SUCCESS.

Another:

ELITISM.

The political struggle occurs over the value assigned to the same sign.

This is an important mechanism because it shows that polarization does not necessarily require disagreement about what is visually present.

It may concern disagreement about **what the visible should mean politically**.

IMG 1d: distributed circulation and wearable reproduction

IMG 1d differs from the other Trumpian texts because the MAGA cap circulates not only as an image but as a **material object reproduced across bodies**.

Its circulation therefore has at least two dimensions:

MEDIA CIRCULATION

and

MATERIAL CIRCULATION.

The cap travels through photographs, videos, social posts, memes, and journalistic representations. But it also travels physically through:

- purchase;
- wearing;
- gifting;

- merchandising;
- rallies;
- everyday public space.

The political sign therefore occupies both media and embodied social environments. This produces a remarkable semiotic effect. The supporter is not merely circulating an image of political identity.

The supporter becomes a **carrier of the political sign**.

The relation becomes:

POLITICAL OBJECT

↓

ACQUISITION

↓

BODY

↓

PUBLIC DISPLAY

↓

SECONDARY VISUAL CIRCULATION.

A person wears the cap. Someone photographs the person. The photograph enters social media. The material sign produces a new digital sign. The movement becomes cyclical:

DIGITAL / MEDIA SIGN

↓

MATERIAL OBJECT

↓

EMBODIED PERFORMANCE

↓

NEW MEDIA IMAGE.

This makes **IMG 1d** one of the strongest examples of the collapse between media representation and everyday political practice. Political identity leaves the screen. Enters the body. Returns to the screen. The circulation is therefore **trans-material**. This mechanism intensifies collective belonging because repetition occurs both perceptually and socially.

The user sees the sign online. Sees it in crowds. May wear it personally. Recognizes others wearing it. The political code becomes environmentally present.

IMG 1e: circulation as amplification of a disputed claim

The circulation of **IMG 1e** provides perhaps the clearest demonstration of the relation between platform visibility and post-truth. A fabricated or misleading image can initially have limited reach. Its political effects expand when circulation removes it from its point of origin and places it before audiences unfamiliar with its provenance.

The sequence becomes:

CONTENT PRODUCED

↓

REPOSTING

↓

SOURCE DISTANCE INCREASES

↓

CONTEXT DECREASES

↓

VISIBILITY INCREASES.

This creates an important asymmetry. As the image moves farther from its original source, audiences may become less capable of reconstructing:

- who created it;
- when;
- for what purpose;
- whether it was labeled;
- what factual status it originally possessed.

Circulation can therefore produce **provenance erosion**. The sign remains visible. Its history becomes less visible. The image is separated from its evidential conditions.

This process is particularly dangerous in relation to fabricated visual content because documentary appearance may survive even when provenance disappears.

The receiver encounters:

IMAGE FIRST

and

SOURCE HISTORY LATER, IF AT ALL.

The image can therefore enjoy a perceptual advantage. Later fact-checking creates another circulation. The fabricated image is reproduced in order to criticize it.

The structure becomes:

MISINFORMATION CIRCULATION

↓

CORRECTIVE CIRCULATION.

The second attempts to neutralize the first.

But correction can paradoxically increase the total visibility of the sign. This creates a difficult semiotic problem:

TO CORRECT THE IMAGE, ONE MAY NEED TO SHOW THE IMAGE.

The correction therefore operates within a double bind. It challenges the claim while potentially extending the sign's cultural life. The image can become increasingly recognizable even among subjects who reject it. This is one of the mechanisms through which misinformation becomes a **shared political reference** rather than disappearing after correction.

The Mileian corpus reveals a somewhat different relation between circulation and leadership because its principal signs often possess a strong capacity for **fragmentation and replay**.

The chainsaw can be isolated. The shout can become a short clip. The anti-caste opposition can become a slogan. Productive chaos can generate numerous extractable moments. Graphs can become screenshots.

The Mileian political text therefore lends itself strongly to **modular circulation**. The original communicative event can be disassembled into smaller units that continue independently.

This can be represented as:

COMPLEX EVENT

↓

EXTRACTION

↓

FRAGMENT 1

FRAGMENT 2

FRAGMENT 3

↓

INDEPENDENT CIRCULATION.

The political persona then emerges through the cumulative repetition of these fragments. This is particularly compatible with platform logic. Short-form media reward content that can function without extensive context.

Milei's visually and emotionally dense signs are particularly suited to such extraction.

IMG 2a: the chainsaw as transmedia emblem

The chainsaw of **IMG 2a** possesses extremely high circulatory efficiency because it combines:

- simple metaphor;
- strong shape;
- immediate physical affordance;
- dramatic visual salience;
- clear association with the leader.

Once stabilized, the chainsaw can appear:

- in photographs;
- video clips;
- caricatures;
- news illustrations;
- memes;
- political commentary;
- supportive graphics;
- critical graphics;
- verbal metaphors even when the object is absent.

This final transition is especially important.

The visual sign can migrate into language. One can speak of “the chainsaw” without showing a chainsaw. The object becomes a **discursive category**.

The sequence is:

MATERIAL OBJECT

↓

VISUAL SYMBOL

↓

POLITICAL METAPHOR

↓

LINGUISTIC SHORTHAND.

This is a particularly advanced form of circulation because the sign crosses semiotic systems. Visuality becomes language. The physical tool becomes abstract political vocabulary. The image therefore acquires a **transsemiotic life**.

At this stage, the chainsaw no longer depends on its constant physical presence. Its symbolic meaning can be activated lexically. A policy can be described as “chainsaw politics”. A reform as another application of the chainsaw. The sign has escaped the image. This demonstrates how political imagery can eventually reshape political language itself.

IMG 2b: fragmentation of bodily intensity

IMG 2b is particularly compatible with audiovisual remediation. Milei’s shouting, gestures, facial intensity, and confrontational bodily performance produce moments that can be easily extracted from longer media events.

A television interview lasting thirty minutes may be reduced to:

- ten seconds of shouting;
- one pointed finger;

- one facial expression;
- one highly confrontational phrase.

The process becomes:

DURATIVE PERFORMANCE

↓

SELECTION OF INTENSITY PEAK

↓

SHORT CLIP

↓

CIRCULATION.

The resulting fragment may be highly representative of Milei's public persona while being minimally representative of the complete event from which it was extracted.

This is a critical distinction.

The fragment can be:

ETHOTICALLY REPRESENTATIVE

while

CONTEXTUALLY INCOMPLETE.

That is, it may accurately resemble the leader's established style while omitting the broader argumentative sequence.

This combination makes such clips especially powerful.

The audience sees something that feels "very Milei". Recognition is strong. Context is weak. The persona may therefore dominate over the proposition.

The viewer remembers:

MILEI SHOUTING

more readily than:

THE COMPLETE ARGUMENT WITHIN WHICH THE SHOUT OCCURRED.

Circulation thus shifts emphasis from discourse to **performative intensity**. This is one of the ways platformized politics privileges persona over extended argumentation.

IMG 2c: circulation of a category

The "caste" of **IMG 2c** circulates differently because its most powerful element is categorical rather than purely visual. Once the opposition has been stabilized, heterogeneous actors can be inserted into the same semantic category.

A politician. A union leader. A bureaucrat. A journalist. An institutional opponent. Different figures can be labeled as members or defenders of the same system.

The category therefore possesses **expansive circulatory capacity**.

Its structure becomes:

CASTE

↓

ACTOR "A"

ACTOR "B"

ACTOR "C"

ACTOR "D".

The term travels. Its referents change. The antagonistic function persists. This is a particularly powerful form of political circulation because the category can continuously absorb new adversaries.

The sign does not need to remain attached to one person. It becomes a reusable **classification device**. This connects circulation directly with political categorization. The public can appropriate the term and apply it independently.

Users can identify new examples of the caste. The political discourse becomes participatory because supporters can extend the category. The leader supplies the classificatory code. The audience applies it.

The structure becomes:

LEADER DEFINES CATEGORY

↓

AUDIENCE LEARNS CATEGORY

↓

AUDIENCE CLASSIFIES REALITY

↓

CATEGORY EXPANDS.

This is one of the most important mechanisms through which populist discourse becomes socially productive. The political vocabulary does not merely describe the world. It teaches supporters how to sort the world.

IMG 2d: circulation as the engine of productive chaos

In **IMG 2d**, circulation does not merely follow productive chaos. It is one of the mechanisms through which productive chaos exists. A provocation that does not circulate remains local. A confrontation becomes politically significant when it produces:

- reaction;
- counter-reaction;
- journalistic coverage;

- commentary;
- memes;
- parody;
- supportive amplification;
- hostile amplification.

The process can be represented as:

PROVOCATION

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

REACTION

↓

RECIRCULATION

↓

NEW PROVOCATION / INTERPRETATION.

The circulation is recursive. There is no clear endpoint. Every response can become new content. This creates a political communication system in which opponents become **co-producers of visibility**.

The leader provokes. The opponent responds. The response confirms that the provocation mattered. The leader may then react to the response. The conflict expands.

This can generate a self-reinforcing loop:

CONFLICT → VISIBILITY → CONFLICT → VISIBILITY.

Productive chaos is therefore not merely a characteristic of Milei's performance. It emerges from the **networked interaction among multiple actors**.

Journalists. Politicians. Supporters. Critics. Influencers. Platforms. All contribute to the reproduction of the conflict. This is one of the clearest examples in the corpus of meaning becoming **distributed across a media ecology**. No single text contains the whole phenomenon. Productive chaos is the result of relations among texts.

IMG 2e: screenshots, simplification, and the circulation of technical authority

Economic charts in **IMG 2e** circulate according to another logic. Graphs are originally embedded in explanatory contexts. They may belong to:

- presentations;
- speeches;
- reports;
- interviews;
- social posts.

Once screenshotted or extracted, however, the graph can circulate independently. This produces a significant tension between:

TECHNICAL COMPLEXITY

and

CIRCULATORY SIMPLIFICATION.

The original graph may require:

- methodology;
- time frame;
- axis interpretation;

- data source;
- definitions;
- comparison criteria.

The circulating screenshot may reduce all this to:

- one line;
- one arrow;
- one percentage;
- one dramatic change.

The graph therefore becomes increasingly **rhetorical through extraction**. Its visual authority survives. Its methodological context may weaken.

The relation becomes:

COMPLEX DATA OBJECT

↓

EXTRACTION

↓

SIMPLIFIED VISUAL CLAIM

↓

VIRAL POLITICAL EVIDENCE.

This does not automatically make the graph inaccurate. The point is different: circulation can change the balance between **technical qualification and visual immediacy**. The graph may become easier to understand at the cost of reduced context. This transformation is especially important because numerical visualization possesses a strong cultural association with objectivity.

The simplified graph can therefore retain an **epistemic aura**. The viewer sees axes. Numbers. Lines. Percentages. These forms can signal:

- measurement;
- expertise;
- evidence.

The political claim receives technical authority before the underlying methodological decisions are evaluated. The graph therefore possesses a form of **portable epistemic credibility**.

This is one of the reasons **IMG 2e** is particularly significant to the post-truth framework. Post-truth communication need not reject technical evidence. It can selectively mobilize the **visual rhetoric of technicality**. Data become part of political spectacle not by ceasing to be data, but by being reorganized for circulation.

Across both corpora, one recurring phenomenon is **contextual compression**. The more efficiently a sign circulates, the less contextual information it may require or retain.

A long political event becomes one image. A speech becomes one quote. A program becomes one object. A controversy becomes one meme. An economic trajectory becomes one graph. The process can be represented as:

COMPLEX POLITICAL REALITY

↓

SELECTIVE REPRESENTATION

↓

CIRCULATORY FRAGMENT

↓

CONDENSED POLITICAL MEANING.

Compression is not necessarily falsification.

Every representation selects. The important issue is that digital circulation intensifies the degree and speed of selection. The fragment can become more visible than the event. The symbol more memorable than the program. The slogan more reproducible than the argument. The image more durable than the explanation.

This creates an asymmetry between:

POLITICAL COMPLEXITY

and

MEDIA PORTABILITY.

The more portable a sign becomes, the more efficiently it can circulate. But portability often depends on simplification.

Trump and Milei both construct political identities highly compatible with this environment because their central signs possess unusual **semiotic compressibility**.

Trump:

- fist;
- MAGA cap;
- gold;
- dominant posture.

Milei:

- chainsaw;
- shout;
- caste;
- graph.

Each can activate a much larger political universe through a relatively small visual or lexical unit.

Circulation also changes the role of the public. The audience is not simply a destination for political meaning. It becomes a site of reinterpretation. Users can:

- agree;
- reject;
- mock;
- expand;
- translate;
- compare;
- contextualize;
- decontextualize;
- combine;
- remix.

Political meaning therefore becomes collectively negotiated.

The structure can be represented as:

OFFICIAL SIGN

↓

PUBLIC APPROPRIATION

↙ ↓ ↘

SUPPORT PARODY OPPOSITION

↓

MULTIPLE DERIVATIVE TEXTS.

The political image develops a **polyphonic life**. This polyphony is particularly important because it prevents us from assuming that viral circulation means ideological persuasion.

A sign can circulate because it is admired. Because it is hated. Because it is funny. Because it is shocking. Because it is being corrected. Because users enjoy conflict. Virality and persuasion are therefore analytically distinct.

The relation is:

HIGH CIRCULATION

does not necessarily equal

HIGH CONSENSUS.

This distinction is essential to any rigorous analysis of **digital populism**. A highly visible sign may indicate:

- support;
- polarization;
- controversy;
- cultural centrality;
- or some combination of these.

The corpus should therefore be interpreted in terms of **semiotic visibility and political function**, not through an automatic equation between visibility and electoral effectiveness.

Supportive communities play a particularly important role in transforming leader signs into collective symbols. The raised fist can be reproduced with celebratory captions. The MAGA cap worn and photographed. The chainsaw incorporated into supportive memes. Economic graphs recirculated as evidence of success. Through these practices, supporters perform **mythological extension**.

The leader provides the initial sign. The community multiplies it.

The process becomes:

LEADER SIGN

↓

COLLECTIVE APPROPRIATION

↓

REPETITION

↓

COMMUNITY MEMORY

↓

MYTHOLOGICAL STABILIZATION.

The sign becomes more powerful because it no longer belongs exclusively to the leader. The political community has taken possession of it. This symbolic appropriation is crucial to populist leadership. A purely personal sign remains celebrity. A collectively appropriated sign can become **movement identity**.

The transition is:

HIS SIGN

↓

OUR SIGN.

For Trump, **IMG 1d** provides the clearest example of this passage.

For Milei, **IMG 2a** can perform a similar function when the chainsaw is adopted symbolically by supporters as a representation of desired political cuts.

The object becomes collectively desired action. The public moves from spectator to symbolic participant.

Opponents likewise become important actors in the life of political signs. A strongly personalized and provocative leader can occupy large amounts of oppositional attention.

Critics may continually reproduce:

- Trump's statements;
- Trump's MAGA symbols;
- Milei's chainsaw;
- Milei's shouting;
- Milei's confrontations.

This reproduction can increase visibility even when the evaluation is negative.

The process becomes:

LEADER PRODUCES SIGN

↓

OPPONENT CONDEMNS SIGN

↓

SIGN IS REPRODUCED

↓

NEW AUDIENCE ENCOUNTERS SIGN.

Again, this does not mean criticism benefits the leader overall. It may persuade audiences against him. The relevant point is that opponents participate in the **circulatory economy** of the sign.

This creates a paradox of mediatized conflict:

TO OPPOSE THE LEADER, ONE OFTEN MUST REPRODUCE THE LEADER.

The political persona therefore occupies not only supportive media spaces but also hostile ones.

Visibility becomes cross-ideological. The leader is present everywhere because everyone is talking about him. This condition strongly favors personalized politics. The individual actor becomes the common reference point connecting otherwise opposed publics.

Collective reinterpretation does not occur on a neutral infrastructure.

Platforms organize circulation through ranking systems, recommendations, engagement signals, network structures, and interface design. Some political signs therefore acquire greater visibility than others.

The key issue is not simply whether content exists but whether it is **selectively surfaced**.The semiotic life of the sign is therefore conditioned by:

- recognizability;
- emotional intensity;
- controversy;
- shareability;
- format;
- timing;
- network position.

Highly condensed political signs may be particularly adapted to these conditions because they can be processed rapidly and reproduced easily.

The relationship can be represented as:

SEMIOTIC COMPRESSIBILITY → EASY INTERACTION → HIGH CIRCULATORY POTENTIAL → REPEATED VISIBILITY → STABILIZED RECOGNITION.

This is one of the reasons the platform environment can favor the emergence of highly personalized symbolic politics. A recognizable leader supplies a shortcut. The face, object, gesture, or slogan immediately identifies the political world. The user need not process a complete party program before reacting. Trump and Milei therefore function as **high-density semiotic nodes**.

Their personas connect many heterogeneous signs. A red cap activates Trump. A chainsaw activates Milei. The symbol becomes a gateway to a much larger ideological network.

As circulation continues, the question of original authorship can become less important to everyday interpretation. Circulation and the erosion of original authorship

Users may recognize a meme without knowing who created it. An image without knowing the photographer. A graph without remembering the original speech. A slogan without knowing its first context.

This produces a progressive movement from:

AUTHORED TEXT

toward

CULTURAL SIGN.

The relation becomes:

WHO MADE THIS?

less central than:

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN OUR POLITICAL CULTURE?

This is a significant stage in the development of political symbols.

A sign becomes culturally powerful when it can circulate **beyond dependence on its original author**.

MAGA exemplifies this clearly.

The chainsaw increasingly does as well.

The sign enters common political vocabulary. Supporters and opponents alike can use it.

The political actor remains its primary referent, but no longer controls every occurrence.

This is one of the ways personal political branding becomes a broader **cultural code**.

Another important effect of circulation is contamination among discursive domains.

Politics increasingly encounters:

- entertainment;
- celebrity culture;
- meme culture;
- journalism;
- economic expertise;
- advertising aesthetics;
- humor;
- fan culture.

The boundaries among these domains become porous.

- **IMG 1c** connects politics and luxury celebrity culture;
- **IMG 1d** connects political ideology and merchandising;
- **IMG 1e** connects political conflict and meme circulation;
- **IMG 2a** connects policy discourse and spectacular object performance;
- **IMG 2d** connects political conflict and memetic acceleration;
- **IMG 2e** connects technical economic visualization and political spectacle.

The political text therefore becomes hybrid.

It does not belong exclusively to the institutional political sphere.

This hybridization can be represented as:

- POLITICS ↔ ENTERTAINMENT;
- POLITICS ↔ MEME CULTURE;
- POLITICS ↔ JOURNALISM;
- POLITICS ↔ DATA VISUALIZATION;
- POLITICS ↔ CELEBRITY.

The leader's identity becomes stronger when it can move across these domains without becoming unrecognizable.

Trump's celebrity-business persona gives him particular trans-domain portability.

Milei's television and memetic performances likewise facilitate movement between political and entertainment registers.

Circulation therefore rewards leaders whose signs possess **cross-contextual adaptability**.

From circulation to collective stabilization, the **cumulative effect of circulation** is not necessarily semantic chaos. Paradoxically, extensive circulation can eventually produce **greater symbolic stabilization**.

At first:

- the sign is new;
- interpretations are open;
- context matters greatly.

After repeated circulation:

- recognition increases;
- certain associations recur;
- interpretive shortcuts emerge.

The sequence becomes:

NOVEL SIGN

↓

MULTIPLE CONTEXTS

↓

REPEATED ASSOCIATIONS

↓

CULTURAL FAMILIARITY

↓

STABILIZED POLITICAL CODE.

- The raised fist increasingly signifies Trumpian resistance.
- The red cap increasingly signifies MAGA.
- The chainsaw increasingly signifies Mileian rupture.
- The graph increasingly becomes compatible with the economist-leader persona.
- The sign therefore becomes easier to read as its circulation history grows.

This process corresponds to what can be called **collective semiotic learning**. The public learns the code through repetition. One does not need formal instruction. The political environment teaches through exposure. The more often the sign is encountered, the faster it can be interpreted.

The political text therefore progressively requires less explanation. This is particularly important for digital populism because communicative efficiency depends heavily on **rapid recognition**.

Trump and Milei, two circulatory regimes: the comparative corpus suggests two different dominant modes of circulation

Trump's political signs tend strongly toward **iconic recurrence**.

The same highly recognizable forms are repeatedly returned to circulation:

- the fist;
- the central leader;
- the luxury environment;
- MAGA;
- the threatening other.

The general process is:

SIGN → RECOGNITION → REPEAT → STABILIZE.

Milei's signs tend more strongly toward **productive recirculation through transformation**.

The chainsaw is reapplied. Anger generates clips. The caste absorbs new actors. Productive chaos generates further content. Graphs update the political trajectory.

The process is:

SIGN → REACTION → VARIATION → RECIRCULATION → NEW ACTIVATION.

The difference can therefore be expressed as:

TRUMP

CIRCULATION AS REINFORCEMENT OF A RECOGNIZABLE SYMBOLIC CENTER

MILEI

CIRCULATION AS CONTINUOUS REACTIVATION OF A DISRUPTIVE PROCESS

Trumpian circulation tends to make the sign **monumental**. Mileian circulation tends to make the sign **operative**.

Trump's image returns because it represents a stable identity. Milei's returns because it can be applied to another act of transformation.

Again, these are dominant tendencies rather than exclusive categories. The Trumpian media system also generates continuous conflict. The Mileian system also stabilizes highly iconic symbols.

The distinction concerns the deeper mode through which circulation contributes to leadership identity.

The analysis of circulation also clarifies a central aspect of **post-truth credibility**.

Credibility is no longer produced exclusively at the point of original enunciation.

It can be generated, intensified, contested, or transformed through **collective repetition**.

A sign may appear credible because:

- many users reproduce it;
- trusted members of a community share it;
- it appears repeatedly across different contexts;
- it fits an already stabilized worldview;
- it is accompanied by strong emotional reactions;
- it possesses visual features culturally associated with evidence.

The relation between repetition and truth can therefore become problematic.

Repetition does not logically prove a claim. But it can create **familiarity**.

Familiarity can influence perceived plausibility.

The structure becomes:

REPEATED EXPOSURE

↓

FAMILIARITY

↓

REDUCED PERCEPTUAL STRANGENESS

↓

POSSIBLE INCREASE IN SUBJECTIVE PLAUSIBILITY.

At the semiotic level, the important point is that repeated visibility can contribute to an effect of **normalization**.

The sign becomes part of what the political community expects to see.

This is particularly relevant to **IMG 1e**, where a fabricated representation can become culturally familiar even when its referential basis has been challenged. But it also applies more broadly to leadership.

Trump repeatedly appears strong. Strength becomes expected. Milei repeatedly appears disruptive. Disruption becomes expected.

The same mechanism stabilizes ethos. The political persona begins to appear self-evident.

The deepest consequence of this process is that the contemporary mediatized leader is not produced exclusively by the leader himself.

Trump is produced by:

- Trump;
- campaign communication;
- supporters;
- journalists;

- critics;
- photographers;
- platforms;
- memes;
- archives.

Milei is produced by:

- Milei;
- his communicative performances;
- supporters;
- opponents;
- television;
- social platforms;
- memetic communities;
- economic visualizations;
- journalistic framing.

The political persona is therefore a **collective semiotic construction**.

This does not mean that all actors possess equal power. The leader retains exceptional visibility and agency. Campaign organizations have resources unavailable to ordinary users.

Major media organizations possess large audiences. Platforms organize differential visibility. The final public identity emerges from the interaction of all these forces.

The leader becomes a **distributed textual object**. No single image contains him. No single statement defines him. The persona emerges from the recurrence of relations across many texts.

This can be represented as:

TEXT 1 + TEXT 2 + TEXT 3

↙ ↘

MEDIA REACTION + USER REACTION + MEMETIC REUSE

↓

MEDIATIZED POLITICAL PERSONA.

The leader therefore becomes less like a single text and more like a **semiotic ecosystem**.

This conceptualization is particularly useful for comparing Trump and Milei because their respective identities remain recognizable despite enormous heterogeneity of content.

The underlying grammar connects the fragments.

Trump:

- strength;
- success;
- patriotism;
- dominance;
- restoration.

Milei:

- rupture;
- anger;
- anti-caste conflict;

- productive chaos;
- libertarian transformation.

Circulation continually introduces new surface texts. The deeper structures organize them.

Across the Trumpian corpus:

- **IMG 1a** circulates from news document toward iconic resilience;
- **IMG 1b** accumulates into a recurring prototype of dominant leadership;
- **IMG 1c** crosses celebrity, business, and political discourses;
- **IMG 1d** circulates simultaneously as material object and media sign;
- **IMG 1e** demonstrates how fabricated imagery can survive through controversy, correction, and polarization.

Across the Mileian corpus:

- **IMG 2a** becomes a transmedia emblem capable of passing from object to metaphor and political vocabulary;
- **IMG 2b** is fragmented into high-intensity units that reinforce performative authenticity;
- **IMG 2c** circulates as a classificatory device through which new actors can be incorporated into the anti-caste opposition;
- **IMG 2d** exists through recursive circulation itself, as provocation and reaction continually generate one another;
- **IMG 2e** transforms technical visualization into portable political evidence through screenshots, simplification, and performative framing.

The two subcorpora therefore converge on one fundamental characteristic of digital political semiosis:

THE SIGN IS NEVER FINISHED AT THE MOMENT OF PUBLICATION.

Publication begins a new phase. The image enters circulation. Circulation generates context. Context generates reinterpretation. Reinterpretation produces further texts. Political meaning therefore becomes **iterative**.

The process can be condensed as:

PRODUCTION

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

APPROPRIATION

↓

REINTERPRETATION

↓

REPRODUCTION

↓

NEW CIRCULATION.

This recursive structure is one of the defining features of platformized political communication.

At the same time, the comparison confirms the broader distinction between Trump and Milei.

Trump's circulation tends to consolidate a political identity organized around a **recognizable symbolic center**. His signs increasingly acquire the character of icons, emblems, and durable markers of a leader whose strength, success, patriotism, and capacity for restoration are continually reaffirmed through recurrence.

Milei's circulation tends more strongly to consolidate a political identity organized around **reiterated operations of disruption**. His signs are continually reactivated through new cuts,

confrontations, antagonists, moments of productive chaos, and statistical representations of transformation.

The distinction can therefore be summarized as:

TRUMP

CIRCULATION MAKES THE LEADER RECOGNIZABLE AGAIN AND AGAIN.

MILEI

CIRCULATION MAKES DISRUPTION HAPPEN AGAIN AND AGAIN.

In both cases, circulation converts political leadership from a sequence of isolated performances into a **durable media environment**. The political subject remains visible because his signs continue to move, return, mutate, and invite new acts of interpretation.

Circulation therefore becomes one of the fundamental mechanisms through which platformized populism transforms temporary political events into persistent symbolic structures. The image ceases to be merely something that has been seen. It becomes something that can **return, be inhabited by new meanings, and continually reproduce the political world to which it belongs**.

9.5. RECURRENCE, ISOTOPY, AND POLITICAL IDENTITY

The analysis developed so far may appear to lead toward a paradox. Digital political communication is characterized by instability.

Images circulate. Contexts change. Meanings are renegotiated. Signs mutate. Audiences appropriate them. Opponents invert them. Platforms redistribute them. Memes transform them. Events continually introduce new visual material.

Trump and Milei remain remarkably recognizable as political figures. Their communicative identities do not dissolve under the pressure of this variability. On the contrary, circulation can contribute to making them more recognizable.

This apparent contradiction can be explained by distinguishing between **variation at the surface level** and **recurrence at deeper semantic levels**.

The individual texts change. The values connecting them recur. The relationship can therefore be represented as:

SURFACE VARIABILITY

↓

SEMANTIC RECURRENCE

↓

ISOTOPIC COHERENCE

↓

POLITICAL RECOGNIZABILITY.

This mechanism is central to the construction of political identity in the corpus.

Trump does not need to reproduce exactly the same image in order to remain semiotically recognizable.

Neither does Milei.

Different visual configurations can activate the same underlying values.

A raised fist and a luxury aircraft are materially unrelated objects.

Within Trump's political universe, they can both participate in the construction of a subject associated with strength and success.

A chainsaw and an inflation graph are likewise formally heterogeneous.

Within Milei's political universe, both can contribute to the construction of a subject represented as capable of transforming an allegedly dysfunctional system.

Political coherence therefore does not depend upon visual uniformity.

It depends upon the capacity of heterogeneous texts to become connected through **recurrent semantic pathways**.

The **concept of isotopy** is particularly productive for understanding this process.

At the level relevant to the present analysis, isotopy can be understood as the recurrence of semantic traits that makes heterogeneous textual elements readable as belonging to a coherent field of meaning.

The important point is recurrence.

A single sign can remain ambiguous. Repeated semantic relations progressively guide interpretation.

The process can be represented as:

SIGN A + SIGN B + SIGN C = RECURRENT SEMANTIC TRAIT

↙ ↘

COHERENT READING.

Political identity therefore emerges not only through the presence of individual symbols but through the **relations of recurrence among them**.

The corpus makes it possible to reconstruct these relations with particular clarity.

For Trump, several recurrent semantic trajectories converge around:

- **STRENGTH**
- **DOMINANCE**
- **SUCCESS**
- **PATRIOTISM**
- **THREAT**
- **RESISTANCE**
- **RESTORATION**.

For Milei, recurrent trajectories converge around:

- **RUPTURE**
- **ANGER**
- **ANTI-CASTE ANTAGONISM**
- **DISRUPTION**
- **ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION**
- **AUTHENTICITY**
- **LIBERTARIAN LEGITIMATION**.

These terms should not be understood as a simple list of themes. They form relations.

Trumpian strength is connected to the capacity for restoration. Threat makes strength necessary. Resistance demonstrates strength. Success legitimates competence. MAGA supplies the collective object toward which restoration is directed.

Similarly, Mileian rupture is connected to the negative construction of the caste. Anger supplies the passional energy of confrontation. The chainsaw materializes rupture. Productive chaos transforms destabilization into a positive political operation. Economic visualization supplies epistemic legitimation to the promised transformation.

The isotopies therefore form **structured networks**.

The most persistent isotopic line in the Trump corpus is that of **strength**.

It appears differently across the five texts.

- In **IMG 1a**, strength is constructed through resistance after bodily vulnerability.
- In **IMG 1b**, strength appears through posture, centrality, dominance, and control of space.
- In **IMG 1c**, it becomes economic strength and the competence associated with success.

- In **IMG 1d**, it is collectivized through MAGA identity and the promise of restored national greatness.
- In **IMG 1e**, it is activated through the construction of threat and the implied necessity of protection, control, and boundary reinforcement.

The isotopic sequence can therefore be represented as:

IMG 1a

RESILIENCE

↓

IMG 1b

DOMINANCE

↓

IMG 1c

SUCCESS

↓

IMG 1d

NATIONAL GREATNESS

↓

IMG 1e

DEFENSE AGAINST THREAT

↓

STRENGTH AS POLITICAL COMPETENCE.

The important point is that strength is not represented identically in every text.

Its semantic manifestations change.

This variation actually expands the isotopy.

Strength becomes:

- physical;
- bodily;
- economic;
- symbolic;
- national;
- protective.

The political persona acquires depth because the same value can be recognized across different domains. This produces a process of semantic reinforcement through heterogeneity.

The signs do not repeat one another literally. They confirm one another structurally.

Strength alone, however, does not fully explain the Trumpian political narrative.

It acquires its broader function through the isotopy of **restoration**.

The MAGA formula is the most explicit manifestation of this structure. “Again” presupposes a temporal comparison. There was a valued condition. That condition has been lost or damaged. The present is negatively evaluated. Political action must recover the desired state.

The basic structure is:

VALUED PAST

↓

DECLINE / LOSS

↓

NEGATIVELY VALORIZED PRESENT

↓

RESTORATIVE ACTION

↓

RECOVERED GREATNESS.

The Trumpian images can be incorporated into this structure:

- **IMG 1a** supplies the resilient subject capable of surviving conflict;
- **IMG 1b** supplies the dominant subject capable of exercising control;
- **IMG 1c** supplies the successful subject whose personal trajectory can be mobilized as evidence of competence;
- **IMG 1d** explicitly names the collective object of value: American greatness;
- **IMG 1e** contributes to the construction of antagonists and threats represented as obstacles to national security, cohesion, or restoration;

The five images therefore participate in a broader narrative grammar:

CRISIS

↓

THREAT

↓

STRONG LEADER

↓

COLLECTIVE MOBILIZATION

↓

RESTORATION.

The individual visual text need not contain the entire structure. It activates one part of it. Circulation allows the fragments to become connected.

The political mythology is therefore **distributed across texts**.

Another recurrent line concerns the figure of the **winner**. This isotopy is particularly visible in **IMG 1c**, but it extends beyond wealth. Trumpian success is represented not simply as possession but as a capacity to prevail.

The semantic chain can be reconstructed as:

WEALTH

↓

SUCCESS

↓

VICTORY

↓

COMPETENCE

↓

LEADERSHIP.

This line intersects with the isotopy of strength. The strong leader is the leader who wins. The successful businessman becomes a political model.

The resistant body of **IMG 1a** can likewise be incorporated into this structure: survival after attack becomes another form of victory over adversity.

The dominant posture of **IMG 1b** visualizes superiority.

The MAGA universe of **IMG 1d** transfers the promise of victory from the individual to the nation.

The political logic becomes:

THE LEADER IS A WINNER

↓

THE LEADER CAN MAKE THE COLLECTIVE WIN.

This transfer is central to the Trumpian ethos. Personal biography is converted into collective promise. The leader's success functions as a prefiguration of national success.

The Trumpian system also **requires a negative pole**. Restoration is narratively meaningful only if something has been lost. Strength becomes politically necessary when something is represented as threatening.

The isotopy of **threat** therefore plays a structurally important role. It is most explicit in **IMG 1e**, but it extends beyond immigration.

The broader semantic opposition can be represented as:

- ORDER / DISORDER;
- SECURITY / THREAT;
- NATION / EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL OTHER;
- CONTROL / LOSS OF CONTROL;
- GREATNESS / DECLINE.

The antagonist is not merely an electoral competitor. It can become the embodiment of a negatively valorized condition. This allows the leader's positive attributes to become narratively necessary. The stronger the threat appears, the more valuable strength becomes.

The relationship is reciprocal:

THREAT PRODUCES THE NEED FOR STRENGTH

and

STRENGTH PRESUPPOSES A THREAT TO BE OVERCOME.

The isotopies therefore reinforce one another. This relational structure is crucial. Political meaning does not arise from isolated values but from **axiological oppositions**. The main Trumpian isotopies can therefore be organized into a network:

DECLINE

↓

THREAT

↓

NEED FOR STRENGTH

↓

STRONG / SUCCESSFUL LEADER

↓

MOBILIZATION OF THE PEOPLE

↓

RESTORATION

↓

GREATNESS.

Within this structure:

- **IMG 1a** primarily activates **resilience**;
- **IMG 1b** activates **dominance**;
- **IMG 1c** activates **success**;
- **IMG 1d** activates **belonging and restoration**;
- **IMG 1e** activates **threat and antagonism**.

The images therefore perform different functions while remaining compatible with a common political grammar. This explains how a highly heterogeneous corpus can nevertheless produce a coherent leadership identity.

Trumpian coherence is not the result of visual sameness. It emerges from isotopic convergence.

In the Mileian corpus, the dominant isotopic line is **rupture**.

Again, the five images express this value differently:

- In **IMG 2a**, rupture is materialized through the chainsaw;
- In **IMG 2b**, rupture appears bodily as rejection of conventional political restraint;
- In **IMG 2c**, it becomes systemic through the opposition between the leader and the political caste;
- In **IMG 2d**, rupture becomes communicative method through productive chaos;
- In **IMG 2e**, it is translated into economic transformation and the attempt to demonstrate measurable discontinuity with the previous model.

The sequence can be represented as:

- **IMG 2c**
  SYSTEM IDENTIFIED AS PROBLEM

  ↓

- **IMG 2b**
  PASSIONAL REJECTION

  ↓

- **IMG 2a**
  SYMBOLIC CUT

  ↓

- **IMG 2d**

  DISRUPTIVE PROCESS

  ↓

- **IMG 2e**

  ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION / LEGITIMATION

Again, this is not a chronological reconstruction. It is an analytical articulation of the functions performed by the five texts. The isotopy of rupture provides the common semantic thread. The chainsaw cuts.

The body refuses restraint. The caste must be dismantled. Chaos destabilizes. Economic data are mobilized to show that another direction is possible or already underway.

Rupture therefore becomes:

- material;
- bodily;
- political;
- communicative;
- economic.

As with Trumpian strength, semantic variation expands rather than weakens the central value.

A second major isotopic line concerns **authenticity**. Within the Mileian system, authenticity is constructed largely through distance from conventional institutional behavior.

The opposition can be represented as:

CONVENTIONAL POLITICS

versus

AUTHENTIC DISRUPTION.

This opposition is particularly visible in **IMG 2b** and **IMG 2d**.

Shouting, intensity, hyperbole, provocation, and communicative disorder can be negatively interpreted through traditional norms of political decorum.

Within the Mileian value system, however, the same traits can be positively resemanticized.

The structure becomes:

- **CONTROLLED POLITICAL PERFORMANCE**
  → potentially artificial;
- **EXCESSIVE POLITICAL PERFORMANCE**
  → potentially sincere.

The important term here is *potentially*. The semiotic analysis does not establish whether the political subject is psychologically sincere.

It examines the textual mechanisms through which **an effect of sincerity or authenticity can be produced**.

The distinction is essential. Authenticity in this analysis is not an empirical judgment about Milei's internal state. It is a **discursive effect**.

The body appears authentic because it seems insufficiently filtered by institutional conventions.

The political subject appears to say what others supposedly refuse to say.

The excess becomes evidence of distance from the system.

The isotopic chain can therefore be represented as:

ANTI-FORMALITY

↓

ANTI-INSTITUTIONALITY

↓

SINCERITY EFFECT

↓

AUTHENTICITY

↓

LEGITIMACY.

This is one of the most distinctive mechanisms of Milei's political persona.

The **negative pole** of the Mileian system is organized most clearly through **IMG 2c**.

The "caste" is not simply an opponent. It functions as a semantic container into which multiple negatively valorized traits can be inserted:

- privilege;
- parasitism;
- inefficiency;
- corruption;
- self-preservation;
- bureaucracy;
- distance from ordinary citizens.

The term therefore possesses considerable **semantic compressibility**. Complex institutional relations are condensed into one morally charged category.

The opposition becomes:

CASTE

versus

PEOPLE / OUTSIDER / TRANSFORMATIVE LEADER.

The category performs several functions simultaneously. It identifies the antagonist. It explains the crisis. It legitimates rupture.

It constructs the leader as external to the problem. It transforms institutional complexity into moral opposition.

The isotopic chain becomes:

CASTE

↓

PRIVILEGE

↓

INEFFICIENCY

↓

CRISIS

↓

NECESSITY OF RUPTURE.

This negative isotopy therefore supports the positive isotopy of transformation. As in the Trumpian corpus, antagonist and leader are structurally interdependent.

The enemy makes the leader necessary.

The chainsaw and productive chaos introduce another important recurrent structure: **destruction as a condition of construction**. Ordinarily, destruction is negatively valorized. To cut, dismantle, destabilize, or destroy may signify loss.

Within Milei's political grammar, however, destruction can be reinterpreted as necessary because the existing structure has already been defined as illegitimate or dysfunctional.

The logic becomes:

BAD SYSTEM

↓

DESTRUCTION OF BAD SYSTEM

↓

POSSIBILITY OF NEW ORDER.

The semantic operation is crucial. Destruction is not represented as an end. It becomes instrumental.

The chainsaw therefore signifies not simply:

CUT,

but:

CUT IN ORDER TO REBUILD / REORDER.

Likewise, productive chaos does not signify:

DISORDER FOR ITS OWN SAKE,

but:

DISORDER AS A TRANSITIONAL FORCE.

The relevant opposition becomes:

STERILE ORDER

versus

PRODUCTIVE DISORDER.

This inversion is central to the Mileian value system. Institutional stability can be negatively coded if it preserves the caste. Disruption can be positively coded if it makes transformation possible.

The isotopy therefore links **IMG 2a** and **IMG 2d** particularly strongly.

The chainsaw supplies the object. Chaos supplies the process. Together they construct the logic of **productive destruction**.

IMG 2e introduces a further isotopic line that prevents Milei's persona from being reducible to pure emotionality.

Economic graphs, inflation data, and statistical visualization activate the semantic field of:

- knowledge;
- measurement;
- expertise;
- diagnosis;
- technical competence;
- evidence.

This creates an important relation with the other Mileian texts. The leader is not constructed only as the subject who wants to destroy the old system.

He is also constructed as the subject who claims to **know why the system has failed and how economic reality should be interpreted**.

The relation becomes:

ANGER

+

KNOWLEDGE

=

LEGITIMATED RUPTURE.

Without the technical component, disruption might appear purely affective.

Without the disruptive component, technical expertise might appear conventional. Their combination produces a distinctive political persona.

The leader can be simultaneously:

PASSIONATE

and

TECHNICAL;

CHAOTIC

and

ECONOMICALLY SYSTEMATIC;

ANTI-INSTITUTIONAL

and

EPISTEMICALLY AUTHORITATIVE.

The apparent contradiction is politically productive. It allows Milei to combine the ethos of the outsider with that of the economist.

The main Mileian isotopies can therefore be organized as:

CASTE / FAILED SYSTEM

↓

ANGER AND REJECTION

↓

RUPTURE

↓

PRODUCTIVE DESTRUCTION

↓

TRANSFORMATION

↓

ECONOMIC LEGITIMATION.

Within this structure:

- **IMG 2a** activates **cutting and rupture**;
- **IMG 2b** activates **anger and authenticity**;
- **IMG 2c** activates **anti-caste antagonism**;
- **IMG 2d** activates **productive chaos**;
- **IMG 2e** activates **economic knowledge and libertarian legitimation**.

As in the Trumpian corpus, the images differ substantially at the surface level. Their coherence emerges from recurrence at deeper semantic levels.

The comparison reveals a particularly important distinction concerning **political temporality**.

Trump's dominant temporal structure is restorative. It points backward in order to move forward.

The sequence is:

VALUED PAST

↓

DEGRADED PRESENT

↓

FUTURE RESTORATION.

Milei's dominant temporal structure is disruptive.

It defines the present as a system requiring discontinuity and directs political desire toward a future produced through rupture.

The sequence is:

FAILED PRESENT / INHERITED SYSTEM

↓

RUPTURE

↓

TRANSFORMATION

↓

NEW FUTURE.

The difference can therefore be expressed as:

TRUMP

THE FUTURE IS LEGITIMATED BY THE RECOVERY OF A VALUED PAST.

MILEI

THE FUTURE IS LEGITIMATED BY THE DESTRUCTION OF A DEVALUED PRESENT.

This is one of the strongest comparative findings of the study. Both leaders construct crisis. Both construct antagonists. Both personalize transformation. Both mobilize emotional intensity. But they organize political temporality differently. Trump's political time is predominantly **restorative**. Milei's is predominantly **discontinuous**.

Trump promises to recover. Milei promises to break. The first requires a memory of greatness. The second requires an image of systemic exhaustion.

A comparable difference appears in the spatial organization of leadership. Trump's corpus repeatedly constructs **centrality**.

The leader occupies:

- the center of the rally;
- the center of the image;
- the center of MAGA identification;
- the symbolic center of national restoration.

The spatial logic tends toward:

CENTER

versus

THREATENING PERIPHERY / OUTSIDE.

The leader gathers the collective around himself. Milei's spatial logic is more strongly organized around **penetration and rupture**.

The chainsaw cuts into the system. The outsider enters institutional space. The angry body expands beyond conventional limits. Productive chaos destabilizes established boundaries.

The spatial logic tends toward:

INSIDE THE SYSTEM

versus

FORCE THAT BREAKS INTO / THROUGH THE SYSTEM.

The distinction can therefore be summarized as:

- **TRUMP OCCUPIES THE CENTER.**
- **MILEI BREAKS THE BOUNDARY.**

Again, the formulation describes a dominant semiotic tendency rather than an exhaustive characterization.

It nevertheless reinforces the broader opposition between monumentalization and disruption reconstructed throughout the analysis. The body likewise performs different dominant functions.

Trump's body tends to signify:

- resilience;
- control;
- dominance;
- verticality;
- command.

The Trumpian body says:

I REMAIN STANDING.

Milei's body tends to signify:

- intensity;
- expansion;
- anger;
- movement;
- overflow.

The Mileian body says:

I WILL NOT REMAIN CONTAINED.

The distinction can be represented as:

TRUMP

BODY AS STABILITY OF POWER

MILEI

BODY AS ENERGY OF DISRUPTION.

The raised fist after the Butler attack condenses

Trump's bodily logic particularly effectively: vulnerability is converted into vertical resistance.

Milei's shouting and expansive gesture condense the opposite movement: contained political decorum is converted into expressive overflow.

The two bodies therefore construct different relationships with political competence.

Trumpian competence is represented as the capacity to **withstand and dominate**.

Mileian competence is represented as the capacity to **break and transform**.

The recurrent semantic structures identified above converge in the production of two distinct **political ethos**.

Trump's ethos can be reconstructed through the convergence of:

- STRENGTH;
- SUCCESS;
- DOMINANCE;
- PATRIOTIC BELONGING;
- RESISTANCE;
- RESTORATION.

The result is the figure of a leader who presents himself as capable of recovering a valued national condition because he already embodies the competence required for victory.

Milei's ethos can be reconstructed through:

- ANGER;
- RUPTURE;
- ANTI-CASTE POSITIONING;
- PRODUCTIVE CHAOS;
- ECONOMIC EXPERTISE;
- LIBERTARIAN TRANSFORMATION.

The result is the figure of a leader who presents himself as capable of producing a new political and economic condition because he refuses the norms of the system he seeks to dismantle.

The comparative structure therefore becomes:

TRUMP

COMPETENCE THROUGH STRENGTH

↓

RESTORATION

and:

MILEI

COMPETENCE THROUGH DISRUPTION

↓

TRANSFORMATION.

This distinction connects the isotopic analysis directly with the semi-narrative structures reconstructed earlier in the study.

Values become narratives. Narratives become performances. Performances become images. Images circulate. Circulation produces recurrence. Recurrence stabilizes ethos.

The complete process can therefore be represented as:

AXIOLOGY

↓

NARRATIVE PROGRAM

↓

PASSIONAL CONFIGURATION

↓

ENUNCIATIVE PERFORMANCE

↓

VISUAL TEXT

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

RESEMANTIZATION / MUTATION

↓

ISOTOPIC RECURRENCE

↓

STABILIZED POLITICAL ETHOS.

This is one of the central models emerging from the research.

***Stabilization* does not mean semantic closure.** The use of the term *stabilization* requires an important qualification. A stabilized political identity is not a completely closed identity. Trump's signs remain contestable. Milei's signs remain contestable.

Supporters and opponents can assign opposite values to the same texts. Strength can be reinterpreted as authoritarianism. Dominance as aggression. Wealth as elitism. Anger as instability. Rupture as destructiveness. Productive chaos as simple disorder. Economic expertise as ideological simplification.

The isotopic structures identified in this study therefore represent **dominant possibilities of coherence**, not universal readings imposed upon every audience. This distinction is fundamental. Semiotic analysis reconstructs the conditions under which a text can produce meaning. It does not assume that all empirical receivers interpret the text identically.

The same structure may be positively or negatively valorized.

For example:

STRENGTH

can become:

LEADERSHIP

or

AUTHORITARIAN DOMINANCE.

Similarly:

RUPTURE

can become:

NECESSARY TRANSFORMATION

or

DANGEROUS DESTRUCTION.

The semantic core may remain recognizable while the axiology is inverted. This produces **polarized stabilization**. The public agrees on the trait. It disagrees on its value.

Trump is strong:

- for one audience, this is competence;
- for another, threat.

Milei is disruptive:

- for one audience, this is authenticity;
- for another, irresponsibility.

The political sign can therefore become stabilized precisely as an **object of conflict**.

Recognition before evaluation. This distinction allows a particularly important analytical sequence to be proposed:

RECOGNITION

↓

CATEGORIZATION

↓

EVALUATION.

The audience first identifies the political code. Then interprets the subject through that code. Only then is the code positively or negatively valorized. This helps explain how political polarization can coexist with extraordinary symbolic coherence.

Supporters and opponents may disagree radically about Trump while sharing the recognition that strength, MAGA, dominance, and confrontation belong to the Trumpian universe.

Likewise, they may disagree radically about Milei while recognizing chainsaw politics, anti-caste discourse, anger, productive chaos, and economic libertarianism as belonging to the Mileian universe.

The leadership identity therefore becomes culturally stable **before consensus is achieved**. Indeed, consensus is not required. Recognizability is sufficient for the political persona to occupy a stable position in public discourse.

The leader as isotopic attractor. The cumulative effect of these processes allows the leader to function as an isotopic attractor. Heterogeneous events are progressively interpreted through the semantic structures already associated with the political persona.

When Trump performs a new act, audiences may ask whether it confirms:

- strength;
- dominance;
- victory;
- MAGA restoration.

When Milei enters a new conflict, audiences may interpret it through:

- rupture;
- anti-caste antagonism;
- productive chaos;
- libertarian transformation.

The established persona therefore begins to organize the interpretation of future events.

The relation becomes:

PAST TEXTS

↓

STABILIZED ETHOS

↓

EXPECTATION

↓

INTERPRETATION OF NEW TEXT.

But the new text then feeds back into the ethos:

NEW TEXT

↓

CONFIRMATION / MODIFICATION

↓

UPDATED ETHOS.

The process is circular. Political identity becomes a **dynamic interpretive schema**.

It does not merely summarize previous communication. It shapes the reception of subsequent communication. This is one of the most important consequences of stabilization. The political persona begins to precede the individual text.

A further consequence of **isotopic density** concerns *communicative efficiency* (**economy**). Once an isotopic system is strongly stabilized, increasingly small signs can activate increasingly large political meanings.

The process can be expressed as:

HIGH ISOTOPIC DENSITY

↓

LOWER NEED FOR EXPLANATION

↓

GREATER COMMUNICATIVE COMPRESSION.

- The MAGA cap does not need to reproduce an entire political manifesto.
- The chainsaw does not need to explain every budgetary reform.
- The raised fist does not need to narrate the entire Butler event each time it appears.
- The graph does not need to reproduce the whole economic doctrine in every circulation.
- The sign functions because audiences possess prior knowledge.

Meaning is partly stored outside the individual text, in the **cultural memory of previous texts**. This makes the sign extremely efficient. A small visible unit activates a large semantic network.

The relation becomes:

CAP → MAGA → TRUMP → RESTORATION → NATIONAL IDENTITY

and:

CHAINSAW → MILEI → CUTS → ANTI-CASTE POLITICS

↙ ↘

LIBERTARIAN TRANSFORMATION.

The political sign therefore works through **semantic compression and inferential expansion**.

The visible form is small. The activated political universe is large.

This communicative efficiency is particularly compatible with **platformized environments.**

Platforms organize attention under conditions of:

- speed;
- fragmentation;
- competition;
- scrolling;

- repetition;
- short-form content;
- continuous interruption.

Within such environments, signs requiring extensive contextual reconstruction may face disadvantages compared with signs capable of immediate recognition.

The Trumpian and Mileian visual systems are highly compatible with this condition because they possess multiple **high-density signs**.

The platform user can recognize:

- Trump through the red cap;
- Milei through the chainsaw;
- Trump through the fist;
- Milei through the expressive bodily excess.

Recognition can precede detailed reading. The political persona therefore becomes suitable for **rapid visual processing**.

This does not mean that platforms mechanically create populism. Nor does it imply that all platform communication necessarily favors the same political style.

The more defensible conclusion is that the formal affordances of platformized communication can be **particularly compatible** with political identities capable of being condensed into recognizable, emotionally charged, and easily reproducible signs. The corpus provides clear examples of this compatibility.

The final effect is a **strong personalization of politics**.

The more heterogeneous political meanings can be condensed into signs associated with the leader, the more the leader becomes the primary organizing principle of the political universe.

Trump is not simply one actor within MAGA. His persona increasingly functions as the center through which MAGA itself is interpreted.

Milei is not simply one advocate of libertarian transformation. His body, voice, chainsaw, conflicts, and economic performances increasingly embody the transformation.

The relationship becomes:

POLITICAL PROGRAM

↓

LEADER

↓

PERSONALIZED SYMBOLIC SYSTEM.

The leader becomes:

- program;
- narrative;
- affect;
- symbol;
- visual identity.

This does not eliminate parties, institutions, ideologies, or collective actors. Rather, it reorganizes their public visibility around a highly personalized semiotic center.

The leader becomes the most efficient sign through which the broader political project can be recognized.

From personalization to political mythology: at its highest level of stabilization, personalization can produce **political mythology**. Myth does not require the disappearance of historical reality. It reorganizes historical material into a simplified and culturally powerful structure.

The leader's biography, objects, gestures, conflicts, victories, threats, economic arguments: all become elements of a larger story, all become elements of a new myth.

For Trump:

THE SUCCESSFUL AND STRONG LEADER RETURNS

TO RESTORE A GREAT NATION UNDER THREAT.

For Milei:

THE DISRUPTIVE OUTSIDER BREAKS A FAILED SYSTEM

IN ORDER TO PRODUCE RADICAL TRANSFORMATION.

These formulations condense the dominant narrative structures identified across the corpus.

They do not reproduce every nuance of either political project.

That is precisely their semiotic function.

Myth simplifies. It connects. It naturalizes.

It makes heterogeneous events appear as manifestations of one underlying truth about the political subject.

The leader ceases to appear as a succession of unrelated performances.

Each new performance becomes another episode in the same story.

The analysis therefore returns to the paradox from which this section began: ***the paradox of digital stability***.

Digital communication is unstable at the level of individual texts.

It can be highly stabilizing at the level of political identity.

The mechanism can now be reconstructed:

MORE CIRCULATION

↓

MORE VARIATION

↓

MORE OCCASIONS FOR RESEMANTIZATION

↓

MORE MUTATION

but simultaneously:

MORE REPETITION

↓

MORE RECOGNITION

↓

MORE ISOTOPIC RECURRENCE

↓

STRONGER POLITICAL IDENTITY.

The two processes occur together. Instability and stabilization are not opposites.

Digital political identity can be stabilized **through controlled or recurrent instability**.

This is particularly visible in the Mileian case, where disruption itself becomes the stable identity.

But it is also visible in Trump's capacity to absorb new events into a pre-existing mythology of strength and restoration.

The surface changes. The grammar persists.

The complete comparative structure emerging from the corpus can therefore be summarized a f**inal comparative model** as follows:

DONALD TRUMP

THREAT / DECLINE

↓

STRENGTH

↓

DOMINANCE

↓

SUCCESS

↓

COLLECTIVE IDENTIFICATION

↓

RESTORATION

↓

GREATNESS

The leader becomes the **central subject capable of recovering a lost object of value**.

JAVIER MILEI

FAILED SYSTEM / CASTE

↓

ANGER

↓

RUPTURE

↓

PRODUCTIVE CHAOS

↓

ECONOMIC REORIENTATION

↓

TRANSFORMATION

↓

LIBERTARIAN LEGITIMATION

The leader becomes the **transformative subject capable of destroying the obstacles that prevent conjunction with a new object of value**.

The two systems share several structural characteristics:

- personalization;
- antagonism;
- emotional intensification;
- visual condensation;
- high symbolic recognizability;
- platform compatibility;
- recurrent construction of authenticity.

They organize these elements differently.

Trump's semiotic system is predominantly structured by the logic:

RECOVER WHAT HAS BEEN LOST.

Milei's by:

DESTROY WHAT PREVENTS THE NEW FROM EMERGING.

This difference provides the deepest comparative opposition reconstructed from the corpus. One leadership model constructs legitimacy through **restorative competence**. The other through **disruptive competence**.

One seeks to stabilize the future by reconnecting it symbolically with an idealized past. The other seeks to legitimate the future through discontinuity with a negatively valorized present.

Resemanticization, mutation, circulation, and isotopic stabilization should therefore be understood as interconnected stages of a single political semiotic process. A sign emerges. It circulates. Its context changes. Its meanings expand. Its function mutates. Audiences appropriate it. Supporters and opponents reproduce it. Platforms contribute to its differential visibility. Repeated associations create semantic recurrence. Recurrence produces recognizable isotopies. Isotopies stabilize ethos. Ethos guides the interpretation of subsequent signs.

The process is therefore recursive:

SIGN

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

RESEMANTIZATION

↓

MUTATION

↓

RECURRENCE

↓

ISOTOPY

↓

ETHOS

↓

EXPECTATION

↓

NEW SIGN

↺

This recursive structure helps explain why the political identities of Trump and Milei can remain coherent within a media environment characterized by continuous transformation. Their identities are not coherent because their communication remains unchanged.

They are coherent because change is repeatedly reorganized around a limited number of highly recognizable values, oppositions, narrative roles, emotional configurations, and visual forms.

Trump's signs repeatedly return to strength, success, resistance, belonging, threat, and restoration.

Milei's signs repeatedly return to anger, rupture, anti-caste antagonism, productive chaos, economic knowledge, and transformation.

The result is not merely a collection of campaign images. It is the construction of two **semiotically organized political worlds**. Within the first, the strong leader promises to restore a greatness represented as having been lost. Within the second, the disruptive leader promises to dismantle a failed order in order to make another one possible.

It is precisely through the circulation, transformation, and recurrence of their signs that these two worlds acquire the appearance of coherence, continuity, and political authenticity.

X. ISOTOPIES, AXIOLOGIES, AND SEMISYMBOLIC RELATIONS

10.1. ISOTOPIC AND AXIOLOGICAL CONFIGURATIONS

The analyses developed in the previous chapters have progressively revealed a set of recurrent semantic structures underlying the apparent heterogeneity of the corpus. Bodies, objects, gestures, colors, spatial arrangements, temporal configurations, passions, slogans, and media performances differ considerably from one text to another, they repeatedly converge around a relatively limited number of values and oppositions.

At this stage of the research, it is therefore useful to move from the analysis of individual mechanisms toward a more synthetic reconstruction of the **deep semantic architecture** organizing the two subcorpora.

The central question becomes:

WHICH RECURRENT VALUES MAKE

THE TEN VISUAL TEXTS COHERENT

AS POLITICAL SYSTEMS?

This question differs slightly from the one addressed in the previous chapter.

The analysis of circulation and stabilization showed **how recurrent meanings survive transformations of context**. The present section asks instead **how those recurrent meanings are organized relationally**.

An isotopy does not consist merely in the repetition of a word, theme, or visual motif.

Its analytical importance lies in the recurrence of semantic traits capable of linking different textual manifestations and making them mutually interpretable.

A fist and an airplane are not figuratively similar.

A chainsaw and an inflation graph are not materially similar.

The texts can become coherent when they are inserted into broader semantic configurations.

The analytical movement is therefore:

HETEROGENEOUS FIGURATIVE ELEMENTS

↓

RECURRENT SEMANTIC TRAITS

↓

ISOTOPIC RELATIONS

↓

AXIOLOGICAL OPPOSITIONS

↓

POLITICAL WORLDVIEW.

This final passage is crucial. Isotopies do not operate in isolation. They are organized through values. Strength acquires meaning because it is opposed to weakness. Restoration because it is opposed to decline. Rupture because it is opposed to continuity. Freedom because it is opposed to constraint. Authenticity because it is opposed to artificiality.

Political semiosis therefore depends upon **difference**. A value becomes intelligible because another value is positioned against it.

The corpus can consequently be read as a set of recurrent **axiological polarities**.

Trumpian political identity is predominantly organized around:

- STRENGTH / WEAKNESS;
- ORDER / DISORDER;
- GREATNESS / DECLINE;
- SUCCESS / FAILURE;

- BELONGING / EXCLUSION;
- SECURITY / THREAT;
- RESTORATION / LOSS;
- AUTHENTIC NATION / HOSTILE OR ILLEGITIMATE OTHER.

The Mileian political identity is predominantly organized around:

- FREEDOM / CONSTRAINT;
- RUPTURE / CONTINUITY;
- NEW / OLD;
- AUTHENTICITY / INSTITUTIONAL ARTIFICIALITY;
- PRODUCTIVE DISORDER / STERILE ORDER;
- TRANSFORMATION / STAGNATION;
- KNOWLEDGE / ECONOMIC MISMANAGEMENT;
- PEOPLE / CASTE.

These oppositions do not simply coexist. They support one another.

The result is a structured political universe in which particular actions appear desirable because the values have already been organized hierarchically.

The **first major axis** of the Trumpian corpus concerns:

STRENGTH / WEAKNESS.

This opposition traverses several texts and operates at different levels.

In **IMG 1a**, bodily vulnerability initially creates the possibility of weakness.

The assassination attempt exposes the political body. The subject can be injured. Threatened. Physically destabilized. The raised fist transforms this initial configuration.

The semantic movement becomes:

VULNERABILITY

↓

RESISTANCE

↓

STRENGTH.

The value of strength is therefore not simply given.

It is narratively produced through the overcoming of its contrary.

This is important because resistance appears stronger when vulnerability has first become visible.

The image does not erase weakness. It subordinates it.

The relation can be represented as:

WEAKNESS POSSIBLE

but

STRENGTH REALIZED.

This contributes to the heroic dimension of the image.

The leader appears strong not because he is invulnerable but because vulnerability fails to destroy political agency.

The same isotopy appears differently in **IMG 1b**.

Here strength is less dependent on an exceptional event and more strongly inscribed in posture.

Frontality. Centrality. Verticality. Dominance. Low-angle framing. These plastic and kinesic configurations allow the leader to appear as a stable locus of authority.

The opposition becomes:

CONTROL / LOSS OF CONTROL.

Trump occupies the first pole.

The political world may be conflictual, but the body is represented as capable of maintaining composure and spatial centrality.

Strength therefore acquires a second form:

STRENGTH AS MASTERY.

In **IMG 1a**, strength means resistance.

In **IMG 1b**, strength means control. The two meanings reinforce one another.

The leader can withstand disruption because he possesses mastery.

This creates a more complex isotopic configuration:

STRENGTH = RESILIENCE + CONTROL.

IMG 1c adds another dimension. Here strength is translated into economic and biographical competence.

The relevant opposition becomes:

SUCCESS / FAILURE.

Aircraft. Gold. Luxury. Wealth. These figurative elements construct a subject already associated with achievement.

Success becomes a form of competence because it indicates that the leader has previously reached highly valued positions within another social domain.

The semantic sequence becomes:

WEALTH → SUCCESS → COMPETENCE → POWER.

The isotopy of strength therefore expands again.

It now includes:

- PHYSICAL / PASSIONAL STRENGTH;
- BODILY DOMINANCE;
- ECONOMIC SUCCESS.

Different figurative domains converge upon the same deeper value.

This is precisely the function of isotopic organization.

The visual texts do not need to resemble one another materially.

They become coherent semantically.

The **second major Trumpian axis** concerns:

GREATNESS / DECLINE.

This opposition finds its most explicit form in **IMG 1d**.

The MAGA formula presupposes that greatness existed before.

It has subsequently been weakened or lost, and can be recovered.

The semantic structure is therefore temporal and axiological simultaneously:

- GREATNESS = POSITIVE;
- DECLINE = NEGATIVE;
- RESTORATION = TRANSFORMATIVE PROGRAM.

The political present is defined through disjunction from the valued state.

The leader's task is to restore conjunction.

The relation can be represented as:

AMERICA ∪ GREATNESS

↓

LOSS

↓

AMERICA ∩ GREATNESS

↓

TRUMP'S NARRATIVE PROGRAM

↓

AMERICA ∪ GREATNESS AGAIN.

The isotopy of greatness thus supplies the **collective object of value** toward which the other Trumpian competences are directed:

- strength alone does not provide a political program;
- success alone does not provide a collective object.

MAGA connects those competences to a national transformation:

- the leader is strong **in order to restore**;
- successful **in order to make the nation successful**;
- dominant **in order to re-establish order**.

The isotopies therefore acquire narrative direction. This is crucial.

Values become political when they are connected to action.

A third Trumpian opposition concerns:

ORDER / DISORDER.

This axis appears across the corpus even when it is not explicitly verbalized.

- In **IMG 1b**, bodily control provides a visual form of order.
- In **IMG 1d**, repeated symbols organize the collective through recognizable identity.
- In **IMG 1e**, threat is constructed through the representation of disorder entering or destabilizing a valued collective space.

The opposition can therefore be represented as:

TRUMP / MAGA / AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

↓

ORDER

versus

THREAT / ALTERITY / LOSS OF CONTROL

↓

DISORDER.

This configuration is especially important because it explains why the isotopy of strength becomes politically necessary.

Strength is valuable because order is represented as threatened.

The relation becomes:

DISORDER → NEED FOR STRENGTH → RESTORATION OF ORDER.

The antagonistic image therefore participates directly in the construction of the leader's competence.

Without disorder, mastery would lose part of its narrative necessity.

The enemy supplies the condition against which the leader's value becomes legible.

The opposition:

SECURITY / THREAT

is especially visible in **IMG 1e**, but it also interacts with the bodily vulnerability of **IMG 1a**.

The Trumpian world contains several types of threat:

- threat to the leader;
- threat to borders;
- threat to national identity;
- threat to collective security;
- threat to the imagined continuity of the nation.

These different threats can be connected through a common semantic trait:

ENDANGERMENT OF A VALUED INTERIOR.

This is crucial.

- In **IMG 1a**, the valued interior is the leader's body and political agency.
- In **IMG 1e**, it is the imagined national or communal space.

The same deeper structure appears at different scales:

BODY UNDER THREAT

and

NATION UNDER THREAT.

This structural analogy facilitates personalization.

The endangered leader and endangered nation can mirror one another.

The leader's resistance then becomes a model for collective resistance.

The relation can be represented as:

TRUMP'S BODY : ATTACK

≈

AMERICA : THREAT.

And consequently:

TRUMP'S RESILIENCE

≈

PROMISED NATIONAL RESILIENCE.

The individual and collective narratives become mutually reinforcing.

IMG 1d and **IMG 1e** also construct a strong opposition between:

BELONGING / NON-BELONGING.

The MAGA cap makes political affiliation visible.

It identifies a community.

The anti-immigration imagery constructs an external or threatening other.

The two texts therefore perform complementary functions.

IMG 1d says:

THIS IS WHO WE ARE.

IMG 1e says:

THIS IS WHO THEY ARE / WHO DOES NOT BELONG TO THE SAME VALUED SPACE.

The political identity becomes relational.

The "we" requires a "they".

The relation can be represented as:

IN-GROUP

↓

SHARED SYMBOLS

↓

BELONGING

versus

OUT-GROUP

↓

THREATENING REPRESENTATION

↓

ALTERITY.

This structure does not merely classify actors. It assigns values. The inside is positively coded. The outside is negatively coded when represented as threatening.

The boundary therefore becomes axiological.

Political belonging is not simply membership.

It becomes **moralized membership**.

The principal Trumpian oppositions can therefore be integrated into a hierarchy:

GREATNESS

is preferable to

DECLINE;

STRENGTH

to

WEAKNESS;

ORDER

to

DISORDER;

SECURITY

to

THREAT;

SUCCESS

to

FAILURE;

BELONGING

to

ALIENATION / EXCLUSION FROM THE AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY.

These values converge upon one overarching political program:

RESTORATION OF A POSITIVELY VALORIZED ORDER.

The deep Trumpian configuration can thus be summarized as:

DECLINE + THREAT + DISORDER

↓

require

STRENGTH + SUCCESS + CONTROL

↓

embodied by

TRUMP

↓

in order to produce

RESTORATION + GREATNESS + SECURITY.

The leader is positioned exactly between the negative and positive poles.

He becomes the operator through whom axiology is transformed into narrative.

This is why personalization is structurally central.

The political values are not presented as self-realizing.

They require an exceptional subject.

The Mileian corpus is organized by a different fundamental opposition:

FREEDOM / CONSTRAINT.

This opposition is especially important because it provides the positive horizon toward which the disruptive program is oriented.

The existing political-economic order is represented as constraining.

State structures, bureaucracy, the political caste, inflation, institutional privilege: these elements become manifestations of a larger semantic field:

CONSTRAINT.

Against them, Milei's libertarian discourse constructs:

FREEDOM

as a superior value.

The transformation can therefore be represented as:

CONSTRAINT

↓

RUPTURE

↓

FREEDOM.

The chainsaw in **IMG 2a** gives this abstract opposition material form.

The object does not directly represent freedom.

It represents the operation through which constraints are supposedly removed.

The chainsaw therefore occupies the intermediary term:

CONSTRAINT

→ CUT →

FREEDOM.

This is important because Mileian freedom is represented not simply as possession of a value but as the result of **subtraction**.

Something must be removed, cut, reduced, dismantled.

Freedom emerges when the obstacle disappears.

The political program is therefore strongly **privative**.

The new condition is produced through elimination of what prevents it.

A second Mileian axis concerns:

CONTINUITY / RUPTURE.

Unlike the Trumpian system, where continuity with an idealized national past is positively valorized, Mileian continuity is often negatively coded when it refers to the inherited political-economic order.

- The old system persists.
- The caste reproduces itself.
- Inflation continues.
- Bureaucracy continues.
- The same political mechanisms recur.
- Duration becomes evidence of failure.

The relation is:

CONTINUITY = STAGNATION.

Against this, Milei constructs:

RUPTURE = POSSIBILITY.

The chainsaw again provides the most direct visual condensation.

But the same value appears in **IMG 2b** through the breaking of bodily protocol, in **IMG 2c** through anti-caste antagonism, and in **IMG 2d** through communicative destabilization.

Rupture therefore operates at several levels:

- material;
- kinesic;
- institutional;

- discursive;
- medial.

The semantic recurrence can be represented as:

- BREAK THE OBJECT;
- BREAK THE PROTOCOL;
- BREAK THE CASTE;
- BREAK THE COMMUNICATIVE ORDER;
- BREAK THE ECONOMIC TRAJECTORY.

The final item connects **IMG 2e** to the same isotopy.

A graph showing a different economic trajectory can be interpreted as evidence that rupture has become measurable.

Thus even the highly ordered visualization of **IMG 2e** remains compatible with the deeper value of discontinuity.

The form is orderly.

The represented change is disruptive.

The continuity/rupture opposition is closely connected to:

OLD / NEW.

The “caste” occupies the old pole:

- it represents persistence;
- inheritance;
- repetition;
- historical failure.

Milei occupies the new pole:

- outsider;
- disruptor;
- different language;
- different behavior;
- different economic program.

The political conflict therefore acquires a temporal morality.

“Old” does not simply mean chronologically previous.

It becomes negatively valorized as exhausted.

“New” becomes positively valorized as possibility.

The structure becomes:

- **OLD = FAILED**;
- **NEW = TRANSFORMATIVE**.

This is almost the inverse of the Trumpian temporal structure.

Trump says:

VALUED PAST → MUST RETURN.

Milei says:

FAILED PAST → MUST END.

The opposition can therefore be formulated as:

TRUMP

PAST VALUE → FUTURE RESTORATION

MILEI

PAST DISVALUE → FUTURE DISCONTINUITY.

This is one of the deepest comparative differences in the entire corpus.

Another central Mileian opposition concerns:

AUTHENTICITY / ARTIFICIALITY.

It emerges especially clearly in **IMG 2b**:

- shouting;
- expansive gestures;
- facial intensity;
- aggressive bodily expression,

within conventional institutional norms, these signs can be interpreted as excessive. But the anti-system frame makes another reading possible.

Controlled politicians may appear:

- scripted;
- strategic;
- mediated;
- inauthentic.

Milei's excess can therefore be positioned as the contrary:

- immediate;
- unfiltered;
- sincere;

- authentic.

The opposition becomes:

INSTITUTIONAL CONTROL

↓

ARTIFICIALITY

versus

EXPRESSIVE EXCESS

↓

AUTHENTICITY.

This is an axiological inversion.

A value conventionally coded as positive—self-control—can become suspicious.

A conventionally negative trait—excess—can become proof of sincerity.

The political system therefore reorganizes ordinary evaluative norms.

This revaluation is one of the distinctive characteristics of disruptive leadership.

The leader is credible because he violates the very conventions whose legitimacy he rejects.

The body becomes evidence of ideological consistency.

The most radical Mileian inversion appears in **IMG 2d**.

The relevant opposition is not simply:

ORDER / CHAOS.

If it were, Milei's political communication would risk assigning positive value to disorder without qualification.

Instead, the corpus suggests a more specific configuration:

STERILE ORDER / PRODUCTIVE CHAOS.

The first term refers to an institutional order represented as dysfunctional precisely because it continues to reproduce itself.

The second refers to destabilization represented as necessary because it can make transformation possible.

The value system therefore reverses conventional expectations.

Order may be negative.

Chaos may be positive.

But only under specific narrative conditions.

The structure is:

OLD ORDER

↓

STAGNATION

↓

CRISIS

therefore

CHAOS

↓

RUPTURE

↓

TRANSFORMATION.

Chaos becomes productive because the pre-existing order has already been negatively coded. This dependence is crucial.

If the old order were positively valued, chaos would appear destructive.

The initial axiological framing makes the later inversion possible.

The political discourse therefore performs two operations:

first:

DEVALUE ORDER;

then:

REVALUE DISRUPTION.

This sequence is central to the Mileian system.

IMG 2e introduces another opposition:

KNOWLEDGE / INCOMPETENCE.

Economic graphs allow Milei's discourse to construct a field in which numerical, statistical, or economic expertise is contrasted with the alleged mismanagement of previous governments.

The visual text contributes to a hierarchy:

MEASUREMENT

DATA

ECONOMIC EXPLANATION

versus

MISMANAGEMENT

IDEOLOGICAL ERROR

FAILED POLICY.

This opposition is particularly important because it adds an epistemic dimension to the disruptive ethos.

Milei is not represented only as:

- angry;
- anti-system;
- provocative.

He is also represented as a subject who **knows**.

The political competence therefore combines:

PASSIONAL INTENSITY

and

EPISTEMIC AUTHORITY.

The relation can be represented as:

ANGER IDENTIFIES THE INTOLERABILITY OF THE SYSTEM

while

KNOWLEDGE EXPLAINS WHY THE SYSTEM FAILS.

The two competences converge upon rupture. Emotion motivates transformation. Knowledge legitimates it.

This helps prevent the Mileian system from collapsing into purely affective politics.

The technical register of **IMG 2e** performs an essential balancing function.

The Mileian political universe is also organized through:

PEOPLE / CASTE.

This opposition resembles other populist structures but acquires a specific articulation in the corpus.

The caste is represented as:

- closed;
- privileged;
- self-reproducing;
- institutionally entrenched.

The people are represented implicitly as those who bear the costs of the system without benefiting from its privileges.

The political leader occupies a special position.

He is institutionally capable of acting but symbolically aligned with those outside the caste.

The structure becomes:

PEOPLE

↔

MILEI

→

CASTE.

The leader mediates the confrontation.

Unlike ordinary mediation, the relation is not conciliatory.

The leader claims legitimacy precisely through refusal of reconciliation with the negatively coded system.

His role is not to negotiate the opposition away. It is to transform it through rupture.

The political program therefore retains a strongly agonistic structure.

The principal Mileian oppositions can therefore be integrated as:

FREEDOM

over

CONSTRAINT;

RUPTURE

over

CONTINUITY OF THE FAILED SYSTEM;

NEW

over

OLD;

AUTHENTICITY

over

ARTIFICIALITY;

TRANSFORMATION

over

STAGNATION;

PRODUCTIVE CHAOS

over

STERILE ORDER;

ECONOMIC KNOWLEDGE

over

MISMANAGEMENT;

PEOPLE / OUTSIDER

over

CASTE.

These values converge on one overarching program:

LIBERATION THROUGH SYSTEMIC DISCONTINUITY.

The deep Mileian configuration can therefore be represented as:

CASTE + CONSTRAINT + STAGNATION + FAILED CONTINUITY

↓

require

ANGER + KNOWLEDGE + RUPTURE

↓

embodied by

MILEI

↓

in order to produce

FREEDOM + TRANSFORMATION + NEW ORDER.

Again, the leader occupies the transition between negatively and positively valorized states.

The comparison reveals that Trump and Milei both require a negatively valorized present. They construct that present differently.

There are two different grammars of crisis:

- Trumpian crisis is predominantly represented as:

  LOSS OF A PREVIOUSLY VALUED CONDITION;

- Mileian crisis is predominantly represented as:

  CONTINUATION OF A HISTORICALLY DYSFUNCTIONAL CONDITION.

The distinction can be expressed as:

TRUMP

THE PROBLEM IS THAT SOMETHING GOOD HAS BEEN LOST.

MILEI

THE PROBLEM IS THAT SOMETHING BAD HAS CONTINUED.

This difference determines the political solution.

If something good has been lost:

RESTORE IT.

If something bad has continued:

BREAK IT.

The two narrative programs therefore derive logically from different constructions of crisis.

The contrast can be formalized:

TRUMP

LOSS → RESTORATION

versus

MILEI

CONTINUITY → RUPTURE.

This opposition runs through virtually every analytical level examined in the research.

The corpus also reveals **two distinct models of political competence**.

Trumpian competence is predominantly constructed through:

- strength;
- control;
- resilience;
- success;
- capacity for protection.

The leader is competent because he is represented as already possessing the qualities required to recover order.

The model is:

COMPETENCE AS POSSESSION OF SUPERIOR ATTRIBUTES.

Mileian competence is predominantly constructed through:

- rupture;
- confrontation;
- refusal of normalization;
- capacity for cutting;
- economic diagnosis.

The leader is competent because he is represented as capable of acting upon a system that others have failed to transform.

The model is:

COMPETENCE AS TRANSFORMATIVE OPERATION.

This distinction can be summarized as:

- **TRUMP → COMPETENCE AS POWER TO RESTORE**;
- **MILEI → COMPETENCE AS POWER TO DISRUPT**.

One emphasizes what the leader **has**. The other what the leader **does**.

Again, both dimensions exist in both leaders, but the corpus reveals different dominant orientations.

Authenticity is similarly differentiated: **there are two models of authenticity**.

1) TRUMPIAN AUTHENTICITY tends to emerge from **consistency with a stabilized persona**.

The leader repeatedly appears:

- strong;
- dominant;
- successful;
- patriotic;
- resistant.

The effect is:

HE CONTINUES TO BE WHO WE EXPECT HIM TO BE.

2) MILEIAN AUTHENTICITY tends more strongly to emerge from **apparent non-conformity with institutional expectations**.

The leader:

- shouts;
- provokes;
- exceeds conventional boundaries;

- uses a chainsaw;
- attacks the caste.

The effect is:

HE DOES NOT BEHAVE LIKE THE SYSTEM HE CONDEMNS.

The two authenticity structures can therefore be expressed as:

TRUMP

AUTHENTICITY THROUGH CONSISTENCY

MILEI

AUTHENTICITY THROUGH NON-CONFORMITY.

This distinction is particularly useful for explaining why very different styles can both generate authenticity effects.

There is no single aesthetic of authenticity.

Authenticity depends upon correspondence between performance and the identity the political subject has already constructed.

The **deepest differences** can now be represented through a series of paired oppositions:

TRUMP | MILEI

RESTORATION | RUPTURE

RECOVERY | REFUNDATION

CENTER | VECTOR

CONTROL | INTERVENTION

STABILITY | TRANSFORMATION

MONUMENTALITY | DISRUPTION

PAST AS VALUE | PAST AS BURDEN

ORDER TO BE RESTORED | ORDER TO BE DISMANTLED

SUCCESS AS CREDENTIAL | ECONOMIC KNOWLEDGE AS DIAGNOSIS

AUTHENTICITY THROUGH CONSISTENCY | AUTHENTICITY THROUGH NON-CONFORMITY

THREATENED COMMUNITY | CONSTRAINED COMMUNITY

PROTECT | LIBERATE

These oppositions should not be interpreted as mutually exclusive empirical descriptions of the two politicians. Their function is analytical. They reconstruct the dominant contrasts produced by the selected corpus.

The distinction is essential because both leaders can display behavior that does not fit perfectly within these polarities. Trump can be disruptive. Milei can seek stabilization. Trump can attack institutions. Milei can occupy institutional forms.

The semiotic analysis identifies the **predominant organization of values**, not a totalizing psychological essence.

Despite the differences, an important **structural similarity emerges**. Both political systems can be represented through the same abstract sequence:

NEGATIVELY VALORIZED PRESENT

↓

EXCEPTIONAL LEADER

↓

TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION

↓

POSITIVELY VALORIZED FUTURE.

The difference concerns the semantic content assigned to each position.

For Trump:

DECLINE

↓

STRONG LEADER

↓

RESTORATION

↓

GREATNESS.

For Milei:

FAILED SYSTEM

↓

DISRUPTIVE LEADER

↓

RUPTURE

↓

FREEDOM / TRANSFORMATION.

This is particularly important because it identifies what is genuinely comparable between the two cases without erasing their differences.

The leaders share a **narrative morphology of crisis and exceptional intervention**.

They differ in the values through which that morphology is filled.

This distinction allows the comparative analysis to remain rigorous. The objective is not to claim that Trump and Milei are politically identical. It is to show how different ideological projects can organize themselves through partially homologous semiotic mechanisms. In both corpora, the political leader occupies the critical position between the negative and positive poles (***the leader as mediator between axiological poles***).

The subject does not simply represent the desired value. He performs the operation required to move toward it.

Trump mediates between:

DECLINE

and

GREATNESS.

Milei mediates between:

CONSTRAINT

and

FREEDOM.

Trump between:

DISORDER

and

ORDER.

Milei between:

STAGNATION

and

TRANSFORMATION.

The leader therefore acts as an **axiological converter**. He turns negative into positive.

The narrative structure can be expressed as:

DISVALUE

↓

LEADER

↓

VALUE.

This position helps explain the extraordinary personalization of both political projects.

If the leader is constructed as the indispensable operator of the transformation, political value itself becomes dependent upon the leader's competence.

The collective object cannot be reached without him.

The relationship becomes:

DESIRED FUTURE

dependent on

PERSONALIZED POLITICAL AGENCY.

This creates a strong bond between ideological project and personal ethos.

One of the most significant findings of the corpus is that **these deep axiological structures are repeatedly translated into visual form**.

Trumpian:

- **STRENGTH**
  becomes vertical body;

- **RESTORATION**
  becomes MAGA repetition;
- **SUCCESS**
  becomes gold and aircraft;
- **BELONGING**
  becomes repeated red caps;
- **THREAT**
  becomes antagonistic imagery.

Mileian:

- **RUPTURE**
  becomes chainsaw;
- **ANGER**
  becomes bodily tension;
- **ANTI-CASTE**
  becomes oppositional categorization;
- **PRODUCTIVE DISORDER**
  becomes chaotic visual rhythm;
- **ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION**
  becomes graphic trajectory.

The relation can therefore be represented as:

ABSTRACT VALUE

↓

FIGURATIVE CONDENSATION

↓

PLASTIC ORGANIZATION

↓

RECOGNIZABLE POLITICAL SIGN.

This translation is central to contemporary visual politics.

Values that would otherwise remain abstract become perceptually accessible:

- strength can be seen;
- rupture can be seen;
- success can be seen;
- anger can be seen;
- belonging can be seen;
- economic change can be seen.

The image gives politics a sensible form.

Repeated translation of values into recognizable images can progressively make the relationship appear natural (**ideological naturalization**).

Trump stands centrally because he is strong.

Milei holds the chainsaw because he disrupts.

MAGA is red because that is simply how MAGA looks.

Mileian anger appears inseparable from the leader's identity.

These associations are historically constructed.

They become naturalized through recurrence.

The process can be represented as:

CONTINGENT ASSOCIATION

↓

REPETITION

↓

RECOGNITION

↓

STABILIZATION

↓

NATURALIZATION.

At the final stage, the political sign no longer appears to need explanation.

The cap “is” MAGA. The chainsaw “is” Milei.

The fist “is” resistance. The graph “is” expertise or transformation.

This is precisely where structural semiotic analysis becomes important.

It denaturalizes the apparently obvious relation between sign and political value.

It asks:

- HOW DID THIS FORM COME TO CARRY THIS MEANING?
- WHICH OPPOSITIONS MAKE THAT MEANING POSSIBLE?
- WHICH REPETITIONS STABILIZED THE ASSOCIATION?
- WHICH ALTERNATIVE VALORIZATIONS REMAIN POSSIBLE?

The political sign therefore becomes visible as a construction rather than an intrinsic truth.

The two systems can now be condensed into a **comparative matrix of deep values**:

TRUMPIAN CONFIGURATION	MILEIAN CONFIGURATION
Strength	Rupture
Restoration	Transformation
Greatness	Freedom
Success	Economic competence
Control	Intervention
Order	Productive destabilization
Security	Liberation from constraint
Center	Vector
Boundary	Cutting / crossing
Continuity with valued past	Discontinuity with failed past
Consistency	Non-conformity
Monumentality	Tension
Patriotic belonging	Anti-caste identification
Winner	Disruptor

These relations should not be read as exhaustive definitions.

They constitute the **deep comparative coordinates** through which the selected corpus becomes analytically intelligible.

The reconstruction of these isotopic and axiological systems prepares the next analytical step toward the **symbolic and semisymbolic level**.

The corpus does not only contain abstract oppositions between values. Many of those oppositions correspond systematically to perceptible contrasts.

Trumpian:

VERTICAL / HORIZONTAL

can become associated with

POWER / SUBORDINATION;

CENTER / PERIPHERY

with

LEADERSHIP / FOLLOWING;

GOLD / ORDINARY TONALITY

with

SUCCESS / NORMALITY.

Mileian:

CONTINUITY / CUT

can become associated with

SYSTEM / RUPTURE;

COMPACTNESS / EXPANSION

with

CONTROL / PASSIONAL EXCESS;

ORDERED FIELD / FRAGMENTATION

with

INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY / PRODUCTIVE DESTABILIZATION.

At this point, the analysis begins to move from isotopy and axiology toward symbolic and semisymbolic relations.

The question is no longer only:

WHICH VALUES RECUR?

but:

HOW ARE DIFFERENCES ON THE PLANE OF EXPRESSION SYSTEMATICALLY RELATED TO DIFFERENCES ON THE PLANE OF CONTENT?

This transition is fundamental because it allows us to show that political meaning is not merely attached to visual forms after the fact.

In many cases, the very organization of expression participates structurally in the production of ideological opposition.

- Verticality can correspond to power.
- Centrality to leadership.
- Cutting to rupture.
- Fragmentation to destabilization.
- Chromatic recurrence to collective identity.
- Directional change to political transformation.

The visual and ideological systems therefore begin to mirror one another.

This is precisely the point at which the analysis of **semi-symbolic systems** becomes necessary.

10.2. SYMBOLIC OBJECTS AND SEMIOTIC CONDENSATION

The comparative corpus contains several objects and gestures whose political significance exceeds their immediate material or denotative function. They operate as **symbolic condensers**, that is, as forms capable of concentrating multiple semantic levels into a relatively compact and highly recognizable visual unit.

This process is crucial to contemporary political communication.

Political programs are complex. Ideologies are abstract. Historical narratives are long. Economic explanations are technical. Collective identities are heterogeneous.

Political images frequently reduce this complexity to a small number of signs capable of being recognized almost instantaneously.

The relation can be represented as:

COMPLEX POLITICAL SYSTEM

↓

SEMIOTIC SELECTION

↓

SYMBOLIC OBJECT / GESTURE

↓

CONDENSED MEANING

↓

RAPID POLITICAL RECOGNITION

The effectiveness of symbolic condensation depends upon the fact that the object does not need to reproduce the whole political discourse. It activates it.

- A cap does not contain the entire MAGA project.
- A chainsaw does not contain the whole libertarian program.
- A raised fist does not contain the full historical sequence of the Butler assassination attempt.
- An inflation graph does not contain every element of an economic doctrine.

Each can open access to a much larger semantic network.

The visible sign is therefore smaller than the political universe it activates.

This asymmetry is central.

The political object functions through **inferential expansion**.

A limited perceptual form produces a larger interpretive field.

The process can be expressed as:

SMALL SIGN

↓

LARGE SEMANTIC NETWORK

This is one of the principal reasons such signs are particularly compatible with platformized political communication.

- They require little space.
- Can be recognized quickly.
- Can survive cropping.
- Can be repeated.
- Can be transformed into memes.
- Can move across media.
- And can retain meaning even when surrounded by minimal explanatory text.

Their political efficiency derives from **compression without total loss of recognizability**.

Not every politically represented object automatically becomes a symbolic object.

- A microphone used during a speech may remain largely instrumental.
- A chair may remain part of the setting.
- A vehicle may remain simply a vehicle.

For symbolic condensation to occur, **the object must progressively become connected to semantic values exceeding its immediate practical function**.

The process can be represented as:

MATERIAL OBJECT

↓

REPEATED POLITICAL CONTEXTUALIZATION

↓

SEMANTIC ASSOCIATION

↓

STABILIZATION

↓

SYMBOLIC OBJECT

At the first level, the object answers:

WHAT IS THIS?

At the symbolic level, it increasingly answers:

WHAT POLITICAL WORLD DOES THIS OBJECT STAND FOR?

The transition is therefore from:

DENOTATION

toward

CONDENSATION OF AXIOLOGY AND NARRATIVE.

This distinction is particularly clear in **IMG 1d** and **IMG 2a**. A cap and a chainsaw are ordinary material objects outside their political contexts. Within the corpus, they cease to function as ordinary objects. The cap becomes MAGA. The chainsaw becomes rupture. Their political identities are so strongly stabilized that the object can eventually be recognized before the full ideological meaning is explicitly verbalized. This indicates a high degree of symbolic condensation.

The raised fist of **IMG 1a** differs from the other symbolic objects because it is not an external material object but a **bodily configuration**. Its semiotic function is comparable.

The gesture condenses:

- survival;
- resistance;
- defiance;
- strength;
- continuation;
- political agency under threat.

At the level of the immediate event, the gesture is brief. At the level of political meaning, it becomes dense.

The relation can be represented as:

RAISED FIST

↓

RESISTANCE

↓

RESILIENCE

↓

STRENGTH

↓

LEADERSHIP UNDER THREAT

The gesture therefore performs a considerable amount of political work.

Its symbolic power derives partly from the fact that it is **already culturally legible** before the Butler event.

Raised fists have long histories in political, protest, labor, revolutionary, resistance, and solidarity contexts.

The gesture therefore enters the Trumpian image with pre-existing cultural associations. The specific event modifies them. The fist is not simply borrowed from an abstract repertoire. It becomes attached to Trump's wounded body after an assassination attempt.

The political meaning therefore emerges from the intersection:

CULTURAL MEMORY OF THE FIST

+

SPECIFIC HISTORICAL EVENT

+

TRUMPIAN ETHOS

This produces a new symbolic configuration.

The gesture remains recognizable as a sign of resistance, but its referent becomes specific:

- Trumpian resistance;
- Trumpian survival;
- Trumpian defiance.

The sign is therefore simultaneously:

INTERTEXTUAL

and

PERSONALIZED.

This double structure contributes to iconicity. The viewer does not need to invent the meaning of the raised fist from zero. The gesture arrives with cultural history. But the Butler image rewrites that history around a new political subject.

This mechanism can be described as **symbolic appropriation through event-specific reanchoring**.

The pre-existing sign is reanchored in a new biography.

The relation becomes:

GENERAL POLITICAL GESTURE

↓

TRUMP-SPECIFIC EVENT

↓

TRUMP-SPECIFIC ICON.

This is an important form of condensation because the image combines cultural familiarity with individual personalization.

In **IMG 1b**, symbolic condensation occurs at the level of the entire body. Trump's posture of dominance progressively exceeds the specific bodily act.

The visual body becomes a sign of:

- authority;
- control;
- confidence;
- leadership;
- superiority;
- centrality.

The process can be represented as:

POSTURE

↓

BODILY STYLE

↓

ETHOS

↓

SYMBOLIC LEADER FORM.

At this point, the body does not simply belong to the political subject. It becomes one of the subject's principal symbols.

The relationship is reflexive:

TRUMP'S BODY REPRESENTS TRUMP.

This apparent tautology is analytically important. A political persona can become so visually stabilized that the leader's bodily style functions as an emblem.

The subject is represented by his own repeated way of appearing. This is a different mechanism from the cap or chainsaw. The external symbolic object can be separated from the body, the bodily symbol cannot: **it is incorporated**.

The political identity therefore becomes literally embodied.

This form of condensation is particularly powerful because it reduces the distance between:

SIGN

and

SUBJECT.

Trump does not need to hold an external emblem in order to signify control. His posture itself can perform that function. The body becomes self-symbolizing.

The objects represented in **IMG 1c** perform symbolic condensation differently. Aircraft, private interiors, gilded surfaces, and luxury environments are material signs of wealth, but within the Trumpian system they become condensed expressions of a larger political mythology.

Their immediate semantic field includes:

- money;
- ownership;
- luxury;
- exclusive access;
- mobility;
- status.

Through resemanticization, these meanings are reorganized around:

SUCCESS.

Success then becomes connected to:

COMPETENCE.

Competence to:

LEADERSHIP.

The sequence becomes:

AIRPLANE / GOLD

↓

WEALTH

↓

SUCCESS

↓

WINNER

↓

POLITICAL COMPETENCE.

This is a particularly clear example of semiotic condensation through **vertical semantic layering**.

The object activates one level. That level activates another. The final political meaning may be several inferential steps removed from the initial material fact.

The aircraft is not itself political competence. But within the narrative system, it can become evidence-like.

This is precisely what makes the symbol ideologically productive.

The object appears concrete. The political inference appears abstract. The concrete supports the abstract. The relation becomes:

VISIBLE POSSESSION

→

INVISIBLE COMPETENCE.

This movement from visible object to invisible attribute is one of the central functions of political symbolism.

The aircraft makes success seeable. Gold makes wealth seeable.

The leader’s claim to competence therefore gains a perceptual support.

The political argument acquires materiality.

Among the Trumpian texts, **IMG 1d** is perhaps the most complete example of symbolic condensation.

The MAGA cap combines:

- material object;
- color;
- text;
- body;
- membership;
- national mythology;
- campaign identity;
- collective memory.

The object is therefore already multi-layered.

Its semiotic density can be represented as:

CAP

↓

RED

↓

MAGA TEXT

↓

TRUMP

↓

MOVEMENT

↓

AMERICAN GREATNESS

↓

RESTORATION

↓

COLLECTIVE BELONGING.

Each level activates the next. The entire chain can be triggered by a single glance. This is a remarkable economy of political signification. The cap functions almost like a **compressed ideological interface**. It does not merely show support. It organizes access to a worldview.

The viewer can infer:

- who the wearer supports;
- which movement is being referenced;
- which national narrative is being activated;
- which political temporality is implied by “again”.

The object therefore condenses:

- IDENTITY;
- AXIOLOGY;
- TEMPORALITY;
- NARRATIVE;
- COLLECTIVE POSITIONING.

This makes **IMG 1d** particularly significant from a structural semiotic perspective.

Few political objects in the corpus integrate so many levels simultaneously. The cap is both simple and complex. Simple perceptually. Complex semantically. This combination is one of the defining properties of successful political symbols.

IMG 1e demonstrates that symbolic condensation can also operate through negative figures. The fake images depicting immigrants allegedly “eating cats” condense a much broader political discourse about:

- immigration;
- security;
- cultural difference;
- threat;
- boundary violation;
- failure of political control.

The image therefore reduces complex social and institutional questions to an emotionally intense scene. The process becomes:

COMPLEX IMMIGRATION ISSUE

↓

SPECTACULAR VISUAL EPISODE

↓

THREAT

↓

POLITICAL ALTERITY

↓

DEMAND FOR CONTROL.

The image becomes a symbolic condensation of the antagonist. This is particularly important because antagonistic politics depends on reducing heterogeneous groups into recognizable categories. The visual sign can perform this reduction with extraordinary speed.

Instead of:

- policy documents;
- demographic data;
- legal categories;
- economic analysis;
- integration debates,
- the spectator receives one image.

The complexity of the issue is collapsed into:

THE THREATENING OTHER.

This is a high-risk semiotic operation precisely because symbolic efficiency can coexist with factual falsity or extreme distortion. The image can be effective as condensation while being unreliable as representation.

This distinction is fundamental to the study of post-truth. Semiotic power and referential accuracy are independent variables. A sign may be highly efficient politically and highly defective factually.

The corpus therefore requires both levels to remain analytically separate.

Across the Trumpian subcorpus, symbolic condensation can be summarized as follows:

- **IMG 1a**
  gesture → resilience;
- **IMG 1b**
  body → dominance;

- **IMG 1c**

  luxury / airplane → success;

- **IMG 1d**

  cap → belonging and restoration;

- **IMG 1e**

  threatening imagery → antagonism and need for control.

These condensations converge around the larger Trumpian mythology:

STRONG AND SUCCESSFUL LEADER

↓

MOBILIZES THE AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

↓

AGAINST THREAT

↓

TO RESTORE GREATNESS.

The symbolic objects therefore function as **entry points into the same political world**.

Each activates a different region of the mythology. Together, they produce density. The leader's identity becomes distributed across multiple condensers. This distribution is important because it allows the political persona to remain recognizable across different communicative contexts.

If one sign is absent, another can activate the same underlying system. The political identity therefore possesses **symbolic redundancy**.

Strength can be represented through fist or posture. Success through gold or aircraft. Belonging through cap or flag. Threat through different antagonistic representations. This redundancy contributes to resilience.

The political mythology does not depend on a single sign. It is a network.

Within the Mileian corpus, **IMG 2a** provides the most evident symbolic object. The chainsaw is exceptional because its practical function is already structurally homologous to the political operation it symbolizes.

A chainsaw cuts. Milei promises cuts. The metaphor therefore possesses unusually low interpretive distance.

The relation becomes:

MATERIAL OPERATION

↓

POLITICAL OPERATION.

This makes the object highly efficient.

The chainsaw condenses:

- cuts in public expenditure;
- anti-bureaucratic politics;
- anti-state rhetoric;
- anti-caste positioning;
- fiscal reduction;
- institutional rupture;
- radical transformation.

The sequence can be represented as:

CHAINSAW

↓

CUT

↓

REDUCTION

↓

DESTRUCTION OF OLD STRUCTURE

↓

ANTI-CASTE POLITICS

↓

LIBERTARIAN TRANSFORMATION.

The object therefore contains both:

NEGATIVE OPERATION

and

POSITIVE HORIZON.

It destroys. But destruction is represented as the precondition for liberation or transformation. This duality is central. The chainsaw is not simply a symbol of negation.

It contains a narrative:

REMOVE → FREE.

This gives the object high programmatic density.

The object functions almost as a visual verb.

It says:

CUT.

Unlike the MAGA cap, which primarily identifies a political world, the chainsaw specifies an operation.

This difference is one of the most important contrasts between the Trumpian and Mileian symbolic systems.

The cap says:

BELONG.

The chainsaw says:

ACT.

More precisely:

- **MAGA CAP → IDENTITY CONDENSER**
- **CHAINSAW → OPERATION CONDENSER**.

The distinction corresponds directly to the broader contrast between restorative and disruptive leadership:

- Trumpian symbolism tends toward recognition of a valued collective identity;
- Mileian symbolism tends toward activation of a transformative operation.

In **IMG 2b**, the body becomes the symbolic condenser.

Shouting. Pointing. Facial tension. Expanded gestures. These elements condense a broader political claim:

THIS SUBJECT IS NOT CONTROLLED

BY THE CONVENTIONS OF THE CASTE.

The visible body therefore functions as evidence of ideological distance.

The process becomes:

BODILY EXCESS

↓

ANTI-FORMALITY

↓

ANTI-INSTITUTIONALITY

↓

SINCERITY EFFECT

↓

AUTHENTICITY.

The body condenses an entire theory of political truthfulness.

Conventional restraint can be interpreted as performance. Excess can be interpreted as sincerity. The body becomes a symbolic argument.

This is particularly significant because the sign operates without requiring an external object.

As with Trump's **IMG 1b**, the political subject becomes self-symbolizing. The content differs sharply.

Trumpian body:

CONTROL.

Mileian body:

UNCONTAINED INTENSITY.

The comparison becomes:

- **TRUMP → BODY AS SYMBOL OF MASTERY**
- **MILEI → BODY AS SYMBOL OF AUTHENTIC DISRUPTION**.

Both are highly condensed. But they condense opposed models of political competence.

IMG 2c demonstrates that symbolic condensation need not depend exclusively on a material object. A category can perform the same function.

“The caste” condenses:

- politicians;
- bureaucracy;
- privilege;
- corruption;
- institutional continuity;
- self-interest;
- inefficiency;
- historical responsibility.

The category becomes a symbolic container.

The relation can be represented as:

MULTIPLE ACTORS / INSTITUTIONS

↓

ONE CATEGORY

↓

“CASTE”

↓

MORALIZED ANTAGONIST.

This is an exceptionally efficient operation.

The political system contains many heterogeneous actors. The label reduces them to one narrative function.

Complexity becomes antagonism. The category therefore behaves similarly to a visual emblem. It allows rapid recognition.

Instead of asking:

WHICH ACTOR?

the discourse asks:

IS THIS ACTOR PART OF THE CASTE?

The category becomes a **membership classifier**. This is the negative counterpart to the MAGA cap.

The cap identifies who belongs to the valued community. The caste label identifies who belongs to the devalued system.

The comparative relation is therefore particularly revealing:

IMG 1d

MAGA → POSITIVE MEMBERSHIP

versus

IMG 2c

CASTE → NEGATIVE MEMBERSHIP.

One includes. The other excludes. One makes belonging visible through an object. The other makes antagonism legible through a category. Both perform political simplification by organizing complex social fields into recognizable membership structures.

IMG 2d contains a more abstract form of symbolic condensation. Here no single object necessarily dominates the entire configuration.

Instead, a cluster of recurrent features is progressively condensed into the concept of **productive chaos**:

- shouting;
- provocation;
- hyperbole;
- media collision;
- fragmentation;
- acceleration.

This is significant because the symbolic unit is not a single figurative object but a **pattern**. The pattern itself becomes recognizable.

The sequence becomes:

MULTIPLE HETEROGENEOUS EVENTS

↓

RECURRENT COMMUNICATIVE QUALITIES

↓

CHAOS

↓

PRODUCTIVE CHAOS

↓

MILEIAN LEADERSHIP STYLE.

The process moves from plurality toward abstraction. The symbol is not one thing. It is a way in which things repeatedly happen. This can be described as **configurational condensation**.

The political symbol becomes a relation rather than an object. This is especially important for understanding digital leadership.

Not every political identity requires a logo-like emblem. A leader can also become recognizable through a recurring **pattern of intensity**.

The public may recognize the style:

“this is very Milei”,

even when none of the canonical objects are visible.

The symbolic condensation has moved from the figurative level toward the **syntactic level of communication**.

What is condensed is:

- not the object;
- but the mode.

This is one of the most sophisticated symbolic mechanisms in the corpus.

The graph in **IMG 2e** performs another highly distinctive type of condensation.

Economic knowledge is complex. Inflation involves:

- time series;
- measurement criteria;
- monetary dynamics;
- fiscal policy;
- prices;
- expectations;
- institutional factors.

A graph reduces this complexity.

The viewer sees:

- line;
- direction;
- increase;
- decrease;
- turning point.

The graph therefore converts technical complexity into perceptual intelligibility.

The relation becomes:

ECONOMIC COMPLEXITY

↓

DATA REDUCTION

↓

GRAPH

↓

VISIBLE TREND

↓

POLITICAL INTERPRETATION.

The graph is therefore a symbolic condenser of **epistemic authority**. Its function goes beyond representation of numbers. It creates a visible form for expertise.

The politician who explains the graph can appear as:

- knowledgeable;
- technical;

- evidence-based;
- competent.

The chart therefore condenses two things simultaneously:

THE ECONOMIC REALITY

and

THE LEADER'S CLAIM TO UNDERSTAND IT.

This dual condensation is particularly important.

The graph represents the object of knowledge, but its public use also represents the knowing subject.

The political scene becomes:

DATA + INTERPRETER = EPISTEMIC LEADERSHIP.

This is one of the key ways **IMG 2e** balances the affective excess of the Mileian persona. The chainsaw condenses action. The angry body condenses authenticity. The caste condenses antagonism. Productive chaos condenses disruptive style. The graph condenses knowledge. Together, the five images construct a multidimensional leadership.

Across the Mileian subcorpus, symbolic condensation can be summarized as:

- **IMG 2a**
  chainsaw → rupture;
- **IMG 2b**
  bodily excess → authenticity;
- **IMG 2c**
  caste → systemic antagonist;
- **IMG 2d**
  productive chaos → transformative energy;

- **IMG 2e**

  graph → economic knowledge and legitimacy.

These signs converge upon the broader political mythology:

FAILED SYSTEM

↓

IDENTIFIED AS CASTE

↓

REJECTED PASSIONALLY

↓

CUT / DESTABILIZED

↓

TRANSFORMED

↓

LEGITIMATED THROUGH ECONOMIC KNOWLEDGE.

The signs therefore form a system:

- the chainsaw alone would reduce Milei to destruction;
- the graph introduces direction and expertise;
- the body alone could reduce him to anger;
- the anti-caste category provides a narrative target;
- productive chaos connects bodily intensity to media circulation.

The corpus therefore distributes the leadership function across complementary symbolic condensers.

Trump and Milei: object-centered and operation-centered symbolism. The comparison makes it possible to identify a deeper difference between the two symbolic regimes.

Trump's principal signs tend more often to condense **states and identities**:

- strength;
- success;
- belonging;
- greatness;
- threat.

Milei's principal signs tend more often to condense **operations and transformations**:

- cutting;
- breaking;
- confronting;
- destabilizing;
- reorienting.

This contrast can be expressed as:

TRUMP

SYMBOLIC CONDENSATION OF WHAT THE POLITICAL WORLD SHOULD BE

MILEI

SYMBOLIC CONDENSATION OF WHAT MUST BE DONE TO THE POLITICAL WORLD

Trump's imagery is strongly nominal.

Milei's is strongly verbal.

This distinction can be formulated metaphorically as:

- **TRUMP → POLITICAL NOUNS**
- **MILEI → POLITICAL VERBS**.

Trumpian signs **name**:

- greatness;
- success;
- strength;
- America;
- threat.

Mileian signs **perform**:

- cut;
- break;
- attack;
- dismantle;
- measure;
- transform.

This is not a grammatical claim about the literal wording of the texts. It is a semiotic distinction concerning the dominant mode of condensation.

- Trumpian symbolism tends to stabilize **substantive values**;
- Mileian symbolism tends to stabilize **transformative operations**.

This finding is fully consistent with the broader comparative model.

Restorative leadership requires a clearly recognizable object of value. Disruptive leadership requires a clearly recognizable operation capable of producing discontinuity.

The corpus also reveals different relationships between object and political agency.

In Trump's case, symbolic objects often demonstrate what the leader **possesses or embodies**:

- the airplane;
- gold;
- the cap associated with his movement;
- the fist as his bodily gesture.

The relation tends toward:

OBJECT / BODY → ATTRIBUTE OF SUBJECT.

In Milei's case, symbolic objects more often demonstrate what the subject **does**:

- the chainsaw acts upon the system;
- the graph demonstrates transformation;
- the body projects anger outward.

The relation tends toward:

OBJECT / BODY → OPERATION PERFORMED BY SUBJECT.

The distinction can therefore be summarized as:

- **TRUMP → SYMBOLS ATTRIBUTE VALUE**
- **MILEI → SYMBOLS ATTRIBUTE ACTION**.

Again, this is a dominant orientation, not an exclusive property.

But it helps explain why the two leadership models feel visually different even when both rely heavily on highly recognizable signs.

Symbolic condensation inevitably involves simplification. This is not necessarily a defect. All representation selects. Without simplification, political communication would become impossible.

The analytical issue is therefore not whether simplification occurs but **what it excludes and what it makes salient**.

The MAGA cap condenses national identity but cannot represent the internal diversity of the nation.

The chainsaw condenses fiscal reduction but cannot represent the institutional complexity of public budgeting.

The anti-immigration image condenses threat while potentially erasing empirical complexity and, in the specific case of fabricated imagery, factual reality itself.

The graph condenses economic trajectories but cannot communicate every methodological qualification simultaneously.

The relation becomes:

CONDENSATION

=

GAIN IN COMMUNICATIVE EFFICIENCY + LOSS OF COMPLEXITY.

This trade-off is central to political communication. The stronger the symbol, the greater its capacity to organize meaning rapidly. But the same strength may reduce nuance. The image becomes powerful precisely because it says less while activating more.

This paradox can be expressed as:

SEMANTIC REDUCTION

produces

IDEOLOGICAL EXPANSION.

The visible sign becomes small. The worldview becomes large.

Another important feature is that symbolic objects often connect cognition and emotion. The cap does not merely identify MAGA, it can generate pride or belonging. The fist does not merely indicate resistance, it can generate admiration, solidarity, or emotional intensity.

The chainsaw does not merely signify spending cuts, it can produce enthusiasm, shock, fear, or amusement. The graph does not merely provide information, it can generate reassurance, hope, anger, or vindication depending on the trajectory displayed and the viewer's political position.

The sign therefore condenses both:

SEMANTIC CONTENT

and

PASSIONAL POTENTIAL.

This duality is crucial. Political symbols are effective partly because they make thought and feeling difficult to separate. The viewer recognizes and evaluates almost simultaneously.

The process may become:

SEE

↓

RECOGNIZE

↓

FEEL

↓

POSITION.

The speed of this sequence is especially important in platformized environments.

The symbolic object also participates in different regimes of truth. The raised fist derives credibility from an indexically grounded event.

The luxury aircraft derives credibility from visible material possession. The MAGA cap derives credibility from repeated social use. The chainsaw derives credibility from its performative materiality. The graph derives credibility from numerical and technical codes.

The fabricated imagery of **IMG 1e**, by contrast, imitates the evidentiary force of visual representation while lacking the referential basis it appears to possess.

The corpus therefore contains several different **veridictory sources of symbolic authority**.

These can be summarized as:

- **EVENTAL AUTHORITY**
  in **IMG 1a**;
- **BODILY AUTHORITY**
  in **IMG 1b** and **IMG 2b**;
- **MATERIAL AUTHORITY**
  in **IMG 1c** and **IMG 2a**;
- **COLLECTIVE AUTHORITY**
  in **IMG 1d**;
- **FABRICATED PSEUDO-EVIDENTIAL AUTHORITY**
  in **IMG 1e**;
- **TECHNICAL AUTHORITY**
  in **IMG 2e**.

This variation is important because political credibility cannot be reduced to one type of evidence.

Different symbolic condensers produce different effects of truth.

The cumulative effect of the objects is strong personalization. The more political values become attached to highly recognizable signs associated with the leader, the easier it becomes to access the broader political project through the individual.

The relation becomes:

SYMBOL

↓

LEADER

↓

POLITICAL WORLDVIEW.

The symbol therefore performs a shortcut:

- The cap leads to Trump, Trump leads to MAGA, MAGA leads to restoration;
- The chainsaw leads to Milei, Milei leads to anti-caste rupture, rupture leads to libertarian transformation.

The leader becomes the intermediate node connecting object and ideology. This has a powerful consequence. The political program increasingly acquires a face: an object, a gesture, a bodily style.

The ideology becomes **personified and materialized simultaneously**.

This is one of the principal semiotic conditions of highly personalized populist leadership.

A strong symbolic condenser also possesses **cultural portability**. It can move beyond the political event into broader culture.

The MAGA cap can appear in:

- television;
- comedy;
- fashion;
- parody;

- advertising references;
- popular culture.

The chainsaw can similarly become a shorthand beyond its original campaign context.

The sign becomes intelligible even to people who do not actively follow every political development.

This is a crucial stage. The political symbol has become part of the wider cultural repertoire. It no longer requires specialist political knowledge.

This can be represented as:

CAMPAIGN SIGN

↓

POLITICAL SYMBOL

↓

CULTURAL REFERENCE.

The transition increases semiotic power because the political actor becomes recognizable outside the explicitly political sphere:

- celebrity and politics begin to overlap;
- meme culture and politics overlap;
- entertainment and ideology overlap.

This connects the symbolic level directly to the broader post-truth ecology analyzed throughout the study.

Another important difference concerns **the symbolic treatment of the leader and the antagonist**.

The leader often receives a **positive individualized symbol**.

Trump:

- fist;
- gold;
- MAGA;
- dominant body.

Milei:

- chainsaw;
- angry body;
- graph.

The antagonist, by contrast, is often symbolically generalized.

Trumpian anti-immigration imagery transforms heterogeneous people into a threatening category.

Milei's "caste" transforms heterogeneous political actors into a single systemic category.

This produces a structural asymmetry:

- **LEADER → INDIVIDUALIZED AND ICONIC**;
- **ENEMY → GENERALIZED AND TYPOLOGIZED**.

The leader has a face. The enemy becomes a type.

This asymmetry contributes to personalization.

The protagonist becomes concrete. The antagonist becomes categorical.

The viewer is invited to identify with a recognizable person against a generalized adversarial field. The political narrative therefore simplifies through unequal representational density.

The corpus also allows a distinction between:

POSITIVE SYMBOLIC CONDENSATION

and

NEGATIVE SYMBOLIC CONDENSATION.

Positive condensation constructs objects of identification or desire.

Examples include:

- **IMG 1a** → resistance;
- **IMG 1c** → success;
- **IMG 1d** → belonging;
- **IMG 2a** → transformative action;
- **IMG 2e** → competence.

Negative condensation constructs objects of rejection.

Examples include:

- **IMG 1e** → threatening alterity;
- **IMG 2c** → caste.

The distinction is not always rigid. The chainsaw may be positively valued by supporters and negatively valued by critics. The raised fist may be heroic or threatening depending on political position. The symbolic object therefore possesses a relatively stable semantic core but a potentially unstable axiology.

This again confirms the distinction developed earlier between:

RECOGNITION

and

EVALUATION.

A symbol can be widely recognized without being consensually valued.

Taken together, the symbolic objects reveal that Trump and Milei should not be understood only as individual political actors but as **symbolic assemblages**.

Trump's mediatized persona is constructed through the articulation of:

- body;
- fist;
- luxury;
- aircraft;
- gold;
- MAGA cap;
- national colors;
- threat imagery.

Milei's mediatized persona is constructed through the articulation of:

- body;
- chainsaw;
- anger;
- anti-caste categories;
- productive chaos;
- graphs;
- economic indicators.

The political subject is therefore distributed across a set of semiotic supports.

The leader is not present only when his face is visible. Trump can be evoked by a MAGA cap. Milei by a chainsaw. The political persona extends beyond the biological body. This extension can be represented as:

LEADER'S BODY

↓

ASSOCIATED SIGNS

↓

DISTRIBUTED SYMBOLIC PRESENCE.

This is particularly important in digital communication. The leader can be present symbolically even when absent physically. A user posting a cap can reactivate Trump. A chainsaw meme can reactivate Milei. The political subject acquires a form of **semiotic ubiquity**.

At its highest level, **symbolic condensation contributes to myth** because the sign begins to connect the political leader to **simplified cultural archetypes**. Trump's signs can converge toward:

- THE WINNER;
- THE PROTECTOR;
- THE RESISTANT LEADER;
- THE RESTORER.

Milei's toward:

- THE DESTROYER OF THE OLD ORDER;
- THE OUTSIDER;
- THE ANGRY TRUTH-TELLER;
- THE ECONOMIC REFORMER;
- THE DISRUPTOR.

These figures are larger than individual policy claims. They organize the political persona at a mythic level.

The symbol therefore connects:

VISIBLE OBJECT

to

ABSTRACT ROLE.

The raised fist is no longer simply a fist. It becomes the attribute of the resistant hero. The chainsaw no longer simply cuts. It becomes the attribute of the destroyer-reformer. The graph no longer simply visualizes numbers. It becomes the attribute of the economist-leader.

This movement from object to role is fundamental to political mythology.

The symbolic level can therefore be summarized through two different dominant structures.

TRUMP

The corpus tends to condense political values into signs of:

- BEING;
- STATUS;
- IDENTITY;
- POSSESSION;
- RESTORATIVE COMPETENCE.

The principal symbolic movement is:

OBJECT / GESTURE → ATTRIBUTE → LEADER IDENTITY.

The raised fist becomes resilience. The body becomes dominance. Luxury becomes success. The cap becomes belonging. The threatening image becomes the external condition that makes protection necessary.

MILEI

The corpus tends to condense political values into signs of:

- ACTION;
- RUPTURE;
- CONFRONTATION;
- TRANSFORMATION;
- EPISTEMIC INTERVENTION.

The principal symbolic movement is:

OBJECT / BODY / CATEGORY → OPERATION → TRANSFORMATIVE LEADER IDENTITY.

The chainsaw becomes cutting. The body becomes unfiltered confrontation. The caste becomes the target. Productive chaos becomes method. The graph becomes measurement of change.

The distinction can therefore be formulated as:

- TRUMP'S SYMBOLS TELL US WHAT KIND OF LEADER HE IS;
- MILEI'S SYMBOLS TELL US WHAT KIND OF TRANSFORMATION HE PERFORMS.

Both ultimately contribute to ethos, but they approach it from different directions.

The analysis of symbolic objects now allows a more precise transition toward the next section.

Symbolic condensation concerns signs in which a particular form becomes strongly associated with a particular political content.

The MAGA cap becomes associated with Trumpian belonging. The chainsaw with Mileian rupture. The raised fist with resistance. The graph with economic competence.

Semisymbolic organization operates differently. It does not depend primarily on a one-to-one relationship between one object and one meaning.

Instead, it concerns **systematic correspondences between oppositions on the plane of expression and oppositions on the plane of content**.

For example:

UP / DOWN

may correspond to

STRENGTH / SUBORDINATION;

CENTER / PERIPHERY

to

POWER / MARGINALITY;

CONTINUITY / CUT

to

SYSTEM / RUPTURE;

COMPACTNESS / EXPANSION

to

CONTROL / EXCESS;

CHROMATIC COHERENCE / CHROMATIC TURBULENCE

to

STABILITY / DISRUPTION.

The distinction is therefore:

SYMBOLIC RELATION

often approximates:

ONE FORM ↔ ONE CONTENT

whereas

SEMISYMBOLIC RELATION

is structured as:

EXPRESSION OPPOSITION : CONTENT OPPOSITION.

This transition is theoretically crucial because it allows the analysis to demonstrate that the visual organization of the corpus does not merely contain isolated political symbols.

It also produces **relational correspondences** through which perceptual differences become aligned with ideological differences.

This is the level at which the plastic analysis developed in Chapter VIII and the axiological analysis developed in Section 10.1 can finally be brought together in a systematic way.

We can therefore now move to **10.3. SEMISYMBOLIC RELATIONS**, where the central question will be:

HOW DO FORMAL OPPOSITIONS SUCH AS VERTICALITY/HORIZONTALITY, CENTER/PERIPHERY, CONTINUITY/DISCONTINUITY, COMPACTNESS/EXPANSION, AND CHROMATIC COHERENCE/TENSION BECOME CORRELATED WITH THE POLITICAL OPPOSITIONS OF POWER, RESTORATION, RUPTURE, AUTHENTICITY, AND TRANSFORMATION?

10.3. SEMISYMBOLIC RELATIONS

The corpus also reveals a series of **semisymbolic relations**, that is, systematic correspondences between oppositions on the plane of expression and oppositions on the plane of content. Following the perspective developed by Jean-Marie Floch, the plastic level should not therefore be treated as an autonomous formal layer added to political meaning from the outside. It participates directly in its construction by organizing perceptual differences that can become correlated with semantic and axiological differences.

The distinction between symbolic and semisymbolic organization is essential.

In a symbolic relation, a specific form tends to be associated with a specific content. The MAGA cap can become associated with Trumpian belonging. The chainsaw can become associated with Mileian rupture. The raised fist can become associated with resistance.

In a semisymbolic system, however, the relation is not primarily:

FORM “A” = CONTENT “A”.

It is instead organized through correspondences such as:

FORM “A” / FORM “B”

corresponding to

CONTENT “A” / CONTENT “B”.

The analytical structure is therefore relational.

For example:

UP / DOWN

can correspond to

POWER / SUBORDINATION;

CENTER / PERIPHERY

to

LEADERSHIP / MARGINALITY;

CONTINUITY / INTERRUPTION

to

SYSTEM / RUPTURE;

COMPACTNESS / EXPANSION

to

CONTROL / EXCESS;

CHROMATIC COHERENCE / CHROMATIC TURBULENCE

to

STABILITY / DISRUPTION.

These correspondences should not be understood as universal visual laws. Verticality does not always mean power. Fragmentation does not always mean political instability. Color contrast does not automatically signify ideological conflict.

The relation becomes analytically significant only when the same expressive oppositions recur coherently within a specific corpus and become repeatedly associated with specific values.

The appropriate analytical question is therefore:

WHICH DIFFERENCES ON THE PLANE OF EXPRESSION ARE MADE TO CORRESPOND WITH WHICH DIFFERENCES ON THE PLANE OF CONTENT WITHIN THIS CORPUS?

This formulation preserves the contextual nature of semisymbolic analysis.

Within the Trumpian subcorpus, one of the clearest semisymbolic relations concerns:

VERTICALITY / LOWERING

and

POWER / VULNERABILITY OR SUBORDINATION.

This relation is especially visible in **IMG 1a** and **IMG 1b**.

In **IMG 1b**, Trump's upright posture, low-angle framing, and visual elevation produce a strongly vertical configuration.

At the level of expression:

- HIGH / LOW;
- UPRIGHT / LOWERED;

- ELEVATED / SUBORDINATED.

At the level of content, these relations become compatible with:

- POWER / WEAKNESS;
- DOMINANCE / SUBORDINATION;
- CONTROL / DEPENDENCE.

The semisymbolic relation can therefore be expressed as:

VERTICAL ELEVATION : LOWER POSITION

=

POWER : SUBORDINATION.

The political body becomes authoritative not only because of what Trump is doing but because the image formalizes authority through spatial hierarchy.

This relation is particularly important because it does not require an explicit verbal statement such as:

TRUMP IS POWERFUL.

The image can produce the same value through the organization of the visual field. The spectator perceives elevation before necessarily translating it into political vocabulary. The semisymbolic relation therefore gives political power a **sensible form**.

In **IMG 1a**, the same expressive axis becomes narratively dynamic. The assassination attempt introduces bodily vulnerability. The raised fist produces an upward vector.

The opposition becomes:

DOWNWARD PRESSURE / UPWARD REASSERTION.

At the level of content:

VULNERABILITY / RESILIENCE.

The relation can therefore be represented as:

DOWN : UP

=

VULNERABILITY : RESISTANCE.

The image acquires force because bodily ascent corresponds with political reassertion. The upward direction does not merely decorate the gesture. It organizes the transition from one value to another.

The expressive plane and content plane therefore reproduce the same transformation:

LOWERED / ENDANGERED BODY

→

ASCENDING GESTURE

mirroring:

THREATENED SUBJECT

→

RESISTANT SUBJECT.

This is one of the most productive semisymbolic structures in the Trumpian corpus.

A second Trumpian semisymbolism concerns:

CENTER / PERIPHERY

and

LEADERSHIP / SECONDARITY.

This relation is especially evident in **IMG 1b**. The political body occupies a central position. Other elements organize themselves around it.

The visual field therefore establishes:

- **CENTER = HIGH SALIENCE**
- **PERIPHERY = REDUCED SALIENCE**.

At the content level, this can correspond to:

- **LEADER = PRIMARY POLITICAL SUBJECT**
- **OTHERS = SUPPORTERS, ENVIRONMENT, OR SECONDARY ACTORS**.

The relation becomes:

CENTER : PERIPHERY

=

LEADERSHIP : FOLLOWING / SECONDARITY.

This semisymbolic organization reinforces personalization. Political centrality becomes perceptually visible as spatial centrality. The leader occupies the center of the image and, symbolically, the center of the political narrative. This relation becomes especially important when repeated.

A single central framing could be contingent. Repeated centrality gradually stabilizes the association:

TRUMP = CENTER.

The political subject becomes not simply visible but structurally privileged. This semisymbolism corresponds closely to the restorative model reconstructed earlier. Restoration requires a center capable of organizing the collective. The image supplies that center. The political world becomes visually centripetal. The gaze converges. The narrative converges. The leadership model converges around the same subject.

Another recurring Trumpian relation concerns:

COMPACTNESS / DISPERSION

and

CONTROL / DISORDER.

The stable bodily form of **IMG 1b** contrasts with the more dispersed surrounding visual field. The Trumpian body appears bounded and coherent. The environment may contain multiple elements, but the leader retains a clear contour.

At the expression level:

COMPACT / DIFFUSE.

At the content level:

CONTROL / INSTABILITY.

The relation becomes:

FORMAL COMPACTNESS : DISPERSION

=

POLITICAL CONTROL : DISORDER.

This is particularly significant because the Trumpian narrative repeatedly constructs the leader as the subject capable of restoring order within a threatened or chaotic environment.

The body itself performs this distinction. Trump's physical contour becomes a perceptual model of political containment. The leader is not dissolved by the environment. He remains visually autonomous. This contributes to the impression of self-mastery.

The same logic can be extended to **IMG 1a**. The surrounding scene is dense and unstable. The raised fist condenses attention.

The expressive transformation is:

DISPERSION → CONCENTRATION.

The political transformation is:

CRISIS → RESISTANCE.

Again, the image organizes perceptual complexity according to the same logic as the leadership narrative.

The fist itself also supports a more localized semisymbolic relation.

At the level of expression:

OPEN / CLOSED.

At the level of content:

DISPERSION / CONCENTRATION

or

VULNERABILITY / RESOLVE.

The closed fist condenses energy. The hand is not relaxed. Not dispersed. Its form is concentrated.

The relation can therefore be represented as:

CLOSURE

=

DETERMINATION / RESOLVE.

This is not a universal equivalence, but within **IMG 1a** the closed form of the hand is consistent with the political value of resistance. The bodily form seems to gather the subject back into itself after physical disruption. This contributes to the image's iconic efficiency.

The gesture can be reduced to a simple contrast:

OPEN BODY TO THREAT

versus

CLOSED FORM OF RESOLVE.

The fist becomes a perceptual node where physical and political concentration overlap.

In **IMG 1c**, semisymbolic relations emerge particularly through chromatic and material contrast. The gold of luxurious interiors can be opposed to ordinary or neutral tonalities. At the expression level:

GOLD / ORDINARY COLORATION.

At the content level:

EXCEPTIONALITY / NORMALITY

or

WEALTH / ORDINARY CONDITION.

The relation can therefore be represented as:

GOLD : ORDINARY TONALITY

=

SUCCESS / EXCEPTIONAL STATUS : NORMALITY.

The political significance lies in the value assigned to exceptionality. Gold visually marks a world that is not ordinary. The leader's environment is perceptually separated from common experience.

That separation can then be resemanticized positively as:

- success;
- achievement;
- independence;
- winner status.

The same formal distinction could be criticized as elitism.

The semisymbolic relation remains stable while its axiology may invert.

This is an important methodological point.

The correspondence:

GOLD / ORDINARY

=

EXCEPTIONAL / NORMAL

can remain recognizable even if one audience values exceptionality positively and another negatively.

Semisymbolism organizes difference. It does not predetermine evaluation.

In **IMG 1d**, chromatic repetition produces another semisymbolic structure.

At the level of expression:

REPETITION / DIFFERENTIATION.

At the content level:

COLLECTIVE COHERENCE / INDIVIDUAL DISPERSION.

The repeated red cap allows multiple bodies to become visually connected.

The relation becomes:

CHROMATIC RECURRENCE

=

POLITICAL BELONGING.

More precisely:

SAME COLOR ACROSS DIFFERENT BODIES

=

SAME POLITICAL IDENTITY ACROSS DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS.

This is an especially important semisymbolic mechanism because it shows how collective identity can be organized plastically. The supporters remain physically distinct. Chromatic repetition produces perceptual equivalence. The crowd becomes a pattern. The political movement becomes visually coherent.

The relation can be represented as:

DIFFERENT BODIES + SAME RED

↓

DIFFERENCE WITHIN UNITY.

This structure corresponds directly to the political idea of a collective composed of distinct individuals but unified around a shared identity. The visual field therefore performs the politics of belonging.

In **IMG 1e**, one of the strongest Trumpian semisymbolisms concerns:

INSIDE / OUTSIDE

and

COMMUNITY / THREATENING ALTERITY.

The political narrative of immigration depends fundamentally on boundaries.

The expression plane can organize:

- inside;
- outside;
- proximity;
- distance;
- entry;
- crossing.

The content plane organizes:

- belonging;
- non-belonging;
- security;
- threat.

The relation becomes:

INSIDE : OUTSIDE

=

AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY : EXTERNAL OTHER.

When the external other is represented as crossing into the interior, the semisymbolic relation becomes dynamic:

BOUNDARY INTACT

=

SECURITY

versus

BOUNDARY CROSSED

=

THREAT.

This is a particularly powerful relation because political geography and moral categorization become aligned.

Spatial difference becomes ideological difference. The border is not merely physical. It becomes axiological.

This reinforces the broader Trumpian model in which restoration involves re-establishing legitimate boundaries and centers.

The principal Trumpian correspondences can therefore be summarized as:

- UP : DOWN = POWER : SUBORDINATION OR VULNERABILITY
- CENTER : PERIPHERY = LEADERSHIP : SECONDARITY
- COMPACTNESS : DISPERSION = CONTROL : DISORDER
- CLOSED : OPEN = RESOLVE : VULNERABILITY
- GOLD : ORDINARY TONALITY = EXCEPTIONAL SUCCESS : NORMALITY
- CHROMATIC RECURRENCE : VARIATION = COLLECTIVE COHERENCE : DISPERSION
- INSIDE : OUTSIDE = BELONGING : THREATENING ALTERITY.

Taken together, these relations organize a visual universe in which political value tends to be associated with:

- height;
- centrality;
- concentration;
- closure;
- recognizable repetition;
- protected interiority.

The deep semisymbolic grammar can therefore be condensed as:

FORMAL STABILITY

=

POLITICAL LEGITIMACY.

Trumpian leadership becomes perceptually coherent because the leader repeatedly occupies the expressive terms associated with order, concentration, hierarchy, and protected identity.

The Mileian corpus constructs a different semisymbolic architecture.

The clearest relation appears in **IMG 2a**.

At the expression level:

CONTINUITY / CUT.

At the content level:

SYSTEM / RUPTURE.

The chainsaw converts this relation into material form.

Before cutting:

a continuous surface.

After cutting:

a discontinuous one.

The expressive transformation can therefore be represented as:

———————

↓

CUT

↓

——— ———.

The content transformation becomes:

OLD SYSTEM

↓

RUPTURE

↓

NEW POSSIBILITY.

The semisymbolic correspondence is:

CONTINUITY : DISCONTINUITY

=

SYSTEMIC PERSISTENCE : POLITICAL RUPTURE.

This is perhaps the clearest semisymbolism in the Mileian subcorpus because the material function of the object directly reproduces the political logic.

The chainsaw is not simply associated with rupture. Its operation enacts the expressive difference corresponding to rupture.

This gives **IMG 2a** unusually strong semiotic density.

The chainsaw also introduces another expressive opposition:

SMOOTH CONTINUITY / ANGULAR OR MECHANICAL INTERRUPTION.

At the content level:

STABILITY OF OLD ORDER / AGGRESSIVE TRANSFORMATION.

The relation can be represented as:

CONTINUOUS LINE : INTERRUPTING VECTOR

=

INSTITUTIONAL CONTINUITY : DISRUPTIVE INTERVENTION.

The importance of the vector should not be underestimated. The chainsaw possesses a direction. It does not merely exist. It points toward the target.

The expression plane therefore contains **intentional orientation**.

At the content level, this becomes political agency. The leader is not simply opposed to the system. He acts upon it.

The semisymbolic relation becomes:

VECTORIALITY

=

TRANSFORMATIVE AGENCY.

This differs strongly from Trumpian centrality. Trumpian power tends to be expressed through position. Mileian power through movement toward a target.

The contrast can be summarized as:

- **TRUMP → POSITIONAL POWER**
- **MILEI → VECTORIAL POWER**.

In **IMG 2b**, the bodily form generates another semisymbolic relation.

At the expression level:

COMPACTNESS / EXPANSION.

At the content level:

RESTRAINT / EXPRESSIVE EXCESS.

Within the Mileian political code, this opposition can be further axiologized as:

INSTITUTIONAL RESTRAINT / AUTHENTIC INTENSITY.

The semisymbolic relation becomes:

BODILY COMPACTNESS : BODILY EXPANSION

=

CONTROLLED CONVENTIONALITY : UNFILTERED AUTHENTICITY.

The expansive body therefore materializes a political refusal of containment:

- arms extend;
- the mouth opens;
- gestures project outward.

The body exceeds the restrained silhouette associated with formal political decorum.

The expressive form becomes consistent with the ideological claim:

I AM NOT CONTAINED BY THEIR RULES.

This is a particularly strong example of the body functioning as a semisymbolic operator.

The difference between contained and expanded form corresponds to the difference between institutional conformity and disruptive authenticity.

Again, the relation remains open to axiological inversion. One viewer may read expansion as sincerity. Another as aggression or lack of control.

The expressive opposition remains stable. The value assigned to it can vary.

Although the corpus is visual, **IMG 2b** also allows a semisymbolic relation to be inferred through visible signs of vocal expression.

The open mouth and bodily tension can correspond to:

SILENCE / SHOUTING

on the expression plane.

At the content level:

RESTRAINT / CONFRONTATION

or

MEDIATED SPEECH / UNFILTERED PASSION.

The relation becomes:

CLOSED / OPEN VOCAL CONFIGURATION

=

CONTAINED / EXTERNALIZED POLITICAL PASSION.

The open mouth becomes a visible sign of vocal excess. The body makes sound perceptible even within the still image. This is another way in which Milei's political authenticity is constructed through the breaking of conventional containment.

In **IMG 2c**, the anti-caste opposition produces a semisymbolic relation between:

INSIDE / OUTSIDE

and

SYSTEM / OUTSIDER.

This relation superficially resembles Trump's inside/outside opposition, but the values are reversed.

In Trumpian anti-immigration imagery:

- **INSIDE = POSITIVE COMMUNITY**;
- **OUTSIDE = THREAT**.

In Milei's anti-caste narrative:

- **INSIDE THE SYSTEM = NEGATIVELY VALORIZED CASTE**;
- **OUTSIDE THE SYSTEM = POSITIVELY VALORIZED OUTSIDER**.

This inversion is theoretically important. The same topological opposition can support opposite ideological structures.

The relation becomes:

TRUMP

INSIDE : OUTSIDE

=

BELONGING : THREAT

MILEI

INSIDE : OUTSIDE

=

CASTE : AUTHENTIC OUTSIDER.

This demonstrates why semisymbolic relations must always be reconstructed contextually. Inside is not inherently positive. Outside is not inherently negative.

The values depend upon the political universe. Milei's identity derives precisely from occupying the external term. The outsider position becomes a source of legitimacy.

The leader is valuable because he does not belong to the closed institutional interior. The spatial opposition therefore becomes ideological.

The Mileian case becomes more complex once the outsider enters political institutions.

The physical relation may change:

OUTSIDE → INSIDE.

The symbolic opposition must remain:

OUTSIDER / CASTE.

The corpus therefore supports a more subtle semisymbolic tension:

INSTITUTIONAL INSIDE

combined with

SYMBOLIC OUTSIDE.

This apparent contradiction becomes part of the leadership model. Milei can occupy the presidency while maintaining a discourse of exteriority toward the old system.

The expression/content relation therefore no longer relies only on literal spatial position. It is maintained through style, conflict, bodily performance, objects, and discourse.

The leader remains semiotically outside even when institutionally inside.

This is a powerful example of how semisymbolic relations can survive changes in empirical circumstance.

In **IMG 2d**, the most evident expressive opposition concerns:

COHERENCE / FRAGMENTATION.

At the content level:

STABILITY / DESTABILIZATION.

The image or broader communicative configuration may contain:

- multiple focal points;
- competing vectors;
- visual density;
- abrupt transitions;
- conflictual elements.

The semisymbolic relation becomes:

FORMAL CONTINUITY : FRAGMENTATION

=

SYSTEMIC STABILITY : POLITICAL DISRUPTION.

This is particularly important because the fragmented form does not merely represent chaos. It performs it. The visual field produces the sensation of instability corresponding to the political value of productive destabilization.

The relation becomes even more specific when the chaos is positively resemanticized:

FRAGMENTATION

=

TRANSFORMATIVE ENERGY.

This marks an important difference from Trumpian imagery. In the Trumpian system, visual disorder tends to correspond to threat or crisis. In the Mileian system, visual disorder can correspond to political productivity. The same expressive term receives opposite values.

The comparison can be represented as:

TRUMP

DISORDER

=

THREAT

MILEI

DISORDER

=

TRANSFORMATIVE ENERGY.

This opposition is one of the most important findings of the comparative analysis. It demonstrates that the distinction between restorative and disruptive leadership is encoded not merely in different signs but in **different value assignments to the same expressive categories**.

A related semisymbolism concerns color.

In the Trumpian corpus, recurrent national colors and MAGA red often create:

CHROMATIC COHERENCE.

This corresponds to:

IDENTITY / CONTINUITY / BELONGING.

In the Mileian corpus, **IMG 2d** more frequently allows:

CHROMATIC TURBULENCE / HIGH CONTRAST.

This corresponds to:

INTENSITY / CONFLICT / DISRUPTION.

The comparative relation can therefore be expressed as:

TRUMP

CHROMATIC RECURRENCE

=

IDENTITARIAN STABILITY

MILEI

CHROMATIC CONTRAST / TURBULENCE

=

DISRUPTIVE INTENSITY.

Again, the distinction concerns dominant functions, not every single occurrence.

IMG 2e, for example, uses controlled chromatic differentiation.

That variation is analytically important because it introduces a second Mileian semisymbolic regime.

In **IMG 2e**, the expression plane is characterized by:

ORDER / GEOMETRIC STRUCTURE / DIRECTIONAL LINE.

The content plane corresponds to:

KNOWLEDGE / MEASURABILITY / ECONOMIC COMPETENCE.

The relation becomes:

GRAPHIC ORDER

=

EPISTEMIC ORDER.

This is a highly significant semisymbolism. The organized visual field makes economic explanation appear organized. Axes imply method. Lines imply measurable change. Data points imply evidence.

The graph therefore creates a perceptual correspondence between:

FORMAL RATIONALITY

and

POLITICAL-ECONOMIC RATIONALITY.

The politician who controls the graph appears to control the explanation. The expressive order supports the ethos of competence.

This relation complicates the broader Mileian association with disruption.

Milei’s corpus therefore contains two complementary expressive regimes:

FRAGMENTATION

=

DISRUPTIVE ENERGY

and

GRAPHIC ORDER

=

ECONOMIC KNOWLEDGE.

The two are not contradictory because they refer to different functions. The political system must be destabilized. The new trajectory must be understood and measured. The chaos operates on the old order. The graph organizes the emerging interpretation.

This produces a larger sequence:

DISORDER THE SYSTEM

↓

ORDER THE EXPLANATION.

The semisymbolic contrast between **IMG 2d** and **IMG 2e** therefore contributes to the construction of Milei as both disruptor and economist.

Graphs also produce a more direct semisymbolic relation through direction.

At the expression level:

RISING / FALLING.

At the content level, depending on the variable:

DETERIORATION / IMPROVEMENT

or the reverse.

For inflation, for example, a falling line can be positively valorized if it represents decreasing inflation.

The expressive opposition becomes:

UPWARD TREND / DOWNWARD TREND

corresponding to:

WORSENING / IMPROVEMENT.

The graph therefore converts political evaluation into visible direction. The economic argument becomes spatial. The viewer does not only read numbers. The viewer perceives movement. This is a clear semisymbolic operation:

DIRECTIONAL CHANGE

=

POLITICAL-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION.

The line becomes a visual argument. A turning point can correspond to a political turning point. The graphic field therefore makes historical discontinuity perceptible. This is particularly compatible with Milei's broader narrative of rupture. The graph gives the political cut a measurable trajectory.

The principal Mileian correspondences can therefore be summarized as:

- **CONTINUITY / CUT**

  =

  SYSTEM / RUPTURE

- **STATIC FORM / VECTOR**

  =

  PERSISTENCE / TRANSFORMATIVE AGENCY

- **COMPACTNESS / EXPANSION**

  =

  RESTRAINT / AUTHENTIC INTENSITY

- **INSIDE / OUTSIDE**

  =

  CASTE / OUTSIDER

- **COHERENCE / FRAGMENTATION**

  =

  STABILITY / DISRUPTION

- **CHROMATIC CALM / CONTRAST**

  =

  LOW INTENSITY / CONFLICTUAL ACTIVATION

- **GRAPHIC DISORDER / GRAPHIC ORDER**

  =

  CONFUSION / TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

- **UNCHANGED LINE / CHANGE OF TRAJECTORY**

  =

  STAGNATION / TRANSFORMATION.

Taken together, these relations organize a visual universe in which political value tends to be associated with:

- cutting;
- movement;
- expansion;
- externality;
- fragmentation;
- contrast;
- directional change.

The deeper semisymbolic grammar can therefore be condensed as:

FORMAL TRANSFORMATION

=

POLITICAL LEGITIMACY.

Milei's leadership becomes perceptually coherent because the expressive forms repeatedly correspond to action upon an inherited structure.

The comparison between the two subcorpora reveals two different dominant semisymbolic systems.

TRUMP

- **CENTER / PERIPHERY**

  =

  LEADER / OTHERS

- **UP / DOWN**

  =

  POWER / VULNERABILITY

- **COMPACT / DISPERSED**

  =

  CONTROL / DISORDER

- **INSIDE / OUTSIDE**

  =

  COMMUNITY / THREAT

- **CHROMATIC RECURRENCE / VARIATION**

  =

  IDENTITY / DISPERSION

The overall logic is:

VISUAL ORDER

=

POLITICAL ORDER.

MILEI

- **CONTINUITY / CUT**

  =

  SYSTEM / RUPTURE

- **STATIC / VECTORIAL**

  =

  STAGNATION / INTERVENTION

- **COMPACT / EXPANDED**

  =

  RESTRAINT / AUTHENTIC EXCESS

- **INSIDE / OUTSIDE**

  =

  CASTE / OUTSIDER

- **COHERENT / FRAGMENTED**

  =

  STABILITY / DISRUPTION

- **UNCHANGED / CHANGING TRAJECTORY**

  =

  CONTINUITY / TRANSFORMATION.

The overall logic is:

VISUAL DISCONTINUITY

=

POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION.

This is perhaps the clearest plastic-semantic distinction between the two leadership models.

Trump's politics tends to make **order visible**. Milei's tends to make **transformation visible**.

One of the most theoretically interesting findings concerns the fact that identical expressive oppositions can be assigned opposite values in the two corpora.

Consider:

INSIDE / OUTSIDE.

Trump:

- **INSIDE = COMMUNITY**
- **OUTSIDE = THREAT**.

Milei:

- **INSIDE = CASTE**
- **OUTSIDE = AUTHENTICITY**.

Or:

ORDER / DISORDER.

Trump:

- **ORDER = SECURITY**
- **DISORDER = THREAT**.

Milei:

- **OLD ORDER = STAGNATION**
- **DISORDER = PRODUCTIVE RUPTURE**.

Or:

CONTINUITY / DISCONTINUITY.

Trump:

- **CONTINUITY WITH GREATNESS = POSITIVE**
- **INTERRUPTION / DECLINE = NEGATIVE**.

Milei:

- **CONTINUITY OF OLD SYSTEM = NEGATIVE**
- **DISCONTINUITY = POSITIVE**.

These reversals are especially important because they demonstrate that the leaders do not simply use different signs.

They organize **different axiologies of perception**.

The same formal category can become politically opposite depending on the ideological system into which it enters.

This can be summarized as:

- TRUMP POSITIVELY VALORIZES THE FORM OF CONTINUITY;
- MILEI POSITIVELY VALORIZES THE FORM OF DISCONTINUITY.

This opposition provides a deep structural explanation for the broader contrast between restoration and rupture.

Semisymbolic organization also contributes directly to authenticity.

In the Trumpian corpus, authenticity emerges partly through correspondence between:

stable form

and

stable persona.

The leader repeatedly appears central, vertical, dominant, recognizable.

The expression plane says continuity.

The content plane says consistency.

The relation becomes:

FORMAL STABILITY

=

CHARACTEROLOGICAL STABILITY.

This supports the authenticity effect:

HE IS STILL THE SAME.

In the Mileian corpus, authenticity emerges through a different relation.

The expressive plane repeatedly violates conventional political containment:

- expanded gestures,
- fragments,
- strong contrasts,
- cutting objects.

The content plane interprets these deviations as:

- anti-formality;
- anti-institutionality;
- sincerity;
- rupture.

The relation becomes:

FORMAL NON-CONFORMITY

=

POLITICAL AUTHENTICITY.

The authenticity effects can therefore be contrasted as:

TRUMP

AUTHENTICITY THROUGH EXPRESSIVE CONSISTENCY.

MILEI

AUTHENTICITY THROUGH EXPRESSIVE TRANSGRESSION.

This difference confirms the broader distinction developed throughout the study.

These correspondences are particularly effective in digital environments because they can be processed rapidly.

A viewer does not necessarily need to reconstruct the full ideology before perceiving:

- upward fist;
- central body;
- red repetition;
- chainsaw cut;
- expanded gesture;
- falling inflation line.

The expressive opposition is immediately available to perception.

The political interpretation may follow very quickly because previous circulation has already stabilized the code.

The sequence becomes:

PERCEPTUAL DIFFERENCE

↓

RECOGNITION OF FORM

↓

ACTIVATION OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION

↓

RAPID INTERPRETATION.

Semisymbolism therefore contributes to **communicative compression**.

The political worldview is embedded in perceptual difference.

This is especially efficient under conditions of:

- scrolling;
- small screens;
- short attention;
- rapid circulation;
- memetic repetition.

A strong semisymbolic relation can survive reduction because the opposition remains visible:

- up versus down;
- center versus periphery;
- continuous versus cut;
- compact versus expanded;
- rising versus falling;

These are perceptually economical structures.

The same simplicity makes semisymbolic relations highly adaptable to **memes**.

A meme can exaggerate the opposition. Make Trump larger. Place him above opponents. Repeat red excessively. Make Milei's chainsaw enormous. Fragment the surrounding political system. Turn a graph dramatically downward.

The memetic text may change the original image while preserving or intensifying the deeper semisymbolic structure.

The process becomes:

ORIGINAL RELATION

↓

MEMETIC EXAGGERATION

↓

GREATER EXPRESSIVE CONTRAST

↓

STRONGER POLITICAL POLARITY.

Memetic transformation can therefore function as a form of **semiotic amplification**.

The opposition becomes simpler and more extreme. Nuance decreases. Recognizability increases.

This is one of the mechanisms through which digital circulation can intensify political polarization at the level of form.

Repeated correspondence between expressive and content oppositions can eventually create an impression of naturalness;

- Trump is central because he is the leader.
- Milei cuts because the system must be cut.

Trump's red signifies America and MAGA because it "obviously" does.

Milei's visual chaos signifies disruptive authenticity because that association has become familiar.

None of these relations is natural. They are historically and culturally constructed.

The process is:

CORRESPONDENCE

↓

REPETITION

↓

FAMILIARITY

↓

NATURALIZATION.

Once naturalized, the semiotic operation becomes less visible.

The viewer no longer asks:

WHY DOES CENTRALITY SIGNIFY LEADERSHIP HERE?

or:

WHY DOES FRAGMENTATION

SIGNIFY TRANSFORMATION HERE?

The relation appears self-evident. Structural analysis seeks precisely to recover this hidden construction.

Semisymbolism therefore provides an important methodological tool for **denaturalizing visual politics**.

It reveals how ideological values are made to appear perceptually obvious.

The cumulative analysis allows the two leadership models to be reformulated at a particularly deep level.

Trumpian leadership can be represented through the expressive chain:

CENTER

↓

VERTICALITY

↓

COMPACTNESS

↓

CHROMATIC COHERENCE

↓

BOUNDARY

↓

CONTROLLED HIERARCHY.

These expressive forms correspond to the content chain:

LEADERSHIP

↓

POWER

↓

STRENGTH

↓

IDENTITY

↓

SECURITY

↓

RESTORATION.

The semisymbolic correspondence can therefore be condensed as:

FORMAL ORDER

=

RESTORATIVE AUTHORITY.

Mileian leadership can be represented through:

VECTOR

↓

CUT

↓

EXPANSION

↓

FRAGMENTATION

↓

CONTRAST

↓

CHANGE OF TRAJECTORY.

These expressive forms correspond to:

INTERVENTION

↓

RUPTURE

↓

AUTHENTICITY

↓

DESTABILIZATION

↓

CONFLICT

↓

TRANSFORMATION.

The semisymbolic correspondence becomes:

FORMAL DISCONTINUITY

=

DISRUPTIVE AUTHORITY.

This is one of the strongest results of the entire comparative analysis.

The distinction between Trump and Milei is not only located at the level of ideology, rhetoric, or explicit political content.

It is repeatedly reconstructed through the **organization of perceptible difference itself**.

The central semisymbolic correspondences can now be condensed into a **comparative matrix**:

Plane of expression	Trumpian content	Mileian content
Center	Leadership / authority	Less central than vectorial intervention
Verticality	Strength / superiority	Intensification when combined with expansive gesture
Compactness	Control / mastery	Restraint / conventionality
Expansion	Less central to dominant code	Authenticity / passional excess
Continuity	Valued identity /	Failed system / stagnation
Discontinuity	Threat / loss of order	Rupture / transformation
Inside	Authentic community	Entrenched system / caste
Outside	Threatening alterity	Outsider authenticity
Chromatic	Belonging / identity	Less central than contrast
Chromatic contrast	Potential threat/intensity	Conflict / activation
Graphic order	Stable authority	Technical competence
Fragmentation	Disorder / threat	Productive chaos
Rising/ascending vector	Resistance / power	Energetic transformation
Cutting vector	Marginal	Rupture / political action

This matrix makes especially visible the **axiological inversion** between the two systems.

The same perceptual categories are not simply used differently. They are often valued oppositely.

The deepest semisymbolic contrast can therefore be formulated as:

TRUMP

CONTINUITY / CENTER / COMPACTNESS / BOUNDARY

=

ORDER / IDENTITY / SECURITY / RESTORATION

MILEI

DISCONTINUITY / VECTOR / EXPANSION / COLLISION

=

RUPTURE / AUTHENTICITY / TRANSFORMATION / LIBERATION.

Trumpian political meaning emerges from the promise that a disordered world can once again acquire a center.

Mileian political meaning emerges from the promise that an excessively stabilized world can finally be broken open.

The opposition is therefore not simply:

ORDER / CHAOS.

It is more precisely:

VALUED ORDER / DEVALUED ORDER

and

DEVALUED DISORDER / VALUED DISRUPTION.

This distinction is essential.

Trump's politics says:

ORDER HAS BEEN LOST AND MUST BE RESTORED.

Milei's politics says:

THE EXISTING ORDER IS PART OF THE PROBLEM AND MUST BE DISRUPTED.

The corresponding visual systems make these positions perceptible.

The leader's body ultimately becomes the privileged location where many of these correspondences intersect.

Trump's body is:

- central;
- vertical;
- compact;

- frontal;
- controlled.

These forms correspond to:

- power;
- stability;
- leadership;
- mastery.

Milei's body is:

- expanded;
- gestural;
- tension-driven;
- directional;
- open.

These forms correspond to:

- passion;
- rupture;
- anti-formality;
- authenticity;
- intervention.

The political body therefore functions as a **semisymbolic matrix**.

It materializes the worldview. The leader does not simply speak ideology. He makes ideology visible through posture and movement.

The body becomes a microcosm of the larger political program.

Trump's body says:

HOLD THE CENTER.

Milei's body says:

BREAK THE CONSTRAINT.

This opposition perhaps provides the most concise embodiment of the two leadership models.

The same structure extends beyond the body to political space.

Trumpian space tends toward:

- center;
- boundary;
- inside;
- protected community;
- hierarchical organization.

Mileian space tends toward:

- breach;
- crossing;
- penetration;
- collision;
- reconfiguration.

The political transformation can therefore be represented spatially.

Trump:

RESTORE THE BORDER.

Milei:

CUT THROUGH THE SYSTEM.

One protects a valued interior.

The other attacks a devalued interior.

This inversion of the inside/outside relation is particularly important because it demonstrates that the two leaders construct opposite relationships with boundaries:

- Trump legitimates boundaries;
- Milei delegitimates institutional enclosure.

The spatial semisymbolism therefore mirrors their political philosophies at a very deep level.

The same correspondence appears temporally.

Trump:

CONTINUITY WITH VALUED PAST

versus

INTERRUPTION / DECLINE.

Milei:

CONTINUITY OF FAILED SYSTEM

versus

INTERRUPTION / NEW BEGINNING.

The expressive opposition:

CONTINUITY / DISCONTINUITY

therefore receives opposite values.

For Trump:

CONTINUITY = POSITIVE.

For Milei:

DISCONTINUITY = POSITIVE.

The distinction can be represented as:

TRUMP

CONTINUE AGAIN WHAT SHOULD HAVE CONTINUED.

MILEI

STOP WHAT HAS CONTINUED TOO LONG.

This temporal semisymbolism connects directly with the restorative/disruptive distinction and confirms that the opposition extends across:

- space;
- time;
- body;
- color;
- form;
- narrative.

This recurring correspondence among multiple levels is one of the most important findings of the study. Trumpian restoration is not encoded in one slogan alone. It is supported by:

- temporal continuity;
- spatial centrality;
- bodily verticality;
- chromatic recurrence;
- symbolic closure.

Mileian disruption is not encoded in the chainsaw alone. It is supported by:

- temporal discontinuity;
- spatial penetration;
- bodily expansion;
- chromatic contrast;
- formal fragmentation.

The leadership models therefore possess **cross-level semiotic coherence**.

The relation can be represented as:

TRUMP

AXIOLOGY: RESTORATION

↓

NARRATIVE: RECOVER

↓

TEMPORALITY: RETURN

↓

SPACE: RECENTER

↓

BODY: STABILIZE

↓

FORM: COMPACT

↓

COLOR: REPEAT

MILEI

AXIOLOGY: RUPTURE

↓

NARRATIVE: DISMANTLE

↓

TEMPORALITY: INTERRUPT

↓

SPACE: BREACH

↓

BODY: EXPAND

↓

FORM: FRAGMENT / VECTORIZE

↓

COLOR: INTENSIFY / CONTRAST.

This is not a claim that every single image realizes every level simultaneously. Rather, the corpus as a whole produces a **systematic convergence of tendencies**.

That convergence is precisely what allows the two political personas to remain highly recognizable across heterogeneous texts.

The significance of these relations becomes even clearer within the post-truth framework.

Political credibility is not generated only through explicit assertions.

It is also constructed through **formal coherence**.

A leader who repeatedly appears in forms compatible with his established political values can produce an effect of truthfulness even before factual propositions are evaluated.

Trump looks strong because strength is encoded through centrality, verticality, and bodily control.

Milei looks disruptive because disruption is encoded through cutting, expansion, collision, and intensity.

The visual form therefore contributes to:

PLAUSIBILITY OF ETHOS.

This is not factual truth. It is a veridictory effect.

The image says:

THIS LOOKS LIKE THE KIND OF PERSON WE ALREADY BELIEVE HIM TO BE.

The relation becomes:

FORMAL COHERENCE

↓

ETHOTIC COHERENCE

↓

AUTHENTICITY EFFECT.

This mechanism is particularly important to post-truth politics because credibility can increasingly depend upon **consistency of appearance with identity** rather than upon the verification of every individual proposition.

The leader appears true to himself. That self-consistency becomes politically valuable. Trumpian authenticity emerges through formal continuity. Mileian authenticity through recurring formal rupture.

Again, the paradox returns:

- TRUMP IS AUTHENTIC BECAUSE HE REMAINS FORMALLY STABLE.
- MILEI IS AUTHENTIC BECAUSE HE REMAINS FORMALLY DISRUPTIVE.

Opposite aesthetic strategies produce structurally comparable authenticity effects.

The semisymbolic analysis therefore confirms that the political contrast between Donald Trump and Javier Milei is deeply embedded in the material organization of the corpus.

Trumpian images repeatedly establish correspondences between:

- **verticality and power;**
- **centrality and leadership;**
- **compactness and control;**
- **chromatic recurrence and belonging;**
- **boundary and security;**
- **formal order and restoration**.

Mileian images repeatedly establish correspondences between:

- **cutting and rupture;**
- **vectoriality and intervention;**

- **expansion and authenticity;**
- **fragmentation and productive destabilization;**
- **contrast and conflict;**
- **change of trajectory and transformation**.

The fundamental difference can therefore be condensed into two semisymbolic formulas:

TRUMP

STABLE EXPRESSION

=

RESTORATIVE POWER

MILEI

TRANSFORMATIVE EXPRESSION

=

DISRUPTIVE POWER.

Trump's political body and visual universe tend to make power appear as the capacity to **occupy, concentrate, protect, stabilize, and restore**.

Milei's tend to make power appear as the capacity to **cut, expand, confront, destabilize, and redirect**.

The first constructs the leader as the **center of a desired order**. The second constructs the leader as the force capable of transforming an undesired order.

At this level, the opposition between restorative and disruptive leadership reaches its most abstract and structurally coherent formulation. It is no longer simply a difference between slogans, policies, or rhetorical styles. It becomes a difference between **two perceptual grammars of political power**: one organized around the stabilization of form, the other around its transformation.

10.4. FROM DEEP VALUES TO POLITICAL VISIBILITY

The preceding sections have shown that the differences between Donald Trump and Javier Milei cannot be reduced to isolated rhetorical choices, specific campaign symbols, or individual visual performances.

The comparison reveals two broader and relatively coherent **semiotic architectures of leadership**, each capable of organizing heterogeneous political materials around a recurrent set of values, transformations, perceptual structures, and effects of credibility.

The purpose of the present section is therefore to integrate the analytical levels examined throughout the study.

The corpus has been approached through:

- axiological structures;
- semi-narrative programs;
- passional configurations;
- enunciative relations;
- actors and roles;
- spatial organization;
- temporality and aspectuality;
- plastic structures;
- resemanticization;
- mutation;
- circulation;
- isotopic recurrence;
- symbolic condensation;

- semisymbolic correspondences.

These dimensions should not be understood as independent compartments. They interact.

A value becomes narratively actionable.

A narrative produces expectations about bodies and actions.

Passions make those transformations sensible. Spatial and temporal structures locate them. Plastic organization gives them perceptual form. Circulation repeats and transforms them. Isotopic recurrence stabilizes them.

The political persona emerges from the cumulative interaction of these operations.

The analytical sequence can therefore be represented as:

DEEP VALUES

↓

NARRATIVE PROGRAM

↓

PASSIONAL INVESTMENT

↓

ENUNCIATIVE PERFORMANCE

↓

BODILY / SPATIAL / TEMPORAL CONFIGURATION

↓

PLASTIC FORM

↓

MEDIA CIRCULATION

↓

RESEMANTIZATION AND MUTATION

↓

ISOTOPIC STABILIZATION

↓

POLITICAL ETHOS

↓

EFFECT OF CREDIBILITY.

This model allows us to move beyond the interpretation of each image as an autonomous representation.

The ten texts participate in broader systems. Their meanings emerge not only internally but through **relations across the corpus**.

The raised fist acquires additional significance because it is compatible with the dominant posture.

The dominant posture is reinforced by the winner imagery.

The winner imagery becomes politically meaningful within the restorative universe of MAGA.

The MAGA universe is strengthened by the construction of threats requiring protection.

Likewise, the chainsaw acquires greater meaning when connected to anti-caste discourse.

Anti-caste discourse is passionalized through bodily anger.

Anger becomes part of productive chaos.

Productive chaos is partially balanced and legitimized by economic visualization.

The individual signs therefore function as **interdependent components of leadership systems**.

The Trumpian semiotic architecture begins with a fundamental negative transformation:

A VALUED CONDITION HAS BEEN LOST.

The precise content of this loss can vary:

- national greatness;
- security;
- control;
- economic or geopolitical superiority;
- cultural continuity;
- institutional authority.

The political present becomes meaningful through comparison with an idealized or positively valorized condition attributed to the past.

The deep temporal structure is therefore:

POSITIVE PAST

↓

LOSS

↓

NEGATIVE PRESENT

↓

RESTORATIVE INTERVENTION

↓

POSITIVE FUTURE AS RETURN.

This structure determines the narrative competence required from the leader.

If the political problem is loss, the leader must possess the capacity to **recover**.

Strength becomes necessary because restoration is represented as conflictual.

Success becomes relevant because the leader must demonstrate competence.

Dominance becomes valuable because the political world is represented as insufficiently controlled.

Patriotic belonging becomes central because the object to be restored is collective.

Antagonism becomes necessary because loss requires causes and obstacles.

The deep Trumpian narrative can therefore be expressed as:

DECLINE

↓

THREAT / OBSTACLE

↓

STRONG LEADER

↓

COLLECTIVE MOBILIZATION

↓

RESTORATION

↓

GREATNESS.

The selected images distribute these functions across the corpus.

- **IMG 1a** constructs the competence of resilience.
  The political body is threatened but remains operative.
  The transformation from vulnerability to resistance provides a condensed visual demonstration of the leader's ability to withstand interruption.

- **IMG 1b** constructs dominance and control.
  The body becomes central, vertical, and monumental.
  The political subject appears capable of occupying the symbolic center required by the restorative narrative.

- **IMG 1c** supplies biographical and material competence.
  Success has already been achieved at the individual level.
  The leader inhabits the aesthetic world of the winner.

- Personal success can therefore be projected onto the collective future.
  IMG 1d identifies the object and community of restoration.
  MAGA connects leader, nation, memory, future, and belonging.
  The political program becomes portable and collectively reproducible.

- **IMG 1e** supplies the antagonistic pole.
  Threat, alterity, fear, and polarization define what must be controlled, excluded, opposed, or narratively overcome for restoration to occur.

The five texts can therefore be reorganized into an integrated system:

- **IMG 1e**
  THREAT / DISORDER

  ↓

- **IMG 1a**
  RESISTANCE

  ↓

- **IMG 1b**
  DOMINANT COMPETENCE

↓

- **IMG 1c**
  SUCCESSFUL COMPETENCE

  ↓

- **IMG 1d**
  COLLECTIVE RESTORATIVE OBJECT.

This is not a chronological sequence. It is a **functional semiotic architecture**.

Each text occupies a position within the broader logic of restorative leadership.

The body is particularly important within this system because it mediates between abstract values and collective narrative.

Trumpian strength must become visible. The body provides that visibility:

- in **IMG 1a**, the body is vulnerable but resistant;
- in **IMG 1b**, it becomes controlled and dominant.

The two images together construct a particularly effective complementary relation:

HE CAN WITHSTAND

and

HE CAN COMMAND.

Resistance without command could produce only victimhood. Command without vulnerability could remain distant or purely monumental. Together, the two configurations construct a leader who is:

- exposed enough to enter conflict;
- strong enough to survive it;
- dominant enough to reorganize the scene afterward.

The bodily formula becomes:

VULNERABILITY

↓

RESISTANCE

↓

CONTROL.

This sequence closely mirrors the restorative political narrative:

CRISIS

↓

STRUGGLE

↓

RESTORED ORDER.

The leader's body therefore functions as a **micro-narrative of the political project**.

What happens to the body prefigures what is promised to the nation. This is one of the deepest mechanisms of personalization identified in the corpus. The leader does not merely propose the transformation. He embodies its structure.

The spatial dimension reinforces this model. Trumpian political space is repeatedly organized through:

- center;
- hierarchy;
- boundary;
- inside;
- protected collective identity.

The desired transformation is therefore also spatial. The problem is not only that greatness has been lost. The political world has lost the correct organization of positions.

The legitimate center has weakened. Boundaries have become permeable. The inside is represented as threatened. The leader's task becomes one of **recentring and re-bordering**.

The spatial formula is:

DISPLACED / THREATENED ORDER

↓

REASSERTION OF CENTER

↓

RESTORED BOUNDARY

↓

SECURE COLLECTIVE SPACE.

This explains why centrality in **IMG 1b**, MAGA collectivity in **IMG 1d**, and threatening alterity in **IMG 1e** are structurally connected.

They are not three unrelated visual motifs. They constitute three parts of the same political topology:

- **CENTER**;
- **COMMUNITY**;
- **BOUNDARY**.

The leader occupies the center. Supporters compose the community. The antagonist defines the boundary.

The same coherence appears temporally. Trump's future is not primarily represented as an unknown political world requiring invention. It is represented as a future whose legitimacy derives from its connection to a valued past.

The political temporality can therefore be expressed as:

PAST VALUE

↓

PRESENT DISJUNCTION

↓

FUTURE RECONJUNCTION.

The word *again* provides the most compact formulation of this structure. The future becomes recognizable before it exists because its values are already known.

This reduces temporal uncertainty. The political promise does not ask the audience to abandon identity in order to enter the future. It promises that the future will restore identity.

The temporal transformation is therefore:

CHANGE IN ORDER TO BECOME OURSELVES AGAIN.

This gives restorative populism a distinctive relationship with political novelty. The intervention may be presented as radical. Its legitimating horizon remains continuity.

The new political action is justified through the promise of recovering an older, more authentic condition.

The plastic level translates this deeper structure into perceptual form.

Trumpian leadership repeatedly converges around:

- verticality;
- centrality;
- compactness;
- chromatic recurrence;

- recognizable objects;
- hierarchical organization;
- strong visual nuclei.

The deep relation becomes:

RESTORATIVE POLITICS

=

STABILIZING PLASTIC FORM.

This does not mean every Trump image is visually calm:

- **IMG 1a** clearly contains instability;
- **IMG 1e** can contain shock and spectacular tension.

The relevant point is that instability tends to be narratively redirected toward the necessity or emergence of a stable center.

The Trumpian image repeatedly performs:

DISORDER → CONCENTRATION.

The leader becomes the perceptual solution to dispersion. The political and plastic structures therefore reinforce one another.

Circulation adds a final layer. The same underlying values return through heterogeneous signs:

- strength appears again;
- success appears again;
- MAGA appears again;
- threat appears again;
- dominance appears again.

The repetition creates a recursive authenticity effect:

THIS IS WHAT TRUMP LOOKED LIKE BEFORE

↓

THIS IS WHAT TRUMP LOOKS LIKE NOW

↓

THEREFORE THIS IS WHO TRUMP IS.

The political persona becomes credible through **diachronic consistency**.

The leader appears authentic because new signs can be assimilated to an already stabilized ethos.

The Trumpian circulatory model therefore tends toward:

RECURRENCE

↓

RECOGNITION

↓

CONSISTENCY

↓

AUTHENTICATION

↓

MONUMENTALIZATION.

The leader increasingly appears as a stable symbolic object inside a highly unstable media environment.

This is one of the fundamental paradoxes of Trumpian platformized leadership:

CONSTANT MEDIA CONFLICT CAN PRODUCE A HIGHLY STABLE PERSONA.

The Mileian architecture begins from a different diagnosis. The central problem is not primarily that a positively valued political condition has been lost. It is that a negatively valued system has **continued for too long**.

The deep temporal problem is therefore persistence.

The structure becomes:

FAILED SYSTEM

↓

PROLONGED CONTINUITY

↓

CRISIS

↓

RUPTURE

↓

TRANSFORMATION.

This difference fundamentally alters the value of continuity.

In the Trumpian model:

continuity with greatness is desirable.

In the Mileian model:

continuity of the old system is precisely what must be interrupted.

The desired political subject therefore requires different competences. The leader must not simply possess strength.

He must possess the capacity to:

- cut;
- confront;
- destabilize;
- refuse normalization;
- diagnose;
- redirect.

The Mileian deep narrative can therefore be expressed as:

CASTE / FAILED SYSTEM

↓

ANGER / REJECTION

↓

DISRUPTIVE INTERVENTION

↓

PRODUCTIVE DESTABILIZATION

↓

NEW TRAJECTORY

↓

LIBERTARIAN TRANSFORMATION.

Again, the five images distribute the narrative functions.

- **IMG 2c** identifies and moralizes the systemic antagonist.
  The “caste” transforms institutional complexity into a narratively coherent enemy.

- **IMG 2b** supplies the passional energy.
  Anger gives bodily visibility to the intolerability of continuity.

- **IMG 2a** supplies the operation.
  The chainsaw condenses the political cut required to interrupt the system.

- **IMG 2d** supplies the processual style.
  Productive chaos transforms destabilization from a possible defect into a sign of ongoing political transformation.

- **IMG 2e** supplies epistemic direction and possible sanction.
  Economic visualization can be used to demonstrate that disruption has produced—or is producing—a measurable change of trajectory.

The integrated Mileian sequence therefore becomes:

- **IMG 2c**
  IDENTIFY THE FAILED SYSTEM

  ↓

- **IMG 2b**
  PASSIONALIZE ITS REJECTION

  ↓

- **IMG 2a**
  MATERIALIZE THE CUT

  ↓

- **IMG 2d**
  MAINTAIN TRANSFORMATIVE DESTABILIZATION

  ↓

- **IMG 2e**
  VISUALIZE THE NEW TRAJECTORY.

Again, this is not a historical chronology but a functional reconstruction of the corpus.

Milei's body performs a different political function from Trump's:

- Trumpian embodiment tends toward consolidation;
- Mileian embodiment tends toward exteriorization.

The political body becomes:

- expanded;
- tension-driven;
- vocal;
- gestural;
- directional.

The relevant transformation is:

INTERNAL PASSION

↓

EXTERNALIZED INTENSITY

↓

VISIBLE REFUSAL OF CONTAINMENT.

This body is politically productive because the institutional system has already been associated with restraint, artificiality, stagnation, or empty formalism.

The body therefore communicates ideological difference through its refusal to remain within conventional expressive limits.

The bodily formula becomes:

CONSTRAINT

↓

PRESSURE

↓

EXPANSION.

This mirrors the larger political narrative:

FAILED SYSTEM

↓

ACCUMULATED CRISIS

↓

RUPTURE.

The political body again becomes a micro-model of the political program. But the movement is opposite to Trump's:

- Trump's body reorganizes instability into concentration;
- Milei's body converts containment into expansion.

The contrast can therefore be expressed as:

TRUMP

BODY UNDER PRESSURE → RECOMPOSES ITSELF

MILEI

BODY UNDER PRESSURE → EXPANDS BEYOND CONVENTIONAL CONTAINMENT.

Both produce authenticity effects. But through opposed corporeal grammars.

Mileian space

- The spatial model follows the same logic.
- The problem is an enclosed system.
- The caste occupies the institutional interior.
- Bureaucracy reproduces itself.
- Political privilege appears protected by boundaries.
- The leader acquires legitimacy through symbolic exteriority.
- The desired political movement is therefore not toward protection of the interior but toward its **penetration and transformation**.

The spatial sequence becomes:

CLOSED SYSTEM

↓

OUTSIDER

↓

BREACH

↓

INTERVENTION

↓

RECONFIGURED SPACE.

The chainsaw gives this topology a material metaphor. It is a tool for producing discontinuity in a surface. Milei's anti-system identity therefore organizes political agency spatially as **breaking through**. This creates the sharpest contrast with Trumpian boundary politics.

Trumpian legitimacy often requires:

PROTECT THE BOUNDARY.

Mileian disruptive legitimacy requires:

BREAK THE ENCLOSURE.

The same spatial category —boundary— receives opposite political values. This inversion is one of the most revealing comparative results.

Mileian temporality

- The Mileian temporal model is similarly based on the negative valuation of duration.
- The system has lasted too long.
- Bureaucracy is slow.
- Politics repeats itself.
- Economic dysfunction is cumulative.
- The leader must accelerate historical change.

The temporal relation becomes:

INERTIA

↓

ACCELERATION

↓

RUPTURE

↓

NEW DIRECTION.

This helps explain the semiotic productivity of urgency. Anger makes waiting intolerable. The chainsaw makes gradualism appear insufficient. Productive chaos makes transformation look already underway. Economic graphs allow slower structural change to be serialized into visible indicators.

Mileian leadership therefore seeks to control political time by converting:

TOO MUCH CONTINUITY

into

ACCELERATED TRANSFORMATION.

The leader becomes a temporal operator. Not the subject who restores the correct historical rhythm, but the one who **forces history to move**.

The comparison becomes:

- TRUMP
  REVERSE THE WRONG TRAJECTORY;
- MILEI
  BREAK THE TRAJECTORY ITSELF.

Mileian plasticity

At the plastic level, this architecture is expressed through:

- vectors;
- cuts;
- angularity;
- expansion;
- fragmentation;
- contrast;

- directional change.

The deep relation becomes:

DISRUPTIVE POLITICS

=

TRANSFORMATIVE PLASTIC FORM.

Again, **IMG 2e** is an important counterpoint. Its graphic organization is highly ordered, but the order is used to make **change of trajectory** perceptible. Thus even formal stability becomes subordinate to transformation.

Graphic order does not represent preservation of the old system. It makes the alleged success of its interruption measurable. This confirms that the Mileian plastic code is not simply chaotic. Its deeper principle is **change**.

Chaos is one possible form. The graph is another. Both become politically coherent when interpreted through transformation.

Mileian circulation

Circulation stabilizes this identity through a process opposite to Trump's. Milei need not always repeat exactly the same form. Instead, the media environment repeatedly produces:

- another provocation;
- another confrontation;
- another cut;
- another attack on the caste;
- another graph;
- another controversy.

The stable element is the **operation of disruption**.

The circulatory structure becomes:

NEW CONFLICT

↓

SAME DISRUPTIVE ETHOS

↓

NEW VARIANT

↓

SAME TRANSFORMATIVE POSITION.

The authenticity effect is therefore:

HE CONTINUES NOT TO BECOME NORMALIZED.

This is crucial:

- **Trumpian authenticity** depends heavily on remaining the recognizable subject audiences already know.
- **Mileian authenticity** depends heavily on remaining the subject who refuses the conventions against which he originally defined himself.

The two structures can be represented as:

TRUMP

CONTINUITY OF PERSONA

→ authenticity.

MILEI

CONTINUITY OF NON-CONFORMITY

→ authenticity.

The apparent contradiction in the second formula is central. Non-conformity becomes consistent. Rupture becomes recurrent. Disruption becomes style.

The integrated comparison allows the concept of political competence to be refined further.

Trump's competence is predominantly **attributive**. The leader is constructed as possessing:

- strength;
- success;
- resilience;
- dominance;
- control.

These are attributes. The narrative inference becomes:

BECAUSE HE IS THIS KIND OF SUBJECT,

HE CAN RESTORE THE COLLECTIVE OBJECT OF VALUE.

Milei's competence is more strongly **operational**. The leader is constructed as capable of:

- cutting;
- confronting;
- diagnosing;
- destabilizing;
- redirecting.

The inference becomes:

BECAUSE HE CAN PERFORM THESE OPERATIONS,

HE CAN TRANSFORM THE SYSTEM.

The distinction can therefore be expressed as:

TRUMP

COMPETENCE THROUGH POSSESSION

MILEI

COMPETENCE THROUGH OPERATION.

This does not mean Trump does not act or Milei does not possess attributes. The distinction identifies the dominant mode of semiotic legitimation reconstructed from the corpus:

- Trump's imagery repeatedly shows **what he is**.
- Milei's repeatedly dramatizes **what he does**.

The same difference appears in the relationship with the collective **object of value**.

Trump's object is comparatively defined. It has a name: GREATNESS. The leader seeks to restore conjunction between the nation and a value represented as previously possessed.

The structure is:

SUBJECT + LOST OBJECT → RECONJUNCTION.

Milei's object is more strongly defined through a process of liberation from negative conditions. Freedom and libertarian transformation provide positive values, but the visual corpus gives unusually strong emphasis to the **operation required to remove obstacles**.

The structure becomes:

SUBJECT + OBSTACLE → RUPTURE → NEW POSSIBILITY.

The difference can therefore be summarized as:

TRUMP

THE OBJECT OF VALUE IS REMEMBERED.

MILEI

THE OBJECT OF VALUE MUST BE MADE POSSIBLE.

Trumpian political desire has a strong mnemonic foundation. Mileian political desire has a strong transformative foundation.

Antagonism likewise operates differently. Trumpian antagonism often constructs the opponent or threatening other as an agent of:

- decline;
- insecurity;
- boundary violation;
- loss of control.

The antagonist threatens a valued order. The narrative function becomes:

PROTECT AGAINST / DEFEAT THE THREAT.

Mileian antagonism constructs the caste as an agent of:

- continuity;
- privilege;
- stagnation;
- institutional reproduction.

The antagonist embodies the order itself. The function becomes:

DISMANTLE THE SYSTEM REPRESENTED BY THE ANTAGONIST.

This distinction is important:

- Trump's adversary threatens the **desired structure**;
- Milei's adversary **is part of the unwanted structure**.

The contrast can therefore be formulated as:

TRUMP

ENEMY AS THREAT TO ORDER

MILEI

ENEMY AS EMBODIMENT OF OLD ORDER.

This difference explains why protection is central to one model and dismantling to the other.

The leaders also require crisis differently.

Trumpian crisis is often a **crisis of loss**.

The political question is:

HOW DID WE LOSE CONTROL, GREATNESS, SECURITY, OR NATIONAL COHERENCE?

Mileian crisis is predominantly a **crisis of persistence**.

The question is:

WHY HAS THIS FAILED SYSTEM BEEN ALLOWED TO CONTINUE?

The distinction becomes:

- **TRUMP → TOO MUCH UNCONTROLLED CHANGE**;
- **MILEI → TOO MUCH FAILED CONTINUITY**.

This is one of the most productive comparative formulas emerging from the corpus because it explains several later oppositions simultaneously:

- Trump values stabilization because change has become threatening.
- Milei values acceleration because continuity has become threatening.

Trump recovers. Milei interrupts. Trump recenters. Milei breaches. Trump monumentalizes. Milei vectorizes. The surface differences derive from different **semiotic diagnoses of crisis**.

The integrated model also clarifies the construction of **political credibility**.

Credibility is not produced exclusively through factual evidence. The corpus reveals multiple regimes:

Trumpian credibility is frequently constructed through:

- biographical evidence of success;
- bodily resilience;
- visual consistency;
- patriotic recognition;
- repetition of dominant ethos.

Mileian credibility is frequently constructed through:

- passional intensity;
- anti-institutional consistency;
- performative rupture;
- economic expertise;
- visualization of measurable trends.

The dominant formulas become:

TRUMP

CREDIBILITY THROUGH EMBODIED

AND BIOGRAPHICAL CONFIRMATION

MILEI

CREDIBILITY THROUGH PERFORMATIVE

AND EPISTEMIC DISCONTINUITY.

Trump's signs say:

LOOK AT WHAT HE HAS BEEN AND WHAT HE EMBODIES.

Milei's say:

LOOK AT WHAT HE IS BREAKING AND WHAT HE CLAIMS TO KNOW.

Both forms are highly personalized. The evidence becomes attached to the individual subject.

The corpus also makes clear that credibility and **factuality** cannot be treated as synonymous. A visual text can produce a strong credibility effect without establishing factual truth. Conversely, a factually grounded text can be politically ineffective if it fails to enter a recognizable interpretive frame.

The relevant distinction is therefore among:

- REFERENTIAL TRUTH;
- EFFECT OF TRUTH;
- AUTHENTICITY;
- POLITICAL CREDIBILITY.

These dimensions may overlap. But they need not.

- **IMG 1a** is grounded in a documented historical event and simultaneously transformed into a heroic icon.
- **IMG 1e** demonstrates how fabricated material can produce emotional and ideological effects despite referential falsity.
- **IMG 2e** demonstrates how technical data can produce epistemic credibility while remaining subject to selection, framing, comparison, and theatricalization.
- **IMG 2b** demonstrates how bodily intensity can produce authenticity without being a factual proposition at all.

This diversity is central to the **aesthetics of post-truth**.

Post-truth politics does not eliminate truth. It reorganizes the relationship among:

- **truth;**
- **visibility;**
- **emotion;**
- **identity;**
- **credibility**.

The sign becomes politically effective when these dimensions are arranged into a coherent regime of belief.

The integrated model would remain incomplete without considering **the role of digital platforms**.

Platforms are not simply neutral channels carrying pre-existing political meanings. Within the analytical framework developed here, they function as meta-operators of visibility, repetition, fragmentation, and circulation.

They contribute to:

- temporal acceleration;
- context compression;
- serial repetition;
- memetic variation;
- secondary enunciation;
- algorithmic selection;
- archival reactivation;
- inter-public conflict.

The leader's semiotic architecture therefore encounters a technical environment that can amplify some of its properties:

- Trump's strongly recognizable symbolic forms benefit from repeated recirculation;
- Milei's high-intensity and fragmentable performances benefit from extractability and reaction.

The relation can be represented as:

TRUMP

STRONG ICONIC RECOGNIZABILITY + PLATFORM REPETITION

↙ ↘

STABLE SYMBOLIC CENTRALITY.

MILEI

HIGH PERFORMATIVE INTENSITY + PLATFORM FRAGMENTATION / REACTION

↙ ↘

CONTINUOUS DISRUPTIVE ACTIVATION.

This does not imply that platform infrastructures mechanically cause either leadership style. The more defensible conclusion is that the two semiotic systems display different but significant **compatibilities with platformized circulation**.

This distinction also allows us to separate two processes that are often conflated. Mediatization concerns the growing dependence of politics on media forms, logics, visibility, and performance. Platformization adds another layer.

Political communication becomes increasingly dependent upon infrastructures characterized by:

- algorithmic ordering;

- user participation;
- metrics;
- networked redistribution;
- short-form formats;
- continuous feedback;
- datafied visibility.

The political leader therefore does not merely perform for media. He performs inside an environment in which the audience can immediately:

- react;
- reproduce;
- transform;
- contest;
- measure;
- redistribute.

The political text is no longer simply broadcast. It becomes **circulatory**.

This is essential to understanding both Trump and Milei. Their political identities do not remain located in official communication. They migrate through heterogeneous actors and formats. Leadership becomes an effect of **distributed visibility**.

The integrated analysis therefore suggests that the appropriate unit of interpretation is not ultimately the isolated image. Nor even the individual leader considered as a biological subject.

The more adequate unit is the **semiotic ecosystem constructed around the leader**.

This ecosystem contains:

- bodies;
- objects;
- gestures;
- slogans;
- colors;
- media formats;
- supporter practices;
- oppositional reactions;
- journalistic framing;
- memetic circulation;
- data visualizations;
- archives.

The political persona emerges from relations among these components. The leader can therefore be conceptualized as a **nodal point within a distributed system of signs**.

This has an important methodological consequence. One should not ask only:

WHAT DOES TRUMP COMMUNICATE?

or:

WHAT DOES MILEI COMMUNICATE?

The broader question is:

WHICH SEMIOTIC SYSTEMS MAKE TRUMP AND MILEI PUBLICLY RECOGNIZABLE AS PARTICULAR TYPES OF POLITICAL LEADERS?

The answer requires examining not only intentional communication but also the wider media ecology through which their signs acquire life.

From this perspective, personalized leadership performs a crucial mediating function.

Ideologies are abstract systems, platforms privilege visible and rapidly interpretable forms.

The leader connects the two. The person becomes an **interface**.

Through Trump:

- restoration becomes body;
- greatness becomes slogan;
- success becomes gold;
- belonging becomes cap;
- resistance becomes fist.

Through Milei:

- rupture becomes chainsaw;
- authenticity becomes anger;
- anti-establishment conflict becomes caste;
- transformation becomes productive chaos;
- economic legitimacy becomes graph.

The leader therefore translates ideology into **perceptual availability**.

The relation is:

IDEOLOGY

↓

LEADER

↓

VISIBLE SIGN.

But the process also works in reverse:

VISIBLE SIGN

↓

LEADER

↓

IDEOLOGICAL WORLD.

A supporter encounters the chainsaw and activates Milei's broader political universe. Encounters MAGA red and activates Trump's. The leader thus functions as a semiotic interface in both directions.

The complete Trumpian model can now be reconstructed as follows:

- **AXIOLOGY**
  greatness / decline; strength / weakness; order / disorder; belonging / threat;

  ↓

- **NARRATIVE**
  loss → struggle → restoration;

  ↓

- **PASSION**
  pride, confidence, fear, defiance;

  ↓

- **BODY**

  verticality, resilience, control;

  ↓

- **SPACE**

  center, boundary, protected interior;

  ↓

- **TIME**

  return, recurrence, restoration;

  ↓

- **PLASTICITY**

  compactness, hierarchy, chromatic coherence;

  ↓

- **SYMBOLS**

  fist, dominant posture, airplane/gold, MAGA cap, threatening imagery;

  ↓

- **CIRCULATION**

  repetition, iconization, mnemonic stabilization;

  ↓

- **ETHOS**

  strong, successful, patriotic restorer;

  ↓

- **CREDIBILITY EFFECT**

  consistency, resilience, competence, recognizable identity.

The Mileian model can be reconstructed as:

- **AXIOLOGY**

  freedom / constraint; rupture / continuity; authenticity / artificiality; transformation / stagnation;

  ↓

- **NARRATIVE**

  failed system → confrontation → rupture → transformation;

  ↓

- **PASSION**

  anger, urgency, indignation, disruptive enthusiasm;

  ↓

- **BODY**

  expansion, tension, shouting, expressive excess;

  ↓

- **SPACE**

  outside, breach, penetration, reconfiguration;

  ↓

- **TIME**

  acceleration, interruption, new trajectory;

  ↓

- **PLASTICITY**

  vectoriality, cutting, fragmentation, contrast;

  ↓

- **SYMBOLS**

  chainsaw, angry body, caste, productive chaos, graph;

  ↓

- **CIRCULATION**

  fragmentation, memetic activation, recursive conflict, updating;

  ↓

- **ETHOS**

  authentic, anti-system, technically competent disruptor;

  ↓

- **CREDIBILITY EFFECT**

  non-conformity, urgency, transformative agency, epistemic authority.

The comparative opposition can therefore be expressed synthetically as:

TRUMP

RESTORATIVE LEADERSHIP

=

THE CAPACITY TO RECONSTRUCT A LOST ORDER AROUND A STRONG CENTER.

MILEI

DISRUPTIVE LEADERSHIP

=

THE CAPACITY TO BREAK A FAILED ORDER AND FORCE A NEW TRAJECTORY.

Despite these differences, the two systems share a common abstract morphology.

Both begin with:

CRISIS.

Both identify:

ANTAGONISTS.

Both construct:

AN EXCEPTIONAL SUBJECT.

Both attribute:

SPECIAL COMPETENCE.

Both mobilize:

PASSIONS.

Both promise:

TRANSFORMATION.

Both depend upon:

HIGH VISIBILITY AND SYMBOLIC RECOGNITION.

The shared structure can therefore be represented as:

NEGATIVE PRESENT

↓

ANTAGONISM

↓

EXCEPTIONAL LEADER

↓

MOBILIZATION

↓

TRANSFORMATION

↓

POSITIVE FUTURE.

What differs is the semantic content of transformation.

For Trump:

TRANSFORMATION = RESTORATION.

For Milei:

TRANSFORMATION = RUPTURE AND REFOUNDATION.

This distinction allows comparison without collapsing the two cases into the same political phenomenon.

They share a semiotic morphology of personalized populist leadership while constructing substantially different axiologies, temporalities, spatialities, and expressive regimes.

The integrated model also suggests that the images should not be understood primarily as representations of pre-existing political identities.

They participate in **producing those identities (political performativity)**.

The fist does not merely show resilience. Its circulation helps make resilience part of Trump's public ethos.

The chainsaw does not merely illustrate Milei's program. Its repetition helps define what that program means culturally.

The cap does not simply represent supporters. It participates in constituting a visible political community.

The graph does not simply display data. Its performative use contributes to the construction of Milei as an economist-leader.

The relation therefore changes from:

POLITICAL IDENTITY → IMAGE

to a reciprocal structure:

POLITICAL IDENTITY ↔ IMAGE.

Representation becomes performative because the repeated image helps stabilize the very subject it appears merely to depict.

This is fundamental to the study of mediatized leadership.

The political persona becomes effective only when its signs are **socially recognized**.

The leader can attempt to perform strength. But the sign becomes culturally relevant when others recognize it as strength, debate it as strength, reject it as authoritarianism, parody it, reproduce it, and connect it to previous signs.

Likewise, Milei can perform rupture, but disruptive identity becomes socially stabilized through collective interpretation and circulation.

Political leadership therefore depends upon an interplay between:

SELF-PRESENTATION

and

SOCIAL RECOGNITION.

The process can be represented as:

LEADER PERFORMS

↓

MEDIA CAPTURE

↓

PUBLIC INTERPRETS

↓

SIGN CIRCULATES

↓

IDENTITY STABILIZES OR MUTATES.

The political persona is therefore neither completely authored by the leader nor completely imposed externally. It is co-produced.

This integrated perspective also allows the concept of the **post-truth political leader** to be defined more precisely.

The post-truth leader is not simply a politician who produces false statements. Such a definition would be analytically insufficient.

Within the corpus, post-truth leadership is better understood as a political configuration in which credibility increasingly depends upon the successful alignment of:

- **VISIBILITY;**
- **AUTHENTICITY EFFECTS;**
- **PASSIONAL INTENSITY;**
- **IDENTITY RECOGNITION;**
- **SYMBOLIC REPETITION;**
- **PLATFORM CIRCULATION,**

while factual verification remains only one dimension among several competing regimes of credibility.

The leader becomes believable because he appears:

- coherent;

- recognizable;
- emotionally legible;
- symbolically dense;
- repeated;
- culturally familiar.

The problem is therefore not the disappearance of truth but the proliferation of **alternative semiotic routes to credibility**.

A fact can persuade. But so can a gesture. A body. An object. A slogan. A meme. A graph. A repeated image. A collectively stabilized identity.

This is precisely why the corpus requires a semiotic analysis rather than a narrow fact-checking framework alone.

The comparative study allows two different credibility regimes to be proposed:

- **RESTORATIVE CREDIBILITY**

  Trump's credibility is constructed when different signs repeatedly confirm that he possesses the attributes necessary to recover a valued order. The governing formula is: *HE LOOKS LIKE THE SUBJECT CAPABLE OF RESTORING WHAT HAS BEEN LOST.*

  The raised fist confirms resilience. The dominant posture confirms strength. Luxury confirms success. MAGA confirms national identification. Threat narratives confirm the necessity of protection. Credibility emerges through convergence.

- **DISRUPTIVE CREDIBILITY**

  Milei's credibility is constructed when different signs repeatedly confirm that he remains capable of breaking with the failed system. The formula becomes: *HE LOOKS LIKE THE SUBJECT CAPABLE OF DOING WHAT THE OLD SYSTEM WOULD NOT DO.*

  The chainsaw confirms willingness to cut. Anger confirms refusal of decorum. The caste confirms the antagonistic target. Productive chaos confirms continued disruption. The graph confirms claimed economic competence and directional change. Again, credibility emerges through convergence.

Thus the two models differ not in whether they produce credibility semiotically, but **in what kind of competence must be made believable**.

The integrated analysis ultimately allows the deepest contrast to be formulated through two different relations to **form itself**.

Trump's political universe begins from the assumption that a legitimate form has been degraded. The task is to recover it.

Milei's begins from the assumption that the inherited form is illegitimate. The task is to destroy or reconfigure it.

The opposition becomes:

TRUMP

GOOD FORM LOST → RESTORE FORM

MILEI

BAD FORM PERSISTING → BREAK FORM.

This deep distinction explains:

- their temporal differences;
- their spatial differences;
- their bodily differences;
- their plastic differences;
- their symbolic differences;
- their circulatory differences.

Trump's semiotic grammar is fundamentally **reconstructive**.

Milei's fundamentally **deconstructive-transformative**.

The first requires:

- memory;
- center;
- continuity;
- recognition;
- protection.

The second requires:

- rupture;
- vector;
- discontinuity;
- intensity;
- intervention.

In summary, the analysis of isotopies, axiologies, symbolic condensations, semisymbolic relations, and cross-level correspondences demonstrates that the ten-text corpus is structured by two remarkably coherent but opposite configurations.

Trump's images repeatedly translate political legitimacy into the visible grammar of **strength, centrality, continuity, success, belonging, and restoration**. Their semiotic organization tends to transform instability into the need for a center, threat into the need for protection, loss into the possibility of return, and personal success into evidence of collective competence.

Milei's images repeatedly translate legitimacy into the visible grammar of **rupture, expansion, antagonism, discontinuity, technical diagnosis, and transformation**. Their semiotic organization tends to transform institutional continuity into stagnation, expressive excess into authenticity, destructive imagery into productive rupture, and economic visualization into evidence that another trajectory can be constructed.

The two models can therefore be condensed into the following formulas:

TRUMP

LOSS → STRENGTH → RECENTERING → RESTORATION

and

MILEI

STAGNATION → RUPTURE → RECONFIGURATION → TRANSFORMATION.

At the deepest level, however, both models depend upon the same fundamental operation: they transform political complexity into **highly recognizable configurations of leadership**.

Values become bodies; programs become objects; conflicts become images; ideologies become colors, gestures, spaces, rhythms, and recurring visual forms.

Political leadership thus emerges as a process of **semiotic condensation and performative stabilization**.

The leader becomes recognizable because heterogeneous signs continually return to the same deeper structure:

- Trump becomes the subject who can **hold and restore the center**;
- Milei becomes the subject who can **break the constraint and redirect the system**.

It is precisely this transformation of abstract political projects into perceptually coherent, emotionally intense, and repeatedly circulating forms that allows the two leadership models to acquire durability within the contemporary digital media ecosystem.

The analysis can now move to the final chapter, where these findings can be brought together in a broader comparative interpretation of **post-truth aesthetics, digital populism, platformized credibility, and contemporary political leadership**.

XI. POST-TRUTH AESTHETICS AND DIGITAL POPULISM

11.1. TWO MODELS OF POPULIST LEADERSHIP

The comparative analysis of Donald Trump and Javier Milei reveals that contemporary populist leadership cannot be understood adequately through political programs, ideological positions, or verbal discourse alone. The corpus demonstrates that leadership is also produced through a dense network of visual, bodily, symbolic, passional, spatial, temporal, and platformized operations that progressively transform the political subject into a highly recognizable semiotic configuration.

The central result of the study is therefore not simply that Trump and Milei use images effectively.

The more important finding is that their images participate in the construction of **two distinct models of political intelligibility**.

Trump's visual universe organizes politics through a logic of restoration.

Milei's organizes it through a logic of rupture.

This distinction affects nearly every analytical level examined in the research: values, narrative programs, passions, bodies, objects, space, time, plastic organization, processes of circulation, forms of authenticity, regimes of credibility.

The two leaders therefore do not merely possess different styles. They construct different semiotic grammars of leadership.

The first comparative model can be defined as **restorative populist leadership**.

In the Trumpian corpus, political crisis is predominantly constructed as loss.

A valued national condition is represented as having existed previously and as having subsequently deteriorated.

The present is therefore evaluated in relation to an idealized past. The political future acquires legitimacy by promising recovery.

The fundamental temporal structure becomes:

VALUED PAST

↓

DECLINE

↓

NEGATIVELY VALORIZED PRESENT

↓

RESTORATIVE INTERVENTION

↓

RECOVERED FUTURE.

This temporal structure explains the importance of the MAGA slogan.

The word *again* performs an extraordinary amount of semiotic work because it establishes continuity among:

- memory;
- loss;
- desire;
- future.

The desired political transformation is not represented primarily as invention. It is represented as **return**.

Trump's leadership therefore requires a subject capable of recovering what has been lost.

This is why strength, dominance, resilience, success, and control assume such central value.

The leader must appear competent enough to restore the disjoined collective object.

The narrative structure can be represented as:

AMERICA

disjoined from

GREATNESS

↓

TRUMP AS COMPETENT SUBJECT

↓

RESTORATIVE PROGRAM

↓

AMERICA REJOINED WITH GREATNESS.

The political leader therefore occupies the position of indispensable mediator between loss and recovery.

This mediation is highly personalized.

The collective future increasingly depends upon the competence of a single recognizable subject.

The five Trumpian images contribute differently to this structure:

- **IMG 1a** constructs resilience;
- **IMG 1b** constructs dominance;
- **IMG 1c** constructs success;
- **IMG 1d** constructs belonging and restorative identity;
- **IMG 1e** constructs threat and antagonism.

Together, they form a coherent political narrative:

THREATENED COMMUNITY

↓

STRONG LEADER

↓

COLLECTIVE MOBILIZATION

↓

RESTORATION.

The Trumpian leadership model can therefore be condensed as:

THE LEADER WHO RESTORES ORDER BY EMBODYING

THE STRENGTH THAT THE COLLECTIVE

IS REPRESENTED AS HAVING LOST.

The Mileian model follows a different logic.

It can be defined as **disruptive populist leadership**.

Here crisis is predominantly constructed not as loss of a valued condition but as the prolonged survival of a negatively valorized system.

The political problem is continuity. The old order has lasted too long. The caste reproduces itself.

Bureaucracy persists. Inflation and economic dysfunction become signs of systemic failure. The political transformation therefore requires interruption.

The temporal structure becomes:

FAILED SYSTEM

↓

PROLONGED CONTINUITY

↓

CRISIS

↓

RUPTURE

↓

NEW TRAJECTORY.

The desired future is not primarily imagined as a recovered past.

It is represented as something that becomes possible only after the inherited structure has been broken.

This explains the extraordinary semiotic importance of the chainsaw.

IMG 2a condenses the political program into one material operation:

CUT.

The mechanical action of the object becomes homologous to the promised political action.

The structure becomes:

OLD SYSTEM

↓

CUT

↓

NEW POSSIBILITY.

Milei's leadership therefore requires a different form of competence.

The political subject must appear capable of:

- breaking;
- confronting;
- destabilizing;
- refusing institutional normalization;
- diagnosing economic failure;
- redirecting the system.

The five Mileian texts distribute these functions:

- **IMG 2c** identifies the caste;
- **IMG 2b** passionalizes rejection;
- **IMG 2a** materializes rupture;
- **IMG 2d** turns destabilization into method;
- **IMG 2e** attempts to provide technical and measurable legitimation.

The broader structure becomes:

FAILED ORDER

↓

ANGRY AND KNOWLEDGEABLE OUTSIDER

↓

RUPTURE

↓

PRODUCTIVE DESTABILIZATION

↓

TRANSFORMATION.

The Mileian leadership model can therefore be condensed as:

THE LEADER WHO PRODUCES POLITICAL LEGITIMACY

BY DEMONSTRATING THE CAPACITY TO BREAK THE SYSTEM THAT

OTHERS ARE REPRESENTED AS INCAPABLE OR UNWILLING TO CHANGE.

The contrast between the two models can be represented as:

TRUMP

LOSS → RECOVERY.

MILEI

CONTINUITY → INTERRUPTION.

Or more synthetically:

TRUMP

RESTORE WHAT SHOULD STILL EXIST.

MILEI

DESTROY WHAT SHOULD NO LONGER EXIST.

This opposition is the central comparative axis of the study and the distinction also reveals two different ways of constructing the present:

- the Trumpian present is represented as a **degraded version of something better**;
- the Mileian present is represented as the **prolongation of something structurally wrong**.

The difference may appear subtle, but it has significant consequences.

Trumpian crisis says:

WE HAVE FALLEN FROM WHERE WE SHOULD BE.

Mileian crisis says:

WE HAVE REMAINED TOO LONG WHERE WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE REMAINED.

The first generates nostalgia. The second generates impatience. The first passionalizes loss. The second passionalizes stagnation. The first requires memory. The second requires rupture.

These different diagnoses of the present help explain the different emotional regimes reconstructed in the corpus.

Trumpian leadership is strongly associated with **pride, confidence, defiance, and fear of decline or threat**.

The emotional structure oscillates between:

WE SHOULD BE GREAT

and

WE ARE BEING PREVENTED FROM BEING GREAT.

Pride and threat therefore reinforce one another.

The stronger the positive collective identity, the more threatening its perceived loss can become.

The Trumpian emotional formula can be represented as:

PRIDE IN AUTHENTIC COLLECTIVE IDENTITY + FEAR OF ITS LOSS

↙ ↘

DEMAND FOR RESTORATION.

Mileian leadership is more strongly associated with **anger, frustration, indignation, urgency, and excitement around disruption**.

The emotional structure becomes:

THIS SYSTEM IS INTOLERABLE + IT HAS CONTINUED TOO LONG

↓

ANGER

↓

DEMAND FOR RUPTURE.

The distinction is therefore not simply:

- **TRUMP = PRIDE**;
- **MILEI = ANGER**.

Both leaders mobilize multiple passions. The deeper contrast concerns the **narrative object of emotion**.

Trumpian passion is oriented toward recovery of a valued identity. Mileian passion toward rejection of a devalued system. The emotional structures are narratively embedded.

The same opposition becomes visible in <u>the body</u>.

Trump's political body is repeatedly organized through:

- verticality;
- centrality;
- compactness;
- frontal presence;
- controlled dominance.

The body tends to become **monumental**.

It appears capable of resisting external pressure while preserving internal form.

The Trumpian bodily logic can be summarized as:

PRESSURE → RESISTANCE → RECOMPOSITION.

This is particularly evident in **IMG 1a**. The body has been attacked. The raised fist re-establishes political agency. The image therefore converts bodily vulnerability into symbolic strength.

In **IMG 1b**, the same logic is stabilized as ordinary leadership style. The body does not merely survive. It occupies. Controls. Dominates.

The Trumpian body says:

I REMAIN STANDING.

The Mileian body operates differently.

It tends toward:

- expansion;
- gesture;
- tension;
- open vocal configuration;
- directional movement;
- expressive overflow.

The body becomes **vectorial**. It does not primarily stabilize itself against pressure. It externalizes pressure.

The Mileian bodily logic becomes:

PRESSURE → INTENSIFICATION → EXPANSION.

The body says:

I WILL NOT REMAIN CONTAINED.

This difference is crucial because the body provides a visible model of political agency.

Trump's body stabilizes. Milei's body disrupts.

Trump's body tends toward monument. Milei's toward force.

The comparison can therefore be formulated as:

- **TRUMP → BODY AS FORM**
- **MILEI → BODY AS ENERGY**.

The **spatial structures** reinforce the same distinction.

Trumpian political space is organized through:

- center;
- inside;
- boundary;
- hierarchy;
- protected collective territory.

The political problem becomes the weakening or displacement of legitimate boundaries and centers.

The desired transformation is therefore:

- RE-CENTER;
- RE-ESTABLISH THE BORDER;
- PROTECT THE INTERIOR.

Mileian political space is organized through:

- enclosure;

- outside;
- breach;
- penetration;
- transformation of institutional space.

The problem is not insufficient enclosure. It is excessive enclosure of a self-protecting system.

The desired operation becomes:

ENTER

CUT

BREAK THROUGH

RECONFIGURE.

The opposition can therefore be condensed as:

TRUMP

PROTECT THE INSIDE FROM THE OUTSIDE.

MILEI

ATTACK THE INSIDE FROM THE OUTSIDE.

This is one of the most revealing structural inversions in the corpus. The same basic topological opposition —inside/outside— receives opposite axiological values:

- for Trump, the valued subject is inside;
- for Milei, the valued subject begins outside.

The Trumpian outsider threatens. The Mileian outsider authenticates. This demonstrates particularly clearly that political meaning cannot be deduced from spatial form alone.

It emerges from the axiological system in which the form is embedded.

The same inversion operates temporally (**two models of temporal legitimacy**):

- Trump legitimates change through continuity,
- Milei legitimates change through discontinuity.

This apparent paradox can be represented as:

TRUMP

CHANGE IS LEGITIMATE IF IT RESTORES CONTINUITY WITH A VALUED PAST.

MILEI

CHANGE IS LEGITIMATE IF IT INTERRUPTS CONTINUITY WITH A DEVALUED PAST.

The Trumpian temporal keyword is:

AGAIN.

The Mileian one can be reconstructed as:

NO LONGER.

Again versus no longer:

- **again** reconnects;
- **no longer** separates.

Trump's temporal imagination is circular. Milei's is linear and ruptural. Trump returns. Milei exits. Trump seeks a lost point of reference. Milei seeks another trajectory.

These temporal configurations contribute directly to different political experiences of hope.

Trumpian hope is hope of recognition. Mileian hope is hope of release.

Trump says:

WE CAN BECOME OURSELVES AGAIN.

Milei says:

WE CAN STOP BEING TRAPPED IN THIS SYSTEM.

The plastic analysis confirms these differences (**two visual grammars**).

Trumpian visuality tends toward:

- centrality;
- verticality;
- compactness;
- repetition;
- chromatic coherence;
- formal concentration;
- controlled hierarchy.

Mileian visuality tends toward:

- vectors;
- cuts;
- expansion;
- fragmentation;
- chromatic contrast;
- directional change;
- perceptual tension.

The comparison can be synthesized as:

TRUMP

CENTRIPETAL VISUALITY;

MILEI

CENTRIFUGAL / VECTORIAL VISUALITY.

Trump's image pulls attention toward a center. Milei's pushes attention through a field of forces.

Trumpian visuality often asks the spectator to recognize **who occupies the center**.

Mileian visuality more often asks the spectator to follow **what force is acting upon the system**.

The first privileges position. The second operation. This distinction corresponds closely to the difference identified earlier between attributive and operational competence.

Two symbolic systems

Trumpian symbolism tends to condense political values into signs of:

- identity;
- status;
- strength;
- success;
- belonging;
- protection;
- the fist;
- the cap;
- the aircraft;

- gold;
- the national palette;

These signs answer the question:

WHO IS THIS LEADER AND WHAT WORLD DOES HE REPRESENT?

Mileian symbolism tends more strongly toward signs of:

- action;
- rupture;
- confrontation;
- transformation;
- measurement;
- the chainsaw;
- the angry body;
- the caste;
- productive chaos;
- the graph.

These signs answer:

WHAT DOES THIS LEADER DO TO THE POLITICAL WORLD?

This is why the distinction between **political nouns and political verbs** remains analytically productive.

Trumpian symbols tend to substantivize political values.

Mileian symbols tend to verbalize political transformation.

Trump:

- **strength**;
- **greatness**;
- **success**.

Milei:

- **cut**;
- **break**;
- **confront**;
- **transform**.

The political imagery thus produces two different grammars of action (**two forms of authenticity**).

The comparative corpus also suggests that authenticity can be produced through opposite strategies.

Trumpian authenticity tends to rely on **consistency**.

New signs are credible when they confirm the persona already known.

The raised fist becomes convincing partly because it can be assimilated to an earlier image of Trump as strong, combative, dominant, and resistant.

The mechanism is:

HE LOOKS LIKE HIMSELF.

Mileian authenticity tends more strongly to rely on **non-conformity**.

The leader appears sincere because he violates conventional political expectations (shouting, provocation, expressive excess, chainsaw performance).

The mechanism becomes:

HE DOES NOT LOOK LIKE THEM.

The comparison can therefore be represented as:

TRUMP

AUTHENTICITY THROUGH SELF-CONSISTENCY

MILEI

AUTHENTICITY THROUGH SYSTEMIC DIFFERENCE.

Both mechanisms ultimately require repetition:

- Trump must repeatedly confirm his identity;
- Milei must repeatedly confirm his refusal of normalization.

The paradox becomes:

CONSISTENT CONSISTENCY

versus

CONSISTENT NON-CONFORMITY.

This is one of the most important similarities beneath the stylistic difference.

Political credibility likewise emerges through different combinations of signs (**two regimes of credibility**).

Trumpian credibility is strongly grounded in:

- resilience;
- visual dominance;
- biographical success;
- patriotic continuity;
- recognizable repetition.

The implicit argument is:

HE HAS THE QUALITIES REQUIRED TO RESTORE THE NATION.

Mileian credibility is grounded more strongly in:

- unfiltered intensity;
- anti-caste consistency;
- willingness to disrupt;
- economic diagnosis;
- technical visualization.

The implicit argument becomes:

HE HAS THE QUALITIES REQUIRED TO BREAK WITH THE SYSTEM.

The distinction can therefore be expressed as:

TRUMP

CREDIBILITY OF THE RESTORER

MILEI

CREDIBILITY OF THE DISRUPTOR.

Both are constructed through converging textual evidence. Neither depends solely on explicit political argumentation.

The body itself becomes evidence, the object becomes evidence.

The visual style becomes evidence.

Consistency becomes evidence.

This is precisely where the concept of post-truth becomes analytically central.

11.2. POST-TRUTH AS A REGIME OF CREDIBILITY

The term *post-truth* is frequently used to indicate political environments in which objective facts appear less influential than emotions and personal beliefs.

Such a definition captures an important dimension of contemporary communication, but it can become analytically reductive if post-truth is treated merely as a synonym for falsehood.

The corpus examined in this study suggests a broader interpretation.

Post-truth concerns not simply the circulation of false statements but the transformation of **credibility itself into a multimodal, affective, performative, and platformized construction**.

The question is no longer only:

IS THIS STATEMENT TRUE?

It also becomes:

- DOES THIS LEADER LOOK AUTHENTIC?
- DOES THIS IMAGE FIT WHAT I ALREADY BELIEVE?
- DOES THIS PERFORMANCE FEEL SINCERE?
- DOES THIS SIGN CONFIRM MY POLITICAL IDENTITY?
- IS THIS CONTENT BEING REPEATED BY MY COMMUNITY?
- DOES THIS GRAPH LOOK TECHNICAL AND AUTHORITATIVE?
- DOES THIS IMAGE PRODUCE EMOTIONAL CERTAINTY BEFORE VERIFICATION OCCURS?

Credibility therefore becomes distributed across multiple semiotic resources.

The relation can be represented as:

POLITICAL CREDIBILITY

=

FACTUALITY

⊕

AUTHENTICITY EFFECT

⊕

PASSIONAL INTENSITY

⊕

IDENTITARIAN RECOGNITION

⊕

VISUAL COHERENCE

⊕

SOCIAL REPETITION

⊕

PLATFORM VISIBILITY.

These components do not possess equal weight in every case. Nor should the formula be interpreted mathematically.

Its purpose is analytical: to show that factual accuracy becomes one dimension within a broader economy of belief.

This is particularly clear when the corpus is considered comparatively.

Several different veridictory regimes coexist in the ten images.

IMG 1a derives from a documented historical event. Its referential grounding is strong. Its later political meaning exceeds documentation. The image becomes heroic.

Its circulation produces a **truth effect about character**:

Trump appears resilient.

The conclusion:

TRUMP IS RESILIENT

is not identical to the factual proposition:

TRUMP RAISED HIS FIST AFTER THE ATTACK.

The first is an interpretation of character. The second is an event description. The image allows the movement from fact to ethos.

IMG 1e demonstrates the opposite configuration.

The fabricated imagery lacks reliable referential grounding. It can produce affective and ideological effects.

The image may be false as documentation while remaining powerful as a marker of:

- fear;
- antagonism;
- polarization;
- group identity.

The distinction is therefore:

REFERENTIAL FAILURE

can coexist with

SEMIOTIC EFFECTIVENESS.

Again, this does not make truth irrelevant.

It demonstrates why factual correction alone may not dissolve political meaning once the sign has migrated into identity and affect.

IMG 2e introduces a third configuration.

The graph can contain factual data. But its presentation is never purely neutral.

Selection of period, scale, comparison, annotation, performance, narrative frame: these decisions contribute to meaning.

The image can therefore be simultaneously:

- factually grounded;
- selective;
- rhetorically organized;
- ideologically mobilized.

This demonstrates that post-truth cannot be mapped onto a simple binary:

FACT = NON-POST-TRUTH

FALSEHOOD = POST-TRUTH.

The more important question concerns **how facts and non-facts alike are inserted into regimes of visibility, emotion, identity, and credibility**.

The corpus suggests that contemporary political communication involves a **competition among different forms of evidence**:

- **EVENTAL EVIDENCE**
  I WAS THERE / THIS HAPPENED.
- **BODILY EVIDENCE**
  LOOK AT HOW THE LEADER ACTS.
- **BIOGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE**
  LOOK AT WHAT THE LEADER HAS ACHIEVED.

- **COLLECTIVE EVIDENCE**
  LOOK AT HOW MANY PEOPLE SHARE THIS SYMBOL.
- **AFFECTIVE EVIDENCE**
  THIS FEELS URGENT, TRUE, OR AUTHENTIC.
- **TECHNICAL EVIDENCE**
  LOOK AT THE NUMBERS / GRAPH / TREND.
- **MEMETIC EVIDENCE**
  EVERYONE KNOWS THIS IMAGE / REFERENCE.

These evidentiary modes coexist. They can reinforce one another. Or conflict.

A graph can contradict an emotional narrative. An emotional narrative can remain powerful despite correction. A bodily performance can produce authenticity without proving any policy proposition.

The post-truth environment is therefore characterized by a **pluralization of evidentiary cues**.

The political subject does not ask the audience to believe only because a proposition has been verified.

The audience is also asked to believe because:

- the leader appears strong;
- the leader appears angry in the right way;
- the leader looks consistent;
- the sign is recognizable;
- the community shares it;
- the image has become culturally familiar.

This pluralization creates competition between **epistemic credibility** and **performative credibility**.

Performative credibility is particularly central to both leadership models.

Trump appears credible as a restorer when he repeatedly performs:

- strength;
- control;
- success;
- resistance.

Milei appears credible as a disruptor when he repeatedly performs:

- anger;
- rupture;
- anti-formality;
- technical certainty.

The leader must not merely state the political identity. He must **perform it visibly**.

The relationship becomes:

POLITICAL CLAIM + VISIBLE PERFORMANCE CONSISTENT WITH CLAIM

=

AUTHENTICITY EFFECT.

This effect is especially powerful because the spectator may interpret the performance as less mediated than verbal rhetoric.

The body appears to reveal something. Anger seems difficult to fake. Resistance after injury seems immediate. Such impressions remain semiotically produced and culturally interpreted.

The body is not transparent truth. It is a signifying surface. This distinction is essential.

The analysis does not determine whether Trump or Milei “really” possesses the psychological traits attributed to them.

It reconstructs **how their public performances can produce effects of authenticity**.

One of the central paradoxes of digital political communication is that highly mediated performances can generate **effects of immediacy**.

A rally has staging. Cameras. Lighting. Framing. Editing. Distribution. Platform selection. The resulting image can appear spontaneous.

A politician’s anger can be captured, selected, clipped, and repeatedly circulated until it becomes evidence of unfiltered authenticity.

The structure becomes:

HIGH MEDIATION

↓

AESTHETIC OF LOW MEDIATION

↓

AUTHENTICITY EFFECT.

This is especially relevant to Milei.

His aggressive or excessive performances can appear authentic precisely because they seem incompatible with polished institutional communication.

The paradox is:

THE MORE A PERFORMANCE APPEARS UNCONTROLLED,

THE MORE IT CAN BE READ AS UNMEDIATED.

Trump produces a related but different effect. His consistency across media contexts can make the persona appear resistant to mediation.

Different platforms. Different events. Same Trump.

The effect becomes:

MEDIATION CHANGES; PERSONA REMAINS.

This creates authenticity through stability.

A further dimension concerns **political recognition**.

Political signs become credible when they fit already stabilized interpretive patterns.

The “user” sees Trump’s raised fist and recognizes:

STRENGTH.

The “user” sees Milei’s chainsaw and recognizes:

RUPTURE.

The sign does not need to establish the entire political argument again. Previous circulation has constructed the code.

The process becomes:

NEW SIGN

↓

OLD FRAME

↓

RAPID INTERPRETATION.

This can produce a form of **confirmation through recognizability**.

The content feels plausible because it resembles what the audience already associates with the political subject.

The leader appears authentic when the new image behaves like previous images. This makes political credibility partly **recursive**.

Past signs authorize the present sign. The present sign reinforces the past identity. The political persona becomes self-confirming.

Post-truth credibility is also deeply passional (**the role of emotion**).

Emotion is not simply added after interpretation. It can structure interpretation. Fear organizes attention toward threat. Anger organizes attention toward injustice or obstruction. Pride organizes attention toward collective identity. Hope organizes attention toward future transformation.

The **emotional regime** determines **what becomes salient**. The same image can therefore acquire different meanings for different interpretive communities because the underlying passional structures differ.

IMG 1d can produce:

- pride;
- belonging;
- hostility;
- irony;
- depending on the viewer.

IMG 2a can produce:

- enthusiasm;
- fear;
- amusement;
- rejection.

The political sign therefore becomes a **passional trigger** as well as a semantic object. This is one of the reasons visual political communication can be particularly effective.

Images often permit rapid affective activation before extended reasoning occurs.

The sequence can be:

SEE

↓

FEEL

↓

INTERPRET

↓

JUSTIFY.

Again, this is not inevitable for every viewer, but it represents one important pathway through which political visuality operates.

The corpus also suggests the importance of identity in determining credibility (**identity-protective interpretation**).

Once political signs become markers of belonging, interpretation itself can become group-sensitive.

A MAGA cap is not merely a message. It is a membership sign.

The caste is not merely a category. It divides the social world.

The sign therefore tells the receiver not only:

WHAT TO THINK ABOUT THE POLITICAL ISSUE

but also:

WHERE YOU STAND WITHIN THE POLITICAL FIELD.

The relation becomes:

SIGN

↓

CATEGORY

↓

IDENTITY POSITION

↓

INTERPRETATION.

This can make factual disputes more difficult to resolve because accepting or rejecting a claim may become connected to belonging.

A correction can be perceived not simply as information but as an attack on the group's interpretive frame.

The post-truth problem is therefore partly **relational and identitarian**.

Truth claims occur inside communities of recognition.

Digital platforms can intensify this process through repeated exposure **(circulation of certainty**).

A sign appears once. Then again. Then in another format. Then through a supporter. Then through a news article. Then as a meme. Repetition creates familiarity. Familiarity can create the impression that the sign is socially established.

The process becomes:

REPETITION

↓

FAMILIARITY

↓

NORMALIZATION

↓

POSSIBLE CREDIBILITY EFFECT.

The key term is *possible*.

Repetition does not mechanically cause belief. But it contributes to the semiotic environment within which belief is produced. The sign becomes less strange. More expected. More integrated into the user's political worldview.

The political identity therefore gains **ambient credibility**. It appears continuously present.

Platforms also organize political reality through unequal visibility (**platformized visibility**).

Not every event becomes equally visible. Not every image circulates equally. Not every interpretation receives the same attention. The political world encountered through platforms is therefore a selected world.

This selection is produced through combinations of:

- editorial choices;
- user behavior;
- network structures;
- algorithmic ranking;
- engagement dynamics;
- platform affordances.

The resulting visibility can influence perceived importance.

A political sign that appears everywhere can begin to feel central.

The sequence becomes:

HIGH VISIBILITY

↓

HIGH PERCEIVED SALIENCE

↓

POLITICAL CENTRALITY.

Again, salience does not equal approval. A leader can be intensely visible through criticism. The important point is that visibility structures the agenda of perception. The political subject occupies mental and media space.

Trump and Milei both demonstrate the strategic importance of this occupation.

The corpus therefore suggests that contemporary leadership increasingly depends on the capacity to capture and maintain **attention (attention as political resource)**.

Attention becomes a scarce political resource.

Trumpian signs often capture attention through:

- recognizability;
- monumentality;
- conflict;
- iconic repetition.

Mileian signs often capture it through:

- shock;
- tension;
- provocation;

- excess;
- disruption.

The distinction can be summarized as:

TRUMP

ATTENTION THROUGH SYMBOLIC RECOGNITION

MILEI

ATTENTION THROUGH PERFORMATIVE INTERRUPTION.

The first asks:

DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS POLITICAL WORLD?

The second:

CAN YOU IGNORE THIS POLITICAL EVENT?

Both are highly compatible with platform environments.

Repeated attention produces **political presence**.

A leader who continually appears in the media environment becomes difficult to exclude from public interpretation.

The person becomes a reference point.

News about other actors may be interpreted through him.

Opponents define themselves against him.

Supporters organize around him.

The leader becomes what might be described as a **semiotic gravity center**. This is especially evident in highly personalized populist politics.

The leader's name, body, and symbols become shortcuts through which broader political conflicts are organized.

The relation is:

VISIBILITY

↓

RECOGNITION

↓

CENTRALITY

↓

PERSONALIZATION.

This process does not eliminate institutional politics. But it changes its public representation.

Parties and programs become increasingly readable through the leader. The political field becomes narratively simplified.

One particularly significant consequence is the **personalization of truth evaluation**.

Instead of asking only:

IS THE CLAIM RELIABLE?

audiences may ask:

DO I TRUST THE PERSON SAYING IT?

or even:

IS THIS THE KIND OF THING MY LEADER WOULD SAY?

Credibility moves from proposition to persona.

The structure becomes:

TRUST IN LEADER

↓

TRUST IN SIGN.

This relation can also operate in reverse:

TRUST IN SIGN

↓

TRUST IN LEADER.

The process becomes recursive. The leader authenticates the claim. The claim authenticates the leader. This is especially powerful when the persona is strongly stabilized.

Trumpian strength can make confrontational narratives appear compatible with his identity.

Mileian economic expertise can make technical claims appear compatible with his persona as economist.

The leader becomes an **epistemic shortcut**. This is one of the most consequential aspects of personalized political communication.

The analysis therefore suggests that **post-truth has an aesthetic dimension**.

Credibility can emerge when different signs **look and feel coherent** within a political world.

Trump's red, gold, verticality, centrality, fist, luxury, and MAGA repetition belong together.

Milei's chainsaw, shouting, contrast, fragmentation, caste opposition, and economic graphs belong together through the broader grammar of disruption and transformation.

The political world becomes **aesthetically recognizable**.

This aesthetic coherence can reduce interpretive friction.

A new sign is rapidly assimilated because it fits the existing system.

The process becomes:

AESTHETIC CONSISTENCY

↓

EASY RECOGNITION

↓

ETHOTIC CONSISTENCY

↓

CREDIBILITY EFFECT.

This is perhaps one of the strongest ways in which semiotics contributes to the analysis of post-truth.

The issue is not merely that audiences believe false claims.

It is that **political truthfulness can increasingly be perceived through coherence of style, identity, emotion, and performance**.

The leader appears believable because the political world around him is aesthetically consistent.

11.3. PLATFORMIZED POPULISM AND THE POLITICS OF THE VISIBLE

The digital environment also transforms the nature of populist visibility. Populist politics has historically relied heavily on the production of direct relations between leader and people.

Digital platforms intensify this tendency by creating environments in which political actors can communicate continuously, bypass some traditional intermediaries, and receive immediate feedback from supporters and opponents.

The apparent directness remains technically mediated. The relationship is structured by platforms. The leader appears close. But proximity is infrastructurally produced.

The audience feels direct access, but the content is ordered by interfaces, algorithms, metrics, and network structures.

This creates another paradox:

MEDIATED DIRECTNESS.

The political leader can appear to speak directly to the public precisely because a complex technical infrastructure makes that directness possible.

Trump and Milei both operate effectively within this condition. Their political styles are strongly compatible with short, intense, recognizable forms.

The platform environment rewards signs that can survive fragmentation.

Trumpian:

- fist;
- MAGA;
- dominant face;
- gold.

Mileian:

- chainsaw;
- shout;
- anti-caste phrase;
- graph.

These signs possess high **platform portability**. The feed changes how political images are encountered.

Traditional political communication often organizes information through relatively stable formats:

- newspaper page;
- television program;

- political speech;
- campaign poster.

The digital feed is different, it is heterogeneous.

A political image may appear between:

- celebrity content;
- advertising;
- personal photographs;
- humor;
- news;
- sports;
- entertainment.

Politics therefore competes in the same perceptual space as multiple non-political genres.

The political sign must survive this heterogeneity. This favors high recognizability.

The relationship becomes:

HETEROGENEOUS FEED

↓

COMPETITION FOR ATTENTION

↓

NEED FOR RAPID DIFFERENTIATION

↓

HIGH-DENSITY POLITICAL SIGNS.

Trump and Milei both possess visual vocabularies well adapted to this condition. Their signs can be recognized quickly.

This does not mean the platforms produce those signs automatically. But platform conditions reward their efficiency.

The feed also fragments political discourse (**fragmentation and reassembly**). A speech is broken into clips. An event into photographs. A policy into a graph. A conflict into a meme. The audience encounters fragments. The political persona then performs a crucial function: it **reassembles the fragments through identity**.

- Different Trump fragments belong together because they are Trumpian.
- Different Milei fragments belong together because they are Mileian.

The leader becomes a principle of coherence.

The structure becomes:

FRAGMENT 1

⊕

FRAGMENT 2

⊕

FRAGMENT 3

↓

PERSONA

↓

COHERENT POLITICAL WORLD.

This is one of the reasons personalization is so compatible with fragmented media. The leader provides narrative continuity where the media form provides discontinuity. The body becomes the thread.

Platforms also alter political temporality (**algorithmic temporality**).

The present becomes continuous. Content is constantly updated. Old material can suddenly return. A previous video can become newly relevant. A historical image can become a meme. The political past becomes available inside the present.

This produces the condition identified earlier as **temporal co-presence**:

- Trump's older celebrity imagery can appear beside current political content, the Butler image can return months or years after the event;
- Milei's earlier television performances can be recirculated during later governmental controversies.

The platform therefore constructs a political archive that is never fully past. The leader's history remains searchable and reactivatable.

This increases the importance of diachronic coherence. The present political body is constantly compared with the archived one.

Digital platforms also quantify attention (**metrics and visibility**): likes, shares, views, comments, followers, reposts and other metrics make public visibility appear measurable.

The political sign does not simply circulate. Its circulation is displayed numerically.

This can create another form of social proof. The user sees not only the content but the fact that others have engaged with it.

The relation becomes:

SIGN + VISIBLE METRIC

↓

PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL RELEVANCE.

Again, engagement does not equal agreement. A controversial post can receive enormous interaction precisely because it is contested. Nevertheless, metrics make attention itself visible.

This contributes to the transformation of political communication into a competition over **measurable presence**.

Virality further intensifies this process: a sign can move from marginality to massive visibility in extremely short periods.

The temporal structure becomes:

LOCAL CONTENT

↓

ACCELERATED SHARING

↓

MASS VISIBILITY.

Virality therefore compresses the time required for cultural recognition. A sign that once might have required years to become widely known can achieve recognition rapidly.

The Butler fist demonstrates the possibility of rapid iconicization.

The chainsaw demonstrates how a campaign prop can quickly become internationally recognizable.

Digital circulation accelerates symbolic history. The image becomes historical while the event is still recent.

This temporal compression is one of the defining characteristics of contemporary political iconicity.

Meme culture further transforms the relation between leader and public. The supporter does not merely receive. He or she can create, caption, edit, combine, recontextualize.

Political participation therefore acquires a semiotic dimension. The citizen becomes a producer of symbolic variants.

The process becomes:

POLITICAL SIGN

↓

PUBLIC APPROPRIATION

↓

CREATIVE TRANSFORMATION

↓

RECIRCULATION.

This does not mean meme production replaces traditional political participation.

Voting, activism, organization, institutional engagement remain distinct practices. But meme culture adds another layer: participation in the production of political visibility and meaning.

Trumpian and Mileian signs are particularly suitable for this because their formal simplicity makes them highly transformable.

Platformization also reduces the temporal separation between moments of official political performance (**politics of permanent performance**).

Campaigning once had clearer beginnings and endings. Digital leadership tends toward continuous performance. The politician is always potentially visible. Every post can become political evidence. Every reaction can become content. Every controversy can renew the narrative.

The leader therefore exists within a regime of **permanent performativity**.

The relation becomes:

POLITICAL EVENT

↓

MEDIA REACTION

↓

USER REACTION

↓

LEADER RESPONSE

↓

NEW EVENT

↺

The cycle continues. This is particularly evident in Milei's productive chaos, but it is also central to Trump's continuous politics of confrontation and symbolic recurrence.

The political persona is never allowed to become inactive. Visibility must be renewed (**permanent campaign and permanent antagonism**). This condition contributes to what can be described as the continuity of campaign logic into government.

Antagonism does not disappear after electoral victory. It may become structurally necessary to preserve the leader's identity:

- Trumpian restoration continually requires threats and obstacles preventing complete restoration;
- Mileian disruption continually requires remnants of the caste or resistance of the old system.

The political narrative therefore remains open. The leader is still needed because the transformation is incomplete.

The structure becomes:

PARTIAL SUCCESS

⊕

REMAINING ENEMY

=

CONTINUED LEADERSHIP NECESSITY.

This mechanism helps sustain mobilization. The political project cannot be narratively completed too early. There must remain something to restore. Something to dismantle. Something to defend against.

The antagonist therefore has a paradoxical function. The enemy threatens the leader's project but also helps maintain its narrative necessity.

The highly personalized and conflictual nature of these semiotic systems can also intensify **polarization**.

Political difference becomes increasingly embodied in recognizable signs: a cap, a chainsaw, a face, a slogan. The opponent is no longer encountered only through abstract policy disagreement. He or she becomes visible through emotionally charged symbolic forms.

The process becomes:

POLITICAL DIFFERENCE

↓

SYMBOLIC CONDENSATION

↓

IDENTITY MARKER

↓

AFFECTIVE POLARIZATION.

This does not mean visual communication is the sole cause of political polarization. Polarization has institutional, economic, social, historical, ideological, and media causes.

The semiotic contribution is more specific: highly condensed signs make political divisions **perceptually immediate and socially recognizable**.

The political field becomes easier to classify: us, them, MAGA, caste, insider, outsider. The symbolic boundary becomes visible.

Polarization also creates **shared attention**. Trump supporters and opponents both recognize MAGA. Milei supporters and opponents both recognize the chainsaw.

This produces the paradox identified earlier:

HIGH AXIOLOGICAL DISAGREEMENT

can coexist with

HIGH SYMBOLIC CONSENSUS.

The public disagrees about value but agrees about the sign's centrality. This makes polarized political culture simultaneously divided and semiotically unified.

Everyone talks about the same symbols. But says opposite things about them.

The leader becomes the shared object around which disagreement organizes itself.

At this point, the leader begins to exceed the boundaries of institutional politics.

Trump becomes:

- politician;
- celebrity;
- meme;
- brand;
- symbol;
- cultural reference.

Milei likewise becomes:

- president;
- television persona;
- chainsaw icon;

- meme subject;
- economic figure;
- global reference point for libertarian politics.

The political leader therefore becomes a **cultural object**.

This transformation is especially important because cultural recognition can persist even among people with limited knowledge of specific policy positions.

One may recognize the MAGA cap without knowing a detailed electoral platform.

Recognize the chainsaw without knowing the technical structure of fiscal reforms.

The political persona therefore acquires **low-threshold cultural legibility**.

This expands its reach beyond conventional political audiences. The ultimate effect is the construction of a **symbolic environment**.

Trumpian signs produce a world in which:

- strength;
- greatness;
- American identity;
- threat;
- victory;

continuously refer to one another.

Mileian signs produce a world in which:

- caste;
- anger;
- chainsaw;

- chaos;
- economic transformation;

continuously refer to one another.

The user does not encounter isolated political messages. He or she encounters **semiotic ecosystems**.

The environment itself becomes persuasive because repeated signs make its internal logic increasingly familiar.

The political worldview begins to appear coherent because every new sign finds a place inside the existing system.

This is one of the strongest mechanisms of ideological stabilization in the corpus.

11.4. COMPARATIVE SYNTHESIS: RESTORATION AND RUPTURE

The entire analytical trajectory can now be condensed into two integrated models.

I. THE TRUMPIAN MODEL

The Trumpian political universe begins with the perception of **loss**. America is represented as disjoined from a valued state.

The present is characterized by:

- decline;
- threat;
- weakness;
- loss of control.

The leader is constructed through:

- resilience;
- dominance;

- success;
- patriotic identification.

The principal symbolic objects and forms are:

- raised fist;
- vertical body;
- airplane and gold;
- MAGA cap;
- national colors;
- threat imagery.

The spatial regime is:

- center;
- inside;
- boundary.

The temporal regime is:

- return;
- again;
- restoration.

The passional regime is:

- pride;
- fear;
- defiance;

- confidence.

The plastic regime is:

- centrality;
- verticality;
- compactness;
- chromatic recurrence.

The circulatory regime is:

- iconic repetition;
- recognition;
- mnemonic stabilization.

The authenticity regime is:

- consistency.

The political program becomes:

- **RESTORE THE LOST ORDER**.

The integrated formula is:

DECLINE

↓

THREAT

↓

STRONG AND SUCCESSFUL LEADER

↓

COLLECTIVE IDENTIFICATION

↓

RESTORATION

↓

GREATNESS.

II. THE MILEIAN MODEL

The Mileian political universe begins with the perception of **failed continuity**.

The present is characterized by:

- caste;
- constraint;
- stagnation;
- economic dysfunction.

The leader is constructed through:

- anger;
- rupture;
- anti-formality;
- economic expertise.

The principal symbolic forms are:

- chainsaw;
- expanded body;
- anti-caste category;

- productive chaos;
- economic graph.

The spatial regime is:

- outside;
- breach;
- intervention.

The temporal regime is:

- interruption;
- acceleration;
- new trajectory.

The passional regime is:

- anger;
- urgency;
- indignation;
- transformative enthusiasm.

The plastic regime is:

- vectoriality;
- cutting;
- fragmentation;
- contrast.

The circulatory regime is:

- provocation;
- reaction;
- variation;
- recursive amplification.

The authenticity regime is:

- non-conformity.

The political program becomes:

- **BREAK THE FAILED ORDER**.

The integrated formula is:

FAILED SYSTEM

↓

ANGER AND DIAGNOSIS

↓

DISRUPTIVE LEADER

↓

RUPTURE

↓

PRODUCTIVE DESTABILIZATION

↓

TRANSFORMATION.

III. TWO MODELS, A COMMON ARCHITECTURE

Despite the strong contrast, the two models share a common architecture.

Both construct:

- a crisis;
- an antagonist;
- an exceptional leader;
- a collective object of value;
- a transformative program;
- an emotionally mobilized public.

Both:

- depend upon personalization.

Both:

- condense political complexity into highly recognizable signs.

Both:

- rely heavily on platform circulation.

Both:

- transform the political body into evidence.

Both:

- construct credibility through more than factual verification.

The shared abstract structure is:

CRISIS

↓

ANTAGONISM

↓

EXCEPTIONAL SUBJECT

↓

PASSIONAL MOBILIZATION

↓

TRANSFORMATION

↓

VALUED FUTURE.

The difference lies in the meaning assigned to transformation.

For Trump:

TRANSFORMATION = RESTORATION.

For Milei:

TRANSFORMATION = RUPTURE.

This is the central comparative conclusion.

The deepest contrast may therefore concern the value assigned to stability itself.

Trumpian leadership assumes that legitimate stability has been lost. The task is to reconstruct it.

Mileian leadership assumes that illegitimate stability has become the problem. The task is to destroy it.

The two systems can therefore be condensed as:

TRUMP

THE WORLD IS TOO DISORDERED.

MILEI

THE WORLD IS TOO STABILIZED AROUND THE WRONG ORDER.

From these diagnoses follow the opposite political imperatives:

TRUMP

STABILIZE.

MILEI

DESTABILIZE.

The final objective of Mileian disruption is not necessarily permanent chaos.

The graphs of **IMG 2e** show that disruption is supposed to generate another order.

The more precise distinction is therefore:

TRUMP

RESTORE A PRE-VALUED ORDER.

MILEI

DESTROY AN INHERITED ORDER IN ORDER TO PRODUCE ANOTHER ONE.

This formulation avoids reducing Milei to chaos and Trump to simple conservatism. It captures instead the different semiotic relation each model establishes with transformation.

The same distinction becomes an aesthetics of power.

Trumpian power looks like:

- height;
- center;
- gold;
- control;
- closed fist;
- monumentality.

Mileian power looks like:

- cut;
- movement;
- open gesture;
- contrast;
- collision;
- directional line.

Trumpian power says:

- **I POSSESS;**
- **I CONTROL;**
- **I ENDURE.**

Mileian power says:

- **I CUT;**
- **I MOVE;**
- **I CHANGE.**

The visual difference is therefore also a ***theory of agency***.

The leader's power is made sensible through different verbs and different relationships with the audience

The models also imply different dominant positions for the public.

Trump's supporter is invited primarily to:

- belong;
- recognize;
- rally around;
- recover;
- defend.

The relation becomes **centripetal**.

The political community gathers **around a symbolic center**.

Milei's supporter is invited more strongly to:

- reject;
- break;
- challenge;
- accelerate;
- participate in transformation.

The relation becomes **vectorial**.

The political community is **mobilized toward an obstacle**.

The audience roles can therefore be represented as:

TRUMP

COMMUNITY OF RESTORATION.

MILEI

COMMUNITY OF RUPTURE.

Again, both contain elements of both logics. The distinction identifies the dominant narrative position assigned to collective participation and different symbolic economies

- Trump's political signs often derive force from **accumulation**.
  More flags. More red caps. More references to greatness. The visual world becomes full.
  The symbolic logic is one of **reinforcement through abundance** and recurrence.

- Milei's signs often derive force from **subtraction** and **interruption**.
  Cut spending. Remove bureaucracy. Break the caste. Interrupt continuity.
  The symbolic economy becomes one of **liberation through subtraction**.

The contrast can therefore be expressed as:

- **TRUMP → ADD VALUE BACK**;

- **MILEI → REMOVE THE OBSTACLE**.

Both models depend on the same fundamental semiotic operation:

COMPRESSION OF COMPLEXITY.

Trumpian political complexity becomes:

- MAGA;

- The fist;

- gold;

- threat:

Mileian political complexity becomes:

- chainsaw;
- caste;
- anger;
- graph.

The image reduces. The slogan condenses. The object simplifies. The political world becomes manageable. This compression is not accidental. It is structurally compatible with digital attention.

The platform environment favors signs capable of producing high meaning with low perceptual cost. This does not make them inherently deceptive. But it increases the risk that political complexity will be reduced to emotionally and ideologically efficient binaries.

The fundamental tension becomes:

COMMUNICATIVE EFFICIENCY

versus

POLITICAL COMPLEXITY.

The corpus ultimately suggests that contemporary political representation is undergoing a significant transformation.

The traditional representative relation could be schematically imagined as:

POLITICIAN

↓

REPRESENTS

↓

POLITICAL PROGRAM / SOCIAL GROUP.

In platformized populism, the leader increasingly becomes a **semiotic condensation of the political project itself**.

The structure becomes:

LEADER

=

BODY + SYMBOL + NARRATIVE + AFFECT + IDEOLOGY + MEDIA PERSONA.

Representation becomes embodiment. The political project becomes visible through the leader. The leader becomes the principal interface through which the public accesses the political worldview.

This produces intense personalization. From a semiotic perspective, Trump and Milei can therefore be approached as **political texts**.

Their bodies are readable. Their gestures are readable. Their objects are readable. Their spaces are readable. Their temporalities are readable. Their media histories are readable.

The leader becomes a continuously updated text whose meaning emerges from:

- recurrence;
- difference;
- circulation;
- appropriation;
- memory.

This perspective allows us to move beyond psychological interpretations.

The study does not need to determine what Trump or Milei “really feels” internally.

The analytical object is how the public persona is **textually and medially constructed**.

This distinction strengthens the methodological defensibility of the research.

The analysis suggests an even further transformation. The leader is not only a text. He increasingly becomes something resembling a **platform of signs**.

Different political contents are organized around his persona. Supporters produce material. Opponents produce material. Journalists produce material. Algorithms distribute material. Memes transform material.

The leader becomes a node through which multiple communicative flows pass. The persona therefore acquires infrastructural qualities. Trump and Milei function as **attention hubs**.

Their names and images connect heterogeneous political conflicts. This is one of the defining features of contemporary personalized politics.

11.5. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The comparative findings permit several broader theoretical observations.

First, populist leadership should be examined not only as discourse but as **multimodal semiotic organization**.

The political distinction between people and elite does not exist only in language.

It becomes:

- spatial boundary;
- body;
- object;
- color;
- gesture;
- rhythm.

Second, political authenticity should not be treated as an intrinsic psychological quality.

It is better understood analytically as an **effect produced through correspondence among persona, performance, and audience expectation**.

Trumpian authenticity is supported by consistency. Mileian authenticity by recurrent non-conformity.

Third, post-truth should be approached as a **regime of credibility** rather than solely as a regime of falsehood.

Factual claims remain important. But political credibility can be produced through other mechanisms:

- body;
- emotion;
- repetition;
- identity;
- visual evidence;
- symbolic coherence.

Fourth, digital platforms should not be understood simply as channels. They participate in the organization of political visibility.

They shape:

- speed;
- fragmentation;
- recurrence;
- reaction;
- memory;
- circulation.

Fifth, political images should be understood as **dynamic signs** rather than static representations.

They change meaning. Change function. Return. Become iconic. Become memetic. Become historical. Their semiotic biography matters.

Sixth, the comparative distinction between restorative and disruptive leadership demonstrates that similar populist morphologies can support very different political aesthetics and temporalities.

Both leaders personalize crisis. But one organizes it around **return**. The other around **break**.

This distinction is theoretically useful because it prevents populism from becoming an excessively broad and undifferentiated analytical label.

The categories developed in this study —restorative populist leadership and disruptive populist leadership— are therefore not intended as exhaustive typologies of populism.

They function as **comparative analytical categories** derived from the semiotic structures reconstructed in the corpus.

Restorative leadership describes a model in which:

- crisis is represented as loss;
- the past contains the desired value;
- the leader embodies the competence required for recovery;
- political transformation is legitimized through continuity.

Disruptive leadership describes a model in which:

- crisis is represented as failed persistence;
- the inherited order is negatively valorized;
- the leader embodies the competence required for rupture;
- political transformation is legitimized through discontinuity.

These categories are particularly useful because they connect:

- axiology;
- narrative;
- temporality;
- space;
- body;
- plasticity;
- circulation.

They therefore capture differences that would remain less visible if the analysis were restricted to policy content or rhetorical vocabulary alone.

The analytical categories may also provide hypotheses for comparative research beyond the two cases examined here.

Other leaders could be studied according to questions such as:

- Does the leader construct crisis as **loss** or as **failed continuity**?
- Does political legitimacy depend on **restoring a valued form** or **breaking an inherited one**?
- Is authenticity produced through **consistency**, **transgression**, or some other mechanism?
- Does visual leadership depend primarily on **centrality**, **proximity**, **expertise**, **care**, **militarization**, **spectacle**, or another plastic-semantic configuration?
- How do symbolic objects circulate?
- Which oppositions become semisymbolically encoded?
- How are collective identities constructed through visible signs?

Such questions could contribute to a broader comparative semiotics of contemporary political leadership.

The present study therefore proposes not a closed classification but a **transferable analytical framework**.

At the same time, the findings must remain proportionate to the methodological architecture of the research.

The corpus contains ten selected visual texts. It was constructed according to semiotic relevance rather than statistical representativeness.

The study therefore cannot claim that every Trumpian or Mileian communication conforms to the reconstructed structures. Nor can it infer how all audiences empirically interpret the selected signs.

The results concern the **semiotic possibilities** and **recurrent configurations** made visible by the corpus. **This distinction is essential**:

- Trump can also produce disruptive images;
- Milei can also produce institutional or stabilizing ones.

Political communication is heterogeneous. The categories identify dominant comparative tendencies within the selected texts. They should not be transformed into rigid essences.

The research therefore reconstructs:

PATTERNS

not

TOTALITIES.

A further development could combine the semiotic analysis with empirical audience research.

The present study reconstructs the textual mechanisms through which particular interpretations become possible. It does not establish which interpretations dominate among particular publics.

Future research could investigate:

- how supporters and opponents read **IMG 1a**;
- whether MAGA red produces the same associations across national contexts;
- whether Milei's anger is interpreted as authenticity or instability by different groups;
- how graph literacy affects interpretation of **IMG 2e**;
- how meme exposure transforms the meaning of **IMG 1e** or **IMG 2a**.

Such research could connect **textual semiotics and audience sociology**.

The distinction between encoded possibilities and empirical reception would then become an object of investigation in its own right.

A second possible development concerns time. The present study has already shown that political signs mutate. A longitudinal analysis could examine systematically how the same image changes over:

- months;
- electoral cycles;
- governmental phases;
- historical retrospective.

The Butler fist may acquire new meanings in future political contexts. The chainsaw may change as Milei's presidency develops. Graphs celebrated at one moment may be reinterpreted in light of subsequent data. The semiotic identity of the leader therefore remains historically open. A longitudinal design could map this process.

A third extension concerns platforms. The same sign may function differently on:

- Facebook;
- Instagram;

- X;
- TikTok;
- YouTube;
- television;
- newspaper websites.

Platform affordances can modify:

- duration;
- format;
- captioning;
- commentary;
- remixability;
- algorithmic visibility.

A cross-platform semiotics could therefore examine how the same political sign becomes **platform-specifically rearticulated**. The chainsaw as TikTok clip is not identical to the chainsaw as newspaper photograph. The MAGA cap in a rally photograph is not identical to the cap in an oppositional meme. The media environment becomes part of the text.

The findings also have broader sociological implications. Political leadership increasingly depends on the organization of **public visibility**.

The leader must not simply act. He must be seen acting. Must be recognizable. Must acquire a repeatable visual form. Must survive fragmented attention. Must become culturally legible.

Leadership therefore becomes partly a sociology of:

- attention;
- recognition;

- circulation;
- collective categorization.

The political subject exists within a field of competing visibility. Some actors become central. Others peripheral. Some signs become iconic. Others disappear.

The unequal distribution of visibility becomes a form of political power. This does not replace institutional power. But it interacts with it.

A politician who controls attention may influence which issues become politically salient.

A leader who becomes a symbolic reference point can structure conflict even outside formal institutional decisions.

Political power therefore acquires a **semiotic dimension of presence**.

The relation can be expressed as:

TO BE SEEN

↓

TO BE RECOGNIZED

↓

TO BE REMEMBERED

↓

TO STRUCTURE INTERPRETATION.

The final term is critical. A politically visible leader can become a frame through which other events are interpreted. A migration event becomes another Trump issue. An economic graph another Milei issue. The persona attracts meaning. This is why political visibility becomes more than exposure. It becomes **interpretive power**.

The leader influences not only what is seen but how new political events are classified.

At the limit, this process can produce a form of **symbolic sovereignty**.

The leader increasingly defines:

- the central conflict;
- the relevant enemy;
- the valued future;
- the emotional tone;
- the vocabulary through which politics is discussed.

Trump defines:

- MAGA;
- greatness;
- threat;
- winning.

Milei defines:

- caste;
- chainsaw;
- libertarian rupture;
- productive confrontation.

The leader therefore attempts to control not only policy but the **categories through which political reality becomes intelligible**. This is one of the deepest forms of semiotic power. To define the categories is to define the field.

To call actors “caste” is to reorganize them narratively. To call a desired future “greatness again” is to define the present as loss. Language and imagery therefore perform political reality.

The findings consequently point toward the importance of **visual and semiotic literacy**. If political credibility increasingly depends upon images, symbols, bodies, graphs, memes, and visual recurrence, democratic interpretation requires more than the capacity to verify verbal claims.

It also requires the capacity to ask:

- How is this image framed?
- What is excluded?
- Which value is attached to this color?
- Why is the leader central?
- What is the graph actually comparing?
- What does the chainsaw simplify?
- What historical associations does the fist activate?
- Who produced the image?
- How has it circulated?
- Has its function changed?
- Which emotional response is being encouraged?

These questions do not tell citizens what political position to adopt. They provide tools for understanding **how political meaning is constructed**.

Semiotic analysis therefore possesses a potentially important civic function.

This becomes especially relevant in post-truth environments. Fact-checking remains indispensable. But factual verification alone cannot fully address political imagery whose power lies in:

- emotion;
- identity;

- myth;
- symbolic condensation;
- aesthetic coherence.

A fabricated image may be fact-checked and still remain memetically powerful. A real photograph may become mythologized. A technically accurate graph may be selectively framed.

Critical interpretation therefore requires the combination of:

FACTUAL LITERACY

and

SEMIOTIC LITERACY.

The first asks:

IS IT TRUE?

The second asks:

HOW IS IT MADE TO MEAN?

Both questions are necessary.

11.6. TWO SEMIOTIC MODELS OF POPULIST LEADERSHIP

The comparative analysis of Donald Trump and Javier Milei demonstrates that contemporary political leadership is constructed not only through policies, speeches, or ideological programs, but through **complex semiotic and media devices based on images, bodies, emotions, symbolic objects, antagonism, repetition, and circulation**.

The ten texts examined reveal two distinct structurally comparable models of populist leadership.

Trump constructs a **restorative and monumental leadership** centered on strength, dominance, success, patriotic belonging, and symbolic stabilization.

The political present is represented as a condition of loss. The collective object of value has been weakened or displaced. The leader is therefore constructed as the subject capable of recovering it.

The raised fist of **IMG 1a** converts vulnerability into resistance. The dominant posture of **IMG 1b** converts centrality and verticality into authority. The aircraft and gilded environments of **IMG 1c** transform wealth and celebrity-business success into political competence.

The MAGA universe of **IMG 1d** condenses national mythology, collective identity, and restorative temporality. The threatening imagery of **IMG 1e** constructs antagonism and the need for protection, reinforcing the narrative necessity of strong leadership.

Trump's semiotic grammar can therefore be summarized as:

LOSS → STRENGTH → RECENTERING → RESTORATION.

Milei constructs instead a **disruptive leadership** centered on anger, rupture, anti-caste antagonism, productive destabilization, and the promise of libertarian transformation.

The political present is represented not primarily as the loss of a valued past, but as the prolonged continuity of a failed order.

The leader therefore derives legitimacy from the capacity to interrupt that continuity.

The chainsaw of **IMG 2a** transforms the political program into a material image of cutting. The bodily intensity of **IMG 2b** converts expressive excess into an effect of anti-institutional authenticity.

The construction of the caste in **IMG 2c** transforms political competition into moralized systemic antagonism. The productive chaos of **IMG 2d** resemanticizes communicative disorder as transformative energy.

The economic visualizations of **IMG 2e** connect libertarian rupture with technical knowledge and the claim of measurable political-economic change.

Milei's semiotic grammar can therefore be summarized as:

STAGNATION → RUPTURE → RECONFIGURATION → TRANSFORMATION.

The comparison reveals that the difference between the two leaders is not simply ideological or rhetorical. It is also temporal, spatial, bodily, plastic, passional, symbolic, and circulatory.

Trump's leadership is organized around:

- center;
- verticality;
- continuity;
- boundary;
- recognition;
- restoration.

Milei's around:

- vector;
- expansion;
- discontinuity;
- breach;
- intensity;
- transformation.

The opposition can therefore be condensed into two perceptual grammars of political power:

- **TRUMP: POWER AS THE CAPACITY TO HOLD AND RESTORE FORM;**
- **MILEI: POWER AS THE CAPACITY TO BREAK AND RECONFIGURE FORM.**

At the same time, the two leadership models share an important structural morphology.

Both construct a negatively valorized present. Both identify antagonists. Both personalize the transformation required to overcome crisis.

Both organize political meaning around an exceptional subject. Both transform the body into evidence of competence. Both rely on highly recognizable signs capable of circulation and repetition. Both construct authenticity through consistency between performance and persona.

Both are deeply compatible with platform environments in which political visibility depends upon **compression, salience, repetition, fragmentation, and continuous reaction**.

The central similarity can therefore be represented as:

CRISIS

↓

ANTAGONISM

↓

EXCEPTIONAL LEADER

↓

PASSIONAL MOBILIZATION

↓

TRANSFORMATION

↓

VALUED FUTURE.

What differs is the meaning of transformation.

For Trump:

TRANSFORMATION MEANS RESTORATION.

For Milei:

TRANSFORMATION MEANS RUPTURE AND REFOUNDATION.

The study also demonstrates that the political image should not be treated simply as a representation of a pre-existing reality. Images participate in the **production of political reality**.

They organize hierarchy. Construct bodies. Define enemies. Make collective identities visible. Translate ideologies into material forms. Create memory. Generate affect. Invite participation. The image therefore acts.

The raised fist helps construct Trump as resistant. The chainsaw helps construct Milei as disruptive.

The MAGA cap helps construct a community of belonging. The caste category helps construct an antagonistic political field.

The graph helps construct economic competence. Representation becomes performative.

The leader is not simply represented through signs. He is progressively made recognizable through them.

The corpus further demonstrates that political meaning does not remain stable once produced.

Signs circulate. They are repeated. Reframed. Memetically transformed. Appropriated by supporters. Inverted by opponents. Reproduced by journalists. Fact-checked. Archived. Reactivated.

The political image therefore possesses a **semiotic biography**.

- **IMG 1a** moves from news documentation toward iconic resilience.
- **IMG 1d** moves from campaign merchandise toward a durable infrastructure of political identity.
- **IMG 1e** demonstrates how a fabricated representation can survive factual contestation by mutating into a polarizing cultural reference.
- **IMG 2a** moves from campaign prop toward a broader metonymy of Mileian governmental action.

- **IMG 2d** transforms episodic disruption into a recognizable method of political communication.
- **IMG 2e** moves from economic visualization toward an instrument of epistemic and ideological legitimation.

This process shows that political signs survive not because their meanings remain completely fixed, but because they are capable of **changing while preserving recognizability**.

Mutation and stabilization are therefore not opposites. Surface meanings may evolve while deeper isotopies remain recurrent.

Trumpian signs repeatedly return to:

- strength;
- success;
- belonging;
- threat;
- restoration.

Mileian signs repeatedly return to:

- anger;
- rupture;
- anti-caste antagonism;
- productive destabilization;
- economic transformation.

The political persona becomes stable precisely because heterogeneous signs are continually reorganized around these deeper structures.

This recursive relation can be represented as:

SIGN

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

RESEMANTIZATION

↓

MUTATION

↓

RECURRENCE

↓

ISOTOPY

↓

ETHOS

↓

NEW SIGN.

The leader therefore becomes a dynamic but recognizable semiotic system.

The analysis also clarifies the role of post-truth.

The post-truth condition should not be reduced to the presence of lies or fabricated content, although factual falsification remains an essential problem.

The corpus suggests a broader transformation: **political credibility increasingly emerges from the interaction of factuality, authenticity, emotional intensity, visual coherence, collective recognition, and platform circulation**.

The distinction is particularly clear across the selected texts.

- **IMG 1a** is anchored in a real historical event but becomes mythologized.
- **IMG 1e** demonstrates how fabricated imagery can remain symbolically active even after its factual status is challenged.
- **IMG 2e** demonstrates how factual data can be spectacularized, selected, and incorporated into an ideological performance.
- **IMG 2b** demonstrates how a body can produce authenticity effects without asserting a proposition susceptible to verification in the ordinary sense.

Truth, credibility, and authenticity therefore occupy different analytical levels.

The contemporary political leader can appear credible because the public encounters a coherent relationship among:

- what he says;
- how he looks;
- how he acts;
- which objects surround him;
- which passions he performs;
- which images circulate;
- which signs communities repeatedly recognize.

Credibility becomes partly **aesthetic and performative**.

This is one of the fundamental characteristics of post-truth political communication.

The digital platform intensifies these mechanisms.

Politics becomes increasingly:

- visual;
- memetic;
- algorithmically ordered;
- participatory;
- accelerated;
- datafied;
- fragmented;
- continuously reactive.

The feed places politics beside entertainment, personal communication, humor, advertising, and celebrity culture.

Political signs must therefore compete for attention:

- the Trumpian response tends toward **strong symbolic recognizability**;
- the Mileian response tends toward **high disruptive salience**.

Trump occupies the feed through icons that repeatedly return. Milei occupies it through events that repeatedly interrupt. The distinction can be formulated as:

- **TRUMP MAKES POLITICAL IDENTITY RECOGNIZABLE AGAIN AND AGAIN;**
- **MILEI MAKES POLITICAL DISRUPTION HAPPEN AGAIN AND AGAIN.**

In both cases the platform contributes to the transformation of political leadership into a condition of **permanent visibility**. The leader is no longer present only during speeches, elections, or institutional events. He becomes continuously reproducible.

A cap can reactivate Trump without Trump being physically present. A chainsaw can reactivate Milei without Milei being present. The leader's persona extends beyond the biological body into a network of circulating signs. Political leadership becomes **distributed symbolic presence**. This transformation contributes to intense personalization.

The leader increasingly functions as the interface through which:

- ideology becomes visible;
- collective identity becomes recognizable;
- political antagonism becomes narratively simple;
- future promises become embodied;
- emotions become publicly shareable.

Trump and Milei therefore illustrate a broader transformation of contemporary politics: the political subject is no longer simply an institutional representative but a **semiotic node around which images, affects, narratives, objects, data, and communities organize themselves**.

The comparison ultimately reveals two different solutions to the same problem of contemporary political visibility. Trump constructs a world in which the legitimate form has been lost and must be restored. Milei constructs a world in which the inherited form is itself the problem and must be broken. The deepest opposition can therefore be expressed as:

TRUMP

A GOOD ORDER HAS BEEN LOST.

↓

RESTORE IT.

MILEI

A BAD ORDER HAS PERSISTED.

↓

BREAK IT.

From this difference derive the two leadership models: Trump becomes the **restorer of form**; Milei becomes the **transformer of form**. One derives political legitimacy from the capacity to stabilize. The other from the capacity to destabilize what has first been defined as illegitimate.

This does not eliminate their similarities as mediatized populist leaders. On the contrary, it makes the comparison more precise. Both personalize crisis. Both dramatize antagonism. Both convert the political body into a visible claim of competence. Both rely on simplified and highly portable signs. Both produce effects of authenticity through media performance. Both depend upon the continuous circulation of images. But the values organizing those mechanisms are different.

The analysis therefore supports a final distinction between **restorative populist visibility** and **disruptive populist visibility**.

The first converts political visibility into a system of **recognition, centrality, continuity, and recovered identity**.

The second converts political visibility into a system of **intensity, rupture, acceleration, and transformative discontinuity**.

At the deepest level, the political power of both models lies in their capacity to make an abstract political project **perceptually immediate**.

Greatness becomes a red cap. Resistance becomes a fist. Success becomes gold. Threat becomes an image. Cuts become a chainsaw. Anti-establishment authenticity becomes a shouting body. The political class becomes a caste. Economic transformation becomes a line on a graph.

This is perhaps the central conclusion of the entire analysis: in the digital ecosystem of post-truth, political leadership increasingly depends upon the capacity to **translate ideological complexity into emotionally intense, visually condensed, culturally recognizable, and continuously circulating configurations of meaning**.

Trump and Milei demonstrate two different versions of this process:

- Trump seeks to make the public **recognize a world that must return**;
- Milei seeks to make the public **feel that an existing world must end**.

Both transform political communication into a permanent struggle over what can be seen, remembered, believed, felt, and recognized as authentic. The political image therefore does not merely accompany leadership. It becomes one of the principal places in which leadership itself is produced.

XII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

12.1. ANALYTICAL DEPTH AND THE LIMITS OF CORPUS SELECTION

The analytical framework developed in this study makes it possible to reconstruct the semiotic organization of two distinct models of contemporary populist leadership. At the same time, the interpretive scope of the findings must be considered in relation to the methodological choices on which the research is based.

The first limitation concerns the size and construction of the corpus. The analysis is based on ten visual texts, equally distributed between Donald Trump and Javier Milei. As explained in the methodological section, this numerical symmetry serves the comparative architecture of the study rather than any claim of statistical representativeness. The selected images were chosen because of their semiotic density and their capacity to condense recurrent dimensions of the two leaders' public identities.

The corpus therefore allows for analytical depth rather than quantitative generalization. This distinction is fundamental. The study does not claim that the ten selected texts exhaust the visual communication of Trump and Milei, nor that every image associated with either leader necessarily reproduces the configurations reconstructed here. Both political figures operate within extremely extensive media ecosystems characterized by thousands of photographs, videos, speeches, posts, memes, journalistic representations, campaign materials, and user-generated contents. The corpus instead isolates a limited number of texts in which particularly significant semiotic structures become visible. Its logic can therefore be represented as:

SELECTION

↓

SEMIOTIC DENSITY

↓

CLOSE ANALYSIS

↓

STRUCTURAL COMPARISON.

The objective is not to establish the statistical frequency of individual signs but to reconstruct the relations through which those signs can participate in broader systems of political meaning. This methodological choice is consistent with the qualitative and interpretive nature of the research.

At the same time, it opens an important direction for future investigation. A larger corpus could test whether the structures identified here recur systematically across wider samples of political communication. For example, future studies could examine hundreds or thousands of images associated with the two leaders and investigate the relative frequency of:

- centrality;
- verticality;
- bodily expansion;
- national symbols;
- economic visualizations;
- antagonistic representations;
- chromatic recurrence;
- symbolic objects;
- expressions of anger;
- representations of strength.

Such an extension would not replace semiotic analysis. Rather, it could combine qualitative interpretation with quantitative or computational approaches. The relation could become:

SEMIOTIC HYPOTHESIS → LARGE-SCALE CORPUS

↙ ↘

EMPIRICAL PATTERN DETECTION → QUALITATIVE REINTERPRETATION.

This combination could provide a particularly productive methodological development.

12.2. FROM SELECTED TEXTS TO EXTENDED VISUAL CORPORA

A larger visual corpus would make it possible to investigate whether the distinction between restorative and disruptive leadership remains stable across different communicative contexts.

The present analysis suggests that Trumpian visuality tends toward:

- strength;
- centrality;
- dominance;
- success;
- national belonging;
- restoration.

Mileian visuality tends toward:

- rupture;
- anger;
- expansion;
- anti-system antagonism;
- productive destabilization;
- economic transformation.

A broader corpus could investigate whether these configurations vary according to:

- electoral phase;
- institutional role;
- political crisis;

- international context;
- media genre;
- platform;
- audience.

This would allow the analytical model to move from the identification of **semiotic structures** toward the investigation of their **distribution**. For example, Trump's visual communication during an electoral campaign might differ from that produced during institutional events.

Similarly, Milei's chainsaw-centered imagery may be particularly salient during specific phases of political mobilization but less central during periods in which presidential institutionalization requires different forms of representation.

The relevant question would therefore become not simply:

WHICH SEMIOTIC MODEL CHARACTERIZES THE LEADER?

but:

UNDER WHICH CONDITIONS DOES EACH SEMIOTIC MODEL

BECOME MORE OR LESS VISIBLE?

This would introduce variation into the comparative framework without abandoning its structural foundations.

12.3. THE TEMPORAL LIMITATION: POLITICAL SIGNS CONTINUE TO CHANGE

A second limitation concerns temporality. Political images do not possess definitive meanings. One of the findings of this research is precisely that signs undergo processes of:

- circulation;
- resemanticization;
- mutation;

- iconization;
- memetic transformation;
- archival reactivation.

The analysis therefore necessarily captures the corpus at a particular historical moment.

The semiotic trajectories of the selected images remain open.

IMG 1a, for example, has already moved from the documentation of a specific event —the assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania— to a broader symbolic representation of resilience, resistance, and political survival.

Its meaning may continue to evolve. Future events may strengthen this interpretation. They may modify it. They may produce entirely new associations.

Similarly, **IMG 2a** may acquire different meanings as the political evaluation of Milei's governmental experience changes over time.

The chainsaw can signify:

- electoral rupture;
- fiscal reduction;
- anti-bureaucratic intervention;
- ideological radicalism;
- successful reform;
- or destructive policy,

depending on the enunciative context and the interpretive community in which it circulates.

The sign remains recognizable while its valorization can change. This suggests an important methodological principle:

SEMIOTIC STABILITY DOES NOT REQUIRE SEMANTIC IMMOBILITY.

A political symbol can remain culturally stable precisely because it is capable of absorbing new meanings. The relationship can be represented as:

RECOGNIZABLE FORM ⊕ VARIABLE CONTEXT

↓

RESEMANTIZATION

↓

CONTINUED SYMBOLIC RELEVANCE.

A longitudinal extension of the present research could therefore reconstruct the **semiotic biographies** of the selected images.

Instead of comparing only texts, future research could compare their transformations over time.

The analytical unit would become:

IMAGE AT T1

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

IMAGE AT T2

↓

RESEMANTIZATION

↓

IMAGE AT T3.

This approach would make it possible to investigate how political iconicity develops historically rather than treating iconic status as an intrinsic property of an image.

12.4. FROM PRODUCTION TO RECEPTION

A third and particularly important limitation concerns the relationship between textual analysis and empirical reception. The present study reconstructs the semiotic structures through which the selected texts make particular interpretations possible.

It does not claim to establish how every viewer actually interprets them. This distinction is essential. A semiotic analysis can identify how **IMG 1b** organizes centrality, verticality, and dominance. It can reconstruct how these features participate in the production of an ethos of strength. It cannot, on this basis alone, conclude that every viewer experiences Trump as strong or dominant.

The same visual configuration can produce opposite evaluations. One viewer may interpret dominance as:

- leadership;
- confidence;
- authority.

Another may interpret it as:

- aggressiveness;
- authoritarianism;
- arrogance.

The denotative or structural recognition of a configuration does not necessarily determine its axiological evaluation. This distinction can be represented as:

TEXTUAL CONFIGURATION

↓

POTENTIAL MEANING

≠

EMPIRICALLY UNIFORM RECEPTION.

The same applies to Milei. The expressive intensity of **IMG 2b** can support an interpretation of authenticity. But it may also be read as instability or lack of institutional restraint.

IMG 2d can make chaos appear productive to one interpretive community and destructive to another.

IMG 2e can produce an effect of economic competence for viewers who accept the framing of the data, while other audiences may question the selection, interpretation, or political contextualization of those same indicators.

The political text therefore does not determine reception mechanically. Meaning emerges from the relationship among:

- text;
- viewer;
- cultural competence;
- political identity;
- previous knowledge;
- media context;
- interpretive community.

Future research could consequently integrate the present semiotic model with empirical audience analysis.

12.5. SEMIOTICS AND AUDIENCE RESEARCH

An especially productive extension would consist in presenting the same selected images to different groups of participants and investigating their interpretations.

The research design could distinguish among:

- supporters;
- opponents;

- politically undecided participants;
- participants with different levels of political knowledge;
- participants belonging to different age groups;
- participants with different levels of digital media use.

The objective would not simply be to determine whether participants "like" or "dislike" the images. A more sociologically and semiotically productive approach would examine **how they construct meaning**. Participants could be asked:

- What do you notice first?
- Which characteristics do you attribute to the leader?
- Which emotion does the image communicate?
- Which emotion does it produce in you?
- What does the object symbolize?
- What kind of political relationship does the image establish between leader and public?
- Does the image appear authentic?
- Does it appear staged?
- Does it appear credible?
- What makes it credible or non-credible?
- What previous images or events does it remind you of?

Such questions would make it possible to compare:

TEXTUAL SEMIOTIC POTENTIAL

with

EMPIRICAL INTERPRETIVE PRACTICE.

The research could then investigate whether the restorative/disruptive distinction reconstructed through textual analysis is also recognized, transformed, or rejected by audiences. This would create a bridge between **semiotics of the text** and **sociology of publics**.

12.6. SUPPORTERS AND OPPONENTS AS DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES

The distinction between supporters and opponents would be especially relevant because one of the characteristics of contemporary polarized politics is that the same sign can be highly recognizable across political divisions while receiving opposite valuations. The MAGA cap in **IMG 1d** provides an exemplary case. Supporters may interpret it through isotopies of:

- patriotism;
- belonging;
- restoration;
- collective pride.

Opponents may activate:

- nationalism;
- exclusion;
- polarization;
- political aggression.

Both groups recognize the object. This creates the structure:

SAME SIGN

↓

SHARED RECOGNITION

↓

OPPOSITE AXIOLOGICAL INVESTMENT.

The result is not semiotic fragmentation in the strict sense. It is a form of **polarized semiotic consensus**. The public agrees about what the central sign is while disagreeing radically about what value should be attributed to it.

The same mechanism may apply to the chainsaw in **IMG 2a**. For supporters:

CUT = LIBERATION.

For opponents:

CUT = DESTRUCTION.

The material operation remains recognizable. Its political value changes. This suggests that polarization can operate not only through different information environments but also through **opposite valorization of shared symbolic objects**. Such a hypothesis would be particularly suitable for empirical testing.

12.7. NATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL RECEPTION

A further limitation concerns cultural context. Trump and Milei operate within different national histories. The United States and Argentina possess different:

- political traditions;
- economic histories;
- party systems;
- media systems;
- national myths;
- collective memories;
- institutional cultures.

The comparative analysis has deliberately focused on structural semiotic relations rather than treating the two contexts as equivalent. Nevertheless, the international circulation of both leaders introduces another question. What happens when political signs leave their original national contexts?

Trumpian imagery circulates globally. Mileian imagery increasingly does as well. The chainsaw can become recognizable outside Argentina even among audiences with limited knowledge of Argentine fiscal policy. MAGA can circulate outside the United States as a generic symbol of Trumpism.

This creates a process of **transnational semiotic abstraction**. As the sign moves away from its original context, some meanings may weaken while others intensify. The sequence could be represented as:

NATIONALLY EMBEDDED SIGN

↓

TRANSNATIONAL CIRCULATION

↓

CONTEXTUAL REDUCTION

↓

SYMBOLIC ABSTRACTION.

The chainsaw may cease to refer primarily to specific Argentine budgetary policies and become a general sign of radical anti-state politics. MAGA may cease to function only as an American electoral slogan and become an internationally recognizable marker of a broader political style.

Future research could therefore compare interpretations of the same images among audiences in:

- the United States;
- Argentina;
- Italy;
- other European countries;
- Latin American countries.

This would make it possible to investigate the relationship between **national codes** and **global political iconicity**.

12.8. CROSS-PLATFORM VARIATION

Another important limitation derives from the fact that images cannot be completely separated from the media environments in which they circulate. A political sign does not function identically across all platforms.

The same image can appear on:

- Facebook;
- Instagram;
- X;
- TikTok;
- YouTube;
- news websites;
- television;
- printed newspapers.

Each environment provides different possibilities for:

- framing;
- captioning;
- commenting;
- sharing;
- editing;
- remixing;
- temporal persistence;
- algorithmic distribution.

The same image can therefore become a different **media text** depending on its platform context.

Consider **IMG 1a**. As a news photograph, it may function primarily as documentation. As a campaign post, it may function as self-legitimation. As a supporter meme, it may become heroic mythology. As an oppositional meme, it may be parodied. As a historical retrospective, it may function as political memory.

The visual material remains similar, but the enunciative configuration changes.

Likewise, **IMG 2e** can function differently when presented:

- during a political speech;
- in an Instagram post;
- inside a television interview;
- as a screenshot on X;
- within a newspaper fact-check.

The graph does not carry its complete political meaning autonomously. Its meaning depends partly on the **media dispositif that frames it**.

A future cross-platform analysis could therefore compare the same sign across different technical and enunciative environments.

12.9. THE PROBLEM OF ALGORITHMIC VISIBILITY

The present research also identifies platform circulation as a central dimension of contemporary political communication, but it does not directly measure algorithmic distribution. This distinction must remain clear. The fact that particular images are compatible with platform circulation does not demonstrate that specific algorithms systematically privilege those images in every context.

Algorithmic visibility is influenced by multiple factors:

- platform design;
- ranking systems;

- engagement;
- network structure;
- user behavior;
- advertising;
- moderation;
- historical moment.

The present study analyzes the **semiotic compatibility** between particular forms of political communication and **platformized environments**, rather than claiming a deterministic causal relationship between algorithms and populist success. This methodological caution is important.

The defensible proposition is:

CERTAIN POLITICAL SIGNS POSSESS FORMAL CHARACTERISTICS

THAT MAKE THEM HIGHLY ADAPTABLE TO PLATFORMIZED CIRCULATION.

The stronger and less defensible proposition would be:

PLATFORM ALGORITHMS NECESSARILY PRODUCE OR FAVOR

THESE POLITICAL LEADERS.

The research supports the first. It does not attempt to demonstrate the second. Future interdisciplinary research could connect semiotic analysis with platform studies and computational methods in order to examine actual patterns of distribution.

12.10. FROM VISIBILITY TO VIRALITY

Another possible extension concerns the distinction between visibility and virality. These concepts should not be treated as synonymous. **Visibility** concerns the capacity of a sign to become perceptually and socially present. **Virality** concerns a particular form of accelerated and networked diffusion. An image may be highly visible without becoming viral. Conversely, an image may experience a short viral explosion without acquiring durable political significance.

The distinction can be represented as:

VISIBILITY ≠ VIRALITY ≠ ICONICITY.

A viral sign is rapidly distributed. An iconic sign is culturally stabilized. The two processes may overlap but need not.

IMG 1a is particularly interesting because rapid circulation contributed to a process of iconicization.

IMG 2a demonstrates how repeated chainsaw imagery progressively condensed a broader political identity into a recognizable object.

Future research could investigate the conditions under which VIRALITY becomes MEMORY and eventually ICONICITY. This would provide a stronger understanding of how temporary platform attention becomes durable political symbolism.

12.11. FROM IMAGE TO VIDEO

The visual corpus also privileges images as analytically delimitable texts. Contemporary platform politics is increasingly audiovisual. TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, livestreams, video clips, the moving image introduces additional semiotic dimensions:

- voice;
- intonation;
- rhythm;
- editing;
- music;
- movement;
- duration;
- interaction.

This is particularly important for Milei. The intensity reconstructed in **IMG 2b** and **IMG 2d** is not exclusively visual. Shouting is acoustic. Acceleration can be produced through editing. Conflict develops temporally. The body moves. A still image necessarily freezes part of this process.

Similarly, Trumpian rallies contain:

- voice;
- repetition;
- crowd response;
- music;
- gesture;
- rhythmic interaction.

An audiovisual extension could therefore reconstruct the **temporal syntax of political performance**. Instead of asking only how the body is spatially organized, it could investigate how political intensity develops second by second.

12.12. SOUND AND POLITICAL AUTHENTICITY

Sound deserves particular attention because vocal performance contributes significantly to authenticity. A voice can communicate:

- authority;
- anger;
- hesitation;
- certainty;
- irony;
- proximity;
- aggression.

Trump's vocal patterns and Milei's shouting could therefore be examined as semiotic resources in their own right. The relationship between verbal content and vocal form may be particularly important in post-truth environments. A proposition may acquire credibility not only because of **what is said**, but because of **how certainty is vocally performed**.

The structure becomes:

PROPOSITION ⊕ VOICE ⊕ RHYTHM ⊕ GESTURE

↓

PERFORMED CERTAINTY.

Such an analysis could further develop the concept of performative credibility proposed in this study.

12.13. FROM POLITICAL LEADER TO GENERATIVE AI

A particularly significant future development concerns the growing role of generative artificial intelligence in political imagery. The distinction between:

- photograph;
- edited image;
- meme;
- synthetic image

is becoming increasingly unstable from the perspective of ordinary digital consumption.

This phenomenon could intensify the mechanisms identified in **IMG 1e**.

The political effectiveness of fabricated imagery may increasingly depend not upon its ability to remain permanently mistaken for documentary evidence, but upon its capacity to enter circulation and activate an already available narrative.

The sequence may become:

SYNTHETIC IMAGE

↓

IMMEDIATE EMOTIONAL RECOGNITION

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

FACTUAL CONTESTATION

↓

MEMETIC SURVIVAL.

In such a scenario, correction may arrive after the image has already performed its principal semiotic function.

The future study of post-truth aesthetics will therefore increasingly need to examine not simply whether an image is real or artificial, but **how synthetic images participate in pre-existing systems of political meaning**.

12.14. THE LIMITS OF THE RESTORATIVE/DISRUPTIVE DISTINCTION

The distinction between restorative and disruptive populist leadership constitutes one of the principal theoretical outcomes of the study. Nevertheless, it should not be transformed into a rigid binary classification.

Political leaders can combine both logics. Trump can perform rupture. Milei can seek stabilization. Trump's political project can contain radical institutional transformations despite its restorative rhetoric. Milei's government necessarily produces new institutional forms despite its disruptive symbolic identity.

The categories therefore identify **dominant semiotic orientations**, not mutually exclusive political essences.

A more complex model could imagine restorative and disruptive leadership as two poles of a continuum:

RESTORATION ←——————————→ DISRUPTION.

Individual political texts could occupy different positions along this axis. A leader could move over time. A campaign could emphasize disruption. Government could emphasize stabilization. A crisis could temporarily alter the dominant semiotic regime. This would make the model dynamic rather than taxonomic.

12.15. TOWARD A TYPOLOGY OF VISIBLE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The Trump-Milei comparison could eventually be expanded into a broader typology. Restoration and disruption may represent only two among several possible semiotic grammars of visible leadership. Other political figures might construct legitimacy through:

- protection;
- competence;
- care;
- proximity;
- technocracy;
- sacrifice;
- militarization;
- moderation;
- innovation;
- collective representation.

This could lead to a broader comparative question:

WHAT MUST A POLITICAL LEADER LOOK LIKE IN ORDER TO BECOME CREDIBLE WITHIN A PARTICULAR POLITICAL NARRATIVE?

A protective leader may require one bodily grammar. A technocratic leader another. A revolutionary leader another. A paternal leader another. A leader constructed through proximity may avoid monumentality entirely. The present study therefore provides two analytically detailed cases within a potentially broader semiotics of visible leadership.

12.16. A MULTIMETHOD RESEARCH PROGRAM

The most promising future development would be to combine different methods while preserving the specificity of each. A possible research architecture could include:

- **SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS**
  identification of structures and hypotheses

↓

- **CONTENT ANALYSIS**
  measurement of recurrent visual features

↓

- **COMPUTATIONAL ANALYSIS**
  large-scale mapping of circulation

↓

- **PLATFORM ANALYSIS**
  reconstruction of technical and algorithmic contexts

↓

- **AUDIENCE RESEARCH**
  empirical investigation of interpretation

↓

- **LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS**
  study of mutation over time.

Such a design would make it possible to move across scales: from the individual image to the corpus, to the platform, to the public, to historical transformation.

Semiotics would remain essential because quantitative recurrence alone cannot explain **what the recurring forms mean**; conversely, quantitative and audience-based methods could test how widely particular semiotic configurations recur and how they are interpreted empirically.

The result would be a genuinely interdisciplinary research program connecting:

- semiotics;
- media sociology;
- political communication;
- platform studies;
- visual studies;
- audience research.

12.17. FINAL RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

The principal limitation of any study of contemporary digital political communication is also one of the reasons why the field remains theoretically productive: **its object is continuously changing**.

The images examined here will continue to circulate. Trump's political persona will continue to generate new relations with earlier images. Milei's symbolic universe will continue to be transformed by the consequences of political action.

Platforms will change. Formats will change. Synthetic media will become more sophisticated. Audiences will develop new interpretive competences. Symbols that currently appear central may become historical artifacts. Others may emerge unexpectedly from events that have not yet occurred.

The semiotic systems reconstructed in this research should therefore be understood as **historically situated but analytically transferable configurations**. Their value lies not in freezing Trump and Milei into permanent categories, but in identifying mechanisms through which contemporary political leadership becomes meaningful, visible, credible, and culturally recognizable.

The broader research question that emerges from the study is consequently no longer limited to:

HOW DO TRUMP AND MILEI COMMUNICATE POLITICALLY?

It becomes:

HOW IS POLITICAL LEADERSHIP MADE VISIBLE, RECOGNIZABLE, CREDIBLE, AND CIRCULABLE WITHIN CONTEMPORARY DIGITAL CULTURE?

This reformulation moves the problem beyond individual political personalities. It directs attention toward the interaction among political subjects, visual forms, media technologies, collective passions, interpretive communities, and platform infrastructures.

The political leader emerges at the intersection of these dimensions. Leadership is consequently neither entirely contained within the individual nor entirely produced by media systems. It is a relational semiotic construction. The leader performs. The camera frames. The platform distributes. The algorithm orders. The journalist contextualizes. The supporter appropriates. The opponent reverses. The meme transforms. The public recognizes.

Through this continuous chain of transformations, political identity becomes socially visible. The final implication of the research is therefore methodological as much as theoretical. To understand contemporary populist leadership, it is not sufficient to ask what political leaders **say**.

It is necessary to investigate what they **look like**, how they **perform**, which objects become attached to them, how their bodies occupy space, how their images construct time, which passions they activate, how their signs mutate, and how those signs circulate among different publics.

The politics of the digital age is increasingly a politics of **distributed signification**. Its objects are unstable. Its circulation is accelerated. Its publics are active. Its images are mutable. Precisely within this apparent instability, highly durable political identities can emerge. Trump and Milei demonstrate two different ways in which this stabilization can occur. Trump stabilizes political identity around the promise that a lost order can be recovered. Milei stabilizes political identity around the promise that an inherited order can be broken. One makes restoration recognizable. The other makes rupture recognizable. And in both cases, the decisive semiotic achievement lies in transforming an abstract political project into a visible, repeatable, emotionally intelligible, and culturally memorable form.

XIII. ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

13.1 TOWARD AN INTEGRATED SEMIOTIC FRAMEWORK OF DIGITAL POPULISM

The contribution of this study lies not simply in applying semiotic categories to the political communication of Donald Trump and Javier Milei, but in constructing an integrated comparative framework capable of explaining how contemporary populist leadership becomes **visible, recognizable, narratively coherent, and politically credible within digital media environments**.

The analysis has progressively moved beyond the interpretation of individual images. The ten visual texts have been examined as components of broader semiotic systems in which values, narrative programs, bodies, passions, objects, spaces, temporalities, plastic configurations, and processes of circulation interact.

This perspective makes it possible to formulate several original contributions. The first concerns the distinction between **restorative populist leadership** and **disruptive populist leadership**. The second concerns the conceptualization of political credibility as a **multilevel semiotic effect**. The third concerns the relationship between political persona and **visual recurrence**. The fourth concerns the role of symbolic objects as devices of **ideological condensation**. The fifth concerns the interpretation of post-truth as a **regime of competing forms of credibility**, rather than exclusively as a condition characterized by factual falsification. The sixth concerns the conceptualization of the political leader as a **dynamic semiotic configuration** produced through circulation.

Taken together, these contributions provide a framework through which the Trump-Milei comparison can be understood not simply as a comparison between two political figures, but as an investigation into two different ways of making political leadership perceptually and culturally intelligible.

13.2. FROM POLITICAL STYLE TO SEMIOTIC ARCHITECTURE

One of the principal contributions of the research is the shift from the concept of *political style* toward that of **semiotic architecture**.

The notion of style is useful for identifying recurrent expressive characteristics.

A leader may be described as:

- aggressive;
- theatrical;
- informal;
- authoritative;
- provocative;
- charismatic.

Such descriptions risk remaining at the surface level if they are not connected to the deeper structures that make those characteristics meaningful. The present study has therefore sought to reconstruct the relations among different analytical levels.

The Trumpian architecture can be represented as:

LOSS

↓

THREAT

↓

STRENGTH

↓

CENTRALITY

↓

COLLECTIVE IDENTIFICATION

↓

RESTORATION.

The Mileian architecture can instead be represented as:

FAILED CONTINUITY

↓

ANTAGONISM

↓

ANGER

↓

RUPTURE

↓

DESTABILIZATION

↓

TRANSFORMATION.

The difference between the two leaders therefore does not consist merely in the fact that Trump appears more monumental while Milei appears more disruptive.

These surface configurations correspond to different:

- axiologies;
- narrative programs;
- temporal structures;
- spatial organizations;
- passional regimes;
- forms of competence.

The concept of semiotic architecture makes it possible to explain **why apparently heterogeneous signs belong together**.

Trump's fist, aircraft, dominant posture, MAGA cap, and anti-immigration imagery are materially different. They can be integrated within a common structure of:

- strength;
- success;
- belonging;
- threat;
- restoration.

Similarly, Milei's chainsaw, bodily intensity, anti-caste discourse, productive chaos, and inflation charts are formally heterogeneous. They converge around:

- rupture;
- anti-system authenticity;
- transformative agency;
- opposition to continuity;
- economic legitimation.

The methodological advantage of the concept is therefore its capacity to move from:

ISOLATED SIGN

to

RELATIONAL SYSTEM.

The political persona becomes intelligible through the relations among signs rather than through any individual sign considered separately.

13.3. RESTORATIVE AND DISRUPTIVE POPULIST LEADERSHIP

The distinction between restorative and disruptive populist leadership constitutes the principal comparative proposition emerging from the study. The two categories identify different ways of transforming crisis into political agency.

In the restorative model, crisis is constructed as **disjunction from a positively valorized condition**. Something valuable has been lost. The leader acquires legitimacy through the promise of reconjunction. The basic structure is:

VALUED CONDITION

↓

LOSS

↓

DISJUNCTION

↓

COMPETENT LEADER

↓

RESTORATIVE ACTION

↓

RECONJUNCTION.

In the disruptive model, crisis is constructed as **continued conjunction with a negatively valorized condition**.

The problem is precisely that the subject remains trapped within an unwanted system.

The leader acquires legitimacy through the capacity to produce disjunction.

The structure becomes:

NEGATIVELY VALORIZED SYSTEM

↓

PERSISTENCE

↓

INTOLERABLE CONJUNCTION

↓

DISRUPTIVE LEADER

↓

RUPTURE

↓

NEW POSSIBILITY.

The distinction can therefore be formulated at an even deeper semiotic level:

RESTORATIVE LEADERSHIP

DESIRED CONJUNCTION HAS BEEN LOST.

DISRUPTIVE LEADERSHIP

UNDESIRED CONJUNCTION HAS PERSISTED.

This formulation clarifies why the two political projects require opposite narrative operations: Trump must **rejoin**; Milei must **separate**.

Trump must reconstruct conjunction between America and greatness. Milei must produce disjunction between society and the caste, bureaucracy, or the failed economic order. The opposition is therefore not merely rhetorical. It concerns the fundamental narrative syntax through which political transformation becomes meaningful.

13.4. TWO DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS OF THE LEADER

This distinction also allows the role of the leader to be specified more precisely. In restorative leadership, the leader operates principally as a **mediator of reconjunction**.

The subject possesses —or is represented as possessing— the competence necessary to reconnect the collective actor with a valued condition.

Trump's political competence is consequently constructed through signs of:

- strength;
- resilience;
- success;
- dominance;
- control.

These attributes make the restorative program narratively plausible.

In disruptive leadership, the leader operates as an **operator of disjunction and reconfiguration**.

Milei's competence is constructed through signs of:

- rupture;
- intensity;
- refusal;
- economic diagnosis;
- capacity to intervene.

The leader does not primarily promise to return the collective subject to an earlier condition. He promises to remove the obstacle preventing another condition from becoming possible.

This produces two different models of agency:

TRUMP

LEADER AS RECOVERER

MILEI

LEADER AS INTERRUPTER.

The distinction helps explain why apparently similar forms of political personalization can produce very different images of power. Both leaders occupy the center of the political narrative. But they occupy it because they perform different narrative functions.

13.5. POLITICAL CREDIBILITY AS A SEMIOTIC EFFECT

A second major contribution concerns credibility. Political credibility is frequently approached through:

- trust;
- reputation;
- expertise;
- truthfulness;
- institutional authority.

The present analysis does not reject these dimensions. It demonstrates, however, that credibility can also be investigated as a semiotic effect produced through the convergence of multiple textual levels.

A political leader may appear credible when:

- the body corresponds to the narrative role;
- the objects correspond to the ideology;
- the visual form corresponds to the political values;
- the emotional performance corresponds to the expected persona;
- new signs correspond to previously stabilized signs.

Credibility can therefore emerge through **structural correspondence**. The general model becomes:

AXIOLOGY

↕

NARRATIVE

↕

BODY

↕

PASSION

↕

PLASTIC FORM

↕

SYMBOLIC OBJECT

↕

CIRCULATING PERSONA.

The stronger the perceived coherence among these levels, the more the political identity can acquire an effect of consistency.

Consistency, in turn, can contribute to credibility.

This does not imply that coherent communication is factually true.

The distinction between **truth and credibility** remains fundamental. The analytical claim is narrower:

semiotic coherence can participate in the production of political credibility.

13.6. CREDIBILITY THROUGH CONVERGENCE

The Trump corpus provides a particularly clear example.

- **IMG 1a** says:
  RESILIENCE.
- **IMG 1b** says:
  DOMINANCE.
- **IMG 1c** says:
  SUCCESS.
- **IMG 1d** says:
  BELONGING AND RESTORATION.
- **IMG 1e** says:
  THREAT.

These meanings are not identical.

They can be narratively combined:

A SUCCESSFUL AND RESILIENT LEADER MUST EXERCISE STRENGTH IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE POLITICAL COMMUNITY FROM THREAT AND RESTORE ITS GREATNESS.

The individual images therefore reinforce one another.

The Mileian corpus produces an analogous convergence.

- **IMG 2a** says:
  CUT.
- **IMG 2b** says:
  INTENSITY.
- **IMG 2c** says:
  ANTAGONISTIC SYSTEM.

- **IMG 2d** says:

  TRANSFORMATIVE DESTABILIZATION.

- **IMG 2e** says:

  ECONOMIC DIAGNOSIS AND LEGITIMATION.

The integrated proposition becomes:

AN INTENSE ANTI-SYSTEM LEADER IDENTIFIES THE FAILED ORDER, BREAKS ITS CONTINUITY, ACCEPTS DESTABILIZATION AS THE COST OR METHOD OF TRANSFORMATION, AND CLAIMS TECHNICAL EVIDENCE OF A NEW ECONOMIC TRAJECTORY.

Credibility therefore emerges not from one image but from the **convergence of heterogeneous evidence** within the same political persona.

This mechanism can be described as semiotic corroboration.

One sign appears to confirm another: the body confirms the slogan, the object confirms the narrative.

The graph confirms the competence, the historical event confirms the persona, the persona confirms the interpretation of the new event.

The structure becomes recursive:

SIGN “A” → PERSONA

SIGN “B” → SAME PERSONA

SIGN “C” → SAME PERSONA

↓

PERCEIVED CONSISTENCY

↓

CREDIBILITY EFFECT.

13.7. THE POLITICAL PERSONA AS A RECURSIVE SYSTEM

This recursive mechanism constitutes another important contribution of the study. Political identity is not produced anew with every image. New signs are interpreted through previously stabilized configurations. At the same time, each new sign can strengthen or modify those configurations.

The relation is therefore circular:

PREVIOUS PERSONA

↓

INTERPRETATION OF NEW SIGN

↓

REINFORCED OR MODIFIED PERSONA

↓

INTERPRETATION OF NEXT SIGN.

The political persona functions as a **semiotic memory**. This helps explain why the same event can acquire different meanings when associated with different political actors.

The event does not arrive in an interpretive vacuum. It encounters an already structured ethos.

The Butler image provides a particularly clear example.

IMG 1a becomes politically powerful not only because of what is internally visible in the photograph. Its interpretation also interacts with an already established Trumpian ethos of:

- combativeness;
- strength;
- resistance;
- defiance.

The new image therefore possesses a double function. It is interpreted through the previous persona. But it also becomes exceptionally powerful evidence for that persona.

The process is:

PRE-EXISTING ETHOS OF STRENGTH

↓

IMG 1a

↓

INTERPRETATION AS RESILIENCE

↓

STRONGER ETHOS OF STRENGTH.

The sign and persona mutually authenticate one another.

13.8. SYMBOLIC OBJECTS AS IDEOLOGICAL COMPRESSORS

A further contribution concerns material objects. The analysis of the MAGA cap and the chainsaw demonstrates that political objects can operate as **ideological compressors**. Complex political programs require extensive articulation. Objects can reduce them to immediately recognizable forms.

The MAGA cap condenses:

- national identity;
- Trumpian belonging;
- campaign history;
- restorative temporality;
- political affiliation.

The chainsaw condenses:

- fiscal cuts;
- anti-bureaucratic politics;
- anti-caste antagonism;
- radical rupture;
- libertarian transformation.

The relationship becomes:

IDEOLOGICAL COMPLEXITY

↓

SYMBOLIC CONDENSATION

↓

MATERIAL OBJECT

↓

RAPID RECOGNITION.

The political object therefore performs a function analogous to a compressed file. A large quantity of meaning is stored within a relatively simple perceptual form.

The receiver who possesses the relevant cultural code can "decompress" the object: the red cap activates a political universe, the chainsaw activates another.

This mechanism is particularly compatible with digital environments because symbolic objects possess high portability. They can be:

- photographed;
- memed;

- reproduced;
- merchandised;
- parodied;
- displayed;
- shared.

The object survives contextual fragmentation because its form remains recognizable.

13.9. FROM SYMBOLIC CONDENSATION TO SYMBOLIC PORTABILITY

The concept of **symbolic portability** can therefore further refine the analysis. A politically effective digital sign must often be capable of moving across contexts without losing its basic recognizability.

The MAGA cap can appear:

- at a rally;
- in a selfie;
- in a meme;
- on television;
- in a newspaper;
- in merchandise;
- in oppositional satire.

The chainsaw can similarly migrate across:

- campaign events;
- social posts;
- news coverage;

- memes;
- international commentary.

The contexts change. The sign persists. This gives political symbols a capacity for **trans-contextual survival**.

The relationship becomes:

FORMAL SIMPLICITY ⊕ HIGH SEMANTIC DENSITY

=

SYMBOLIC PORTABILITY.

This does not mean that meanings remain identical across contexts. On the contrary, portability facilitates resemanticization. The sign can change value while remaining recognizable.

This combination of:

STABILITY OF FORM

and

FLEXIBILITY OF MEANING

helps explain the durability of political symbols in digital culture.

13.10. POST-TRUTH AS COMPETITION AMONG CREDIBILITY REGIMES

A further contribution concerns the conceptualization of post-truth.

The analysis suggests that post-truth should not be reduced to a binary conflict between truth and falsehood.

A more productive semiotic approach examines the **competition among different regimes through which something becomes credible**.

The corpus contains at least four distinct forms:

- **REFERENTIAL CREDIBILITY**

  The sign appears credible because it is connected to a verifiable event or condition;

- **PERFORMATIVE CREDIBILITY**

  The leader appears credible because bodily behavior is interpreted as evidence of authentic commitment or character;

- **EPISTEMIC CREDIBILITY**

  The sign appears credible because it mobilizes expertise, data, graphs, numbers, or technical knowledge;

- **IDENTITARIAN CREDIBILITY**

  The sign appears credible because it corresponds to the values and narratives of an interpretive community.

These regimes can coexist. They can also conflict.

- **IMG 1a** combines referential and performative credibility;
- **IMG 1e** demonstrates the possibility that identitarian and affective effectiveness can persist despite referential weakness or falsity;
- **IMG 2b** relies strongly on performative credibility;
- **IMG 2e** constructs epistemic credibility through economic visualization.

The post-truth environment can therefore be understood as one in which these different credibility regimes compete for interpretive authority.

The central question becomes:

WHICH FORM OF EVIDENCE DOES

THE AUDIENCE TREAT AS POLITICALLY AUTHORITATIVE?

A documented fact?

A familiar identity?

An emotionally convincing performance?

A graph?

A trusted leader?

A viral image?

The answer cannot be assumed in advance.

13.11. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN TRUTH AND RECOGNIZABILITY

The analysis also suggests an important distinction between **truthfulness and recognizability**. A sign can become recognizable independently of its factual status. Once culturally stabilized, it can continue to function as a political reference. This is particularly important in relation to **IMG 1e**.

Fabricated imagery can be factually rejected and nevertheless survive as:

- meme;
- joke;
- symbol of controversy;
- marker of group identity;
- reference to a broader political narrative.

The sign can therefore lose **referential credibility** without losing **cultural recognizability**.

The distinction becomes:

FALSE AS DOCUMENT

does not necessarily mean

INACTIVE AS SIGN.

This is one of the reasons why correction, although necessary, does not automatically eliminate the effects of political misinformation.

The sign may already have changed function. It no longer needs to be believed literally in order to remain politically active. It can become a symbolic shorthand for an antagonistic worldview. This suggests that misinformation research can benefit from examining not only the truth status of content but its **semiotic afterlife**.

13.12. THE SEMIOTIC AFTERLIFE OF POLITICAL IMAGES

The concept of semiotic afterlife provides another useful development. Political images often continue to circulate after:

- the event has ended;
- the original post has disappeared;
- the factual claim has been corrected;
- the electoral campaign has concluded.

Their persistence depends upon the capacity to enter cultural memory. The sequence can be represented as:

EVENT

↓

IMAGE

↓

CIRCULATION

↓

DETACHMENT FROM ORIGINAL CONTEXT

↓

CULTURAL RECOGNITION

↓

REACTIVATION.

At the final stage, the image can be reintroduced into new political situations. The old sign becomes evidence for a new narrative. The archive becomes active. This is particularly important in digital environments because old content remains:

- searchable;
- shareable;
- editable;
- recontextualizable.

Political memory becomes technically available for continuous reactivation. The political persona therefore accumulates a **digital visual archive** that participates in future interpretation.

13.13. FROM ARCHIVE TO POLITICAL MYTH

At a certain point, repeated political images can exceed the specificity of the event from which they originated. The Butler fist can cease to mean only *«Trump after the assassination attempt in Butler».*

It can begin to mean:

«Trumpian resistance».

The transition is:

EVENT

↓

REPRESENTATION OF EVENT

↓

SYMBOL OF CHARACTER

↓

POLITICAL MYTH.

Similarly, the chainsaw can move from:

an object used during Milei's political performance

to:

a representation of Mileian politics itself.

The individual event is generalized. The contingent becomes exemplary. The historical becomes paradigmatic. This process connects the analysis of contemporary digital politics with the broader semiotic problem of myth.

The political myth does not necessarily erase the historical event. It transforms the event into a generalizable structure of meaning. The particular becomes evidence of an essence.

Trump raised his fist at one specific moment. The circulating image can nevertheless come to signify:

THIS IS WHO TRUMP IS.

Milei held or displayed a chainsaw in specific contexts. The object can nevertheless come to signify:

THIS IS WHAT MILEI DOES TO POLITICS.

This movement from event to essence is one of the principal mechanisms through which political leadership becomes iconic.

13.14. ICONICITY AS REDUCTION OF INTERPRETIVE DEPENDENCE

The study also permits a more precise definition of political iconicity. An image becomes increasingly iconic as its interpretation becomes **less dependent upon detailed knowledge of the original context**.

At the beginning:

WHO? WHERE? WHEN? WHAT HAPPENED?

are necessary questions.

After sufficient circulation, recognition becomes more immediate. The image itself activates the political narrative.

The sequence is:

HIGH CONTEXTUAL DEPENDENCE

↓

REPETITION

↓

CULTURAL STABILIZATION

↓

LOWER CONTEXTUAL DEPENDENCE

↓

ICONICITY.

This does not mean context disappears. It means that a culturally stabilized interpretive frame becomes available before contextual reconstruction.

The sign increasingly explains itself through previous circulation. This mechanism is highly relevant to both **IMG 1a** and **IMG 2a**. Their symbolic effectiveness depends partly on the possibility of recognition beyond the immediate circumstances of their production.

13.15. THE LEADER AS A SYSTEM OF INDEXES, ICONS, AND SYMBOLS

The corpus further suggests that contemporary political persona is constructed through the interaction of different modes of signification.

The political body can operate indexically. An injury points to an event. A gesture points to bodily intensity. A graph points toward quantified phenomena.

Images can operate iconically through resemblance. Objects can operate symbolically through culturally stabilized conventions.

Political leadership therefore emerges from combinations of:

INDEXICALITY

⊕

ICONICITY

⊕

SYMBOLICITY.

The strength of **IMG 1a**, for instance, derives partly from this combination. The visible consequences of the attack provide indexical traces of the event. The raised-fist posture participates in an iconography of resistance. Its subsequent circulation stabilizes it symbolically within Trumpian political identity.

Likewise, the chainsaw is simultaneously:

- a material object;
- an image of cutting;
- a symbolic representation of political-economic reduction.

The effectiveness of political imagery therefore often derives from **semiotic layering** rather than from a single mode of signification.

13.16. THE POLITICAL BODY AS EVIDENTIARY SURFACE

The study also contributes to understanding the body as an **evidentiary surface**. Political bodies do not simply appear. They are interpreted as evidence.

Trump's body can become evidence of:

- strength;
- survival;
- dominance.

Milei's body can become evidence of:

- anger;
- sincerity;
- urgency;
- anti-institutional authenticity.

The body therefore participates in political argumentation without necessarily producing an explicit proposition. It shows.

The inferential structure becomes:

VISIBLE BODY

↓

PERCEIVED DISPOSITION

↓

ATTRIBUTED CHARACTER

↓

POLITICAL COMPETENCE.

For Trump:

HE RESISTS

↓

HE IS STRONG

↓

HE CAN LEAD / RESTORE.

For Milei:

HE REFUSES CONTAINMENT

↓

HE IS AUTHENTICALLY ANTI-SYSTEM

↓

HE CAN BREAK THE SYSTEM.

The body thus provides a bridge between perception and political inference. This helps explain why bodily images can become extraordinarily powerful within personalized political communication.

13.17. FROM BODY TO ETHOS

The relationship between body and ethos is not immediate. It is culturally mediated. Depending on context, raised fist can signify:

- resistance;
- victory;
- solidarity;
- defiance;
- aggression.

Shouting can signify:

- passion;
- anger;
- authenticity;
- instability;
- aggressiveness.

The body therefore does not contain a single meaning.

The relevant process is:

BODILY FORM

↓

CULTURAL CODE

↓

NARRATIVE CONTEXT

↓

ETHOTIC ATTRIBUTION.

This is another reason why the present study has avoided psychological reductionism. The analysis does not ask whether Milei is “really angry” or Trump “really dominant”. It asks how visible bodily configurations become available for particular political interpretations.

Ethos is therefore constructed at the intersection of:

- body;
- discourse;
- previous persona;
- media framing;
- collective recognition.

13.18. FROM PERSONALIZATION TO SEMIOTIC DEPENDENCY

The integrated analysis also reveals a possible consequence of extreme political personalization: **semiotic dependency**. As the political project becomes increasingly embodied by the leader, the interpretation of the project becomes dependent upon the leader’s signs.

Greatness becomes difficult to separate from Trump. The chainsaw-style rupture becomes difficult to separate from Milei. The relation becomes:

POLITICAL VALUE

↓

PERSONAL EMBODIMENT

↓

REPEATED ASSOCIATION

↓

VALUE-LEADER FUSION.

This fusion strengthens recognition. But it also makes the political project increasingly dependent upon the persona. The leader ceases to function merely as a spokesperson. He becomes the principal symbolic guarantee of the project. The political program is therefore personalized not only organizationally but **semiotically**. This can be expressed as:

- THE LEADER DOES NOT MERELY REPRESENT THE PROJECT.
- THE LEADER BECOMES ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL FORMS THROUGH WHICH THE PROJECT CAN BE RECOGNIZED.

13.19. THE PARADOX OF COMPLEXITY AND SIMPLICITY

One of the broader conclusions emerging from the study concerns the relationship between political complexity and semiotic simplicity.

Contemporary societies are characterized by extraordinarily complex political problems:

- migration;
- inflation;
- public debt;

- institutional legitimacy;
- globalization;
- inequality;
- national identity;
- bureaucratic organization.

The political signs examined in this corpus often operate through radical condensation:

- a cap;
- a fist;
- a chainsaw;
- a graph.

The relationship is paradoxical:

INCREASING POLITICAL COMPLEXITY

coexists with

INCREASING SEMIOTIC COMPRESSION.

This does not necessarily mean that political audiences are incapable of complexity. Rather, it indicates that highly competitive media environments favor signs capable of rapidly organizing complexity into recognizable interpretive frames.

The sign functions as an **entry point** into a much larger political narrative.

MAGA does not contain an entire political program literally, it provides a symbolic access point to one; the chainsaw does not explain fiscal policy, it makes a particular relation to fiscal policy immediately visible.

The political sign therefore operates through **economy of representation**. Maximum ideological recognizability is pursued through minimum perceptual complexity.

13.20. SEMIOTIC EFFICIENCY

This relation can be described as **semiotic efficiency**. A sign is semiotically efficient when it can activate a relatively extensive interpretive network through a relatively simple perceptual configuration.

The general relation is:

LOW PERCEPTUAL COMPLEXITY

⊕

HIGH CULTURAL CODIFICATION

=

HIGH SEMIOTIC EFFICIENCY.

The MAGA cap possesses high semiotic efficiency. The chainsaw possesses high semiotic efficiency. Trump's raised fist increasingly possesses high semiotic efficiency as its iconic status develops.

Such efficiency is especially advantageous within digital platforms characterized by:

- rapid scrolling;
- limited attention;
- small screens;
- fragmented contexts;
- continuous competition among contents.

The political sign capable of being recognized in fractions of a second possesses an important communicative advantage. Again, this is not equivalent to political persuasion. Recognition does not necessarily produce support. But recognition is a precondition for many later processes of interpretation, discussion, polarization, memetic transformation, political memory.

13.21. FROM SEMIOTIC EFFICIENCY TO POLITICAL MEMORABILITY

The ultimate effect of condensation may therefore be **memorability**. Complex arguments can be forgotten. Simple signs can persist.

The relation becomes:

CONDENSATION

↓

RECOGNITION

↓

REPETITION

↓

MEMORY.

Political memory is consequently not composed only of:

- laws;
- speeches;
- elections;
- institutional decisions.

It is also composed of images, objects, gestures, colors,

Trump's political history can be remembered through a sequence of highly condensed visual signs.

Milei's political rise can likewise be remembered through recognizable objects and performances.

The image therefore becomes an **archive of political identity**. This contributes to the transformation of political history itself. Events become culturally remembered through their most portable visual forms.

13.22. A COMPARATIVE MODEL OF DIGITAL POPULIST VISIBILITY

The findings of the study can finally be integrated into a comparative model.

TRUMPIAN VISIBILITY

CRISIS AS LOSS

↓

VALUED PAST

↓

RESTORATIVE NARRATIVE

↓

STRENGTH / SUCCESS / DOMINANCE

↓

CENTRALIZED AND MONUMENTAL BODY

↓

SYMBOLS OF BELONGING AND VICTORY

↓

REPETITION

↓

ICONIZATION

↓

CREDIBILITY THROUGH CONSISTENCY

↓

RESTORATIVE LEADERSHIP.

MILEIAN VISIBILITY

CRISIS AS FAILED CONTINUITY

↓

DEVALUED SYSTEM

↓

DISRUPTIVE NARRATIVE

↓

ANGER / RUPTURE / TECHNICAL DIAGNOSIS

↓

EXPANSIVE AND VECTORIAL BODY

↓

SYMBOLS OF CUTTING AND TRANSFORMATION

↓

PROVOCATION AND RECIRCULATION

↓

STABILIZATION OF DISRUPTION

↓

CREDIBILITY THROUGH NON-CONFORMITY

↓

DISRUPTIVE LEADERSHIP.

The two systems can then be placed within a common meta-model:

POLITICAL CRISIS

↓

AXIOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

↓

NARRATIVE PROGRAM

↓

LEADER COMPETENCE

↓

BODILY AND VISUAL PERFORMANCE

↓

SYMBOLIC CONDENSATION

↓

PLATFORM CIRCULATION

↓

RECOGNITION

↓

ETHOS

↓

CREDIBILITY

↓

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP.

This meta-model constitutes one of the principal synthetic outcomes of the research.

13.23. THEORETICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COMPARISON

The significance of comparing Trump and Milei therefore lies precisely in the combination of **structural similarity and semiotic difference**.

If the two leaders had nothing in common, the comparison would have limited explanatory value. If they were semiotically identical, it would add little analytical differentiation.

Their comparison is productive because both construct strongly personalized populist leadership within highly mediatized and platformized environments, while organizing that leadership according to different deep structures.

They share:

- personalization;
- antagonism;
- high symbolic density;
- performative authenticity;
- platform compatibility;
- visual recognizability.

They differ in:

- temporality;
- spatiality;
- bodily grammar;
- symbolic operation;
- relationship to order;
- construction of competence.

The comparison therefore demonstrates that digital populist visibility is **not a single aesthetic form**. Populist morphology can generate different visual grammars. This is theoretically important. The existence of shared populist structures does not imply stylistic or semiotic uniformity.

The political opposition between people and elite can be narratively organized through restoration or rupture. The leader can appear credible through monumentality or excess. Political transformation can be represented as recovery or interruption. The comparative semiotic approach makes these differences visible.

13.24. FROM THE CASE STUDIES TO A GENERAL HYPOTHESIS

The research ultimately permits the formulation of a broader hypothesis:

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CONTEMPORARY PERSONALIZED POLITICAL COMMUNICATION DEPENDS PARTLY ON THE CAPACITY TO PRODUCE COHERENCE ACROSS DIFFERENT SEMIOTIC LEVELS WHILE PRESERVING THE PORTABILITY OF ITS PRINCIPAL SIGNS ACROSS MEDIA CONTEXTS.

This hypothesis brings together two dimensions:

- **VERTICAL COHERENCE**
  → values, narratives, bodies, passions, and plastic forms correspond;
- **HORIZONTAL PORTABILITY**
  → signs move across platforms, genres, publics, and contexts.

The model can therefore be represented through two axes:

- **VERTICAL AXIS**
  deep values
  ↕
  narrative
  ↕
  passion
  ↕
  body

↕

plastic form

↕

visible sign

and

- **HORIZONTAL AXIS**

  event → post → news → meme → supporter → opponent → archive → reactivation.

Political visibility becomes especially powerful when the two axes intersect. The sign is internally coherent enough to be recognizable and externally portable enough to circulate. This intersection can produce a durable political persona.

13.25. FROM VISIBILITY TO CREDIBILITY

The study therefore proposes that the relationship between visibility and credibility should not be understood as automatic.

Visibility alone does not create credibility. A leader may be highly visible and widely rejected.

The more precise sequence is:

VISIBILITY

↓

RECOGNITION

↓

INTERPRETIVE COHERENCE

↓

POSSIBLE AUTHENTICITY EFFECT

↓

POSSIBLE CREDIBILITY EFFECT.

The repeated use of *possible* is important. Semiotics reconstructs conditions of meaning. It does not assume uniform psychological effects. The sign offers interpretive pathways. Audiences actualize them differently. This distinction preserves the analytical boundary between textual organization and empirical reception.

13.26. THE CENTRAL CONTRIBUTION

The central contribution of the research can consequently be condensed into a single proposition:

CONTEMPORARY DIGITAL POPULIST LEADERSHIP CAN BE UNDERSTOOD AS A PROCESS THROUGH WHICH POLITICAL CRISIS IS TRANSLATED INTO A COHERENT AND PORTABLE SYSTEM OF VALUES, NARRATIVES, BODIES, OBJECTS, PASSIONS, AND VISUAL FORMS CAPABLE OF PRODUCING RECOGNIZABLE POLITICAL PERSONAS ACROSS MEDIA ENVIRONMENTS.

Trump and Milei represent two distinct realizations of this process. Trump translates crisis into the grammar of **restoration**. Milei translates crisis into the grammar of **rupture**.

Trump's semiotic system seeks to make the lost order visible as recoverable.

Milei's seeks to make the existing order visible as breakable.

Trump's principal political operation is therefore:

RECONJUNCTION.

Milei's principal political operation is therefore:

DISJUNCTION FOLLOWED BY RECONFIGURATION.

This difference structures the political meaning of the selected images from the deepest axiological level to their most immediate visual organization.

13.27. FINAL STATEMENT

The comparative analysis ultimately demonstrates that political leadership in contemporary digital culture cannot be reduced to what a leader says, proposes, or institutionally accomplishes.

Leadership must also be examined as a **visible form of social meaning**.

It is constructed through the repeated alignment of:

- body and narrative;
- object and ideology;
- passion and authenticity;
- space and hierarchy;
- time and political promise;
- image and memory;
- circulation and recognition.

Trump and Milei reveal two different solutions to the same communicative problem: **how to make political transformation visible through the figure of the leader**.

Trump solves this problem by transforming the leader into a stable center.

His semiotic universe repeatedly says:

WHAT HAS BEEN LOST CAN BE RECOVERED BECAUSE

THE SUBJECT CAPABLE OF RECOVERING IT IS STILL STANDING.

The logic of **IMG 1a**, **IMG 1b**, **IMG 1c**, **IMG 1d**, and **IMG 1e** converges upon this restorative structure.

Milei solves the same problem by transforming the leader into an agent of discontinuity.

His semiotic universe repeatedly says:

WHAT HAS PERSISTED CAN BE INTERRUPTED BECAUSE

THE SUBJECT CAPABLE OF BREAKING IT HAS ENTERED THE SYSTEM.

The logic of **IMG 2a**, **IMG 2b**, **IMG 2c**, **IMG 2d**, and **IMG 2e** converges upon this disruptive structure.

The two models therefore establish opposite relations with political form:

TRUMP

FORM LOST

↓

FORM RECOVERED

MILEI

FORM IMPOSED

↓

FORM BROKEN

↓

FORM RECONFIGURED.

Beneath this opposition lies the common logic of personalized digital politics. In both cases, abstract political complexity is condensed into a leader whose body, gestures, objects, images, and recurrent performances become increasingly capable of representing an entire political world.

The leader becomes:

- a narrative operator;
- a passional center;
- a symbolic archive;
- a visual shortcut;
- an object of collective recognition;
- a node of digital circulation.

Political leadership consequently emerges not as a fixed property possessed by an individual, but as a **relational achievement continuously produced through signs**.

It is performed by the leader, framed by media, distributed by platforms, reinterpreted by journalists, appropriated by supporters, contested by opponents, transformed by memes, reactivated by archives, recognized by publics.

What appears to be the image of a leader is therefore never merely an image. It is the temporary visible stabilization of a much broader network of meanings.

For this reason, the study of contemporary political leadership requires attention not only to ideology and discourse, but also to **the social life of signs**.

The decisive question is no longer simply:

WHAT DOES THE LEADER REPRESENT?

Nor only:

WHAT DOES THE LEADER SAY?

It is also:

HOW DOES A POLITICAL SUBJECT BECOME A RECOGNIZABLE FORM

THROUGH WHICH AN ENTIRE INTERPRETATION OF REALITY CAN BE SEEN?

The Trump-Milei comparison provides two different answers:

- Trump becomes recognizable by making **restoration visible**;
- Milei becomes recognizable by making **rupture visible**.

It is precisely in the transformation of political programs into visible, repeatable, portable, and culturally intelligible forms that the semiotic power of contemporary digital populist leadership becomes most clearly observable.

XIV. APPARATUS AND SOURCES

14.1. ICONOGRAPHIC MATERIALS (CORPUS)

Image 1 – IMG 1a – BBC News – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQG_8tfRXlc (raised-fist frame within the video)

Image 2 – IMG 1b – POTUS, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DYGae1qkSoZ

Image 3 – IMG 1c – Facebook – https://www.facebook.com/DonaldTrump/posts/via-eric-trump-debate-readymakeamericagreatagain-trumptrain/10156613640555725

Image 4 – IMG 1d – POTUS, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DYaFGIKRkn1

Image 5 – IMG 1e – Semiotigram, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DXV7sMRDGV2 (slide 6 in the carousel)

Image 6 – IMG 2a – Javier Milei, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DTlQn0yiS9U

Image 7 – IMG 2b – Javier Milei, Instagram Reel – https://www.instagram.com/reel/DM-_PYQIx12

Image 8 – IMG 2c – Javier Milei, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DX_8fxDEzD0

Image 9 – IMG 2d – Javier Milei, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DVQ5DIjDo1_

Image 10 – IMG 2e – Javier Milei, Instagram – https://www.instagram.com/p/DTf2U5ADhSg

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As a journalist, Dr. Jantus Lordi de Sobremonte has more than thirty-six years of professional experience and has served as Editor-in-Chief of numerous international publications, including *World & Pleasure*, *Notiziario CNN*, *Wanted in Buenos Aires*, *Scaccomatto*, and *The EEC Calendar*.

His professional experience in journalism and communication has developed across the private, public, academic, and non-governmental sectors, providing a practical counterpart to his scholarly investigation of media systems and communicative processes. Over the course of his career, he has

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This combination of professional practice and academic research has progressively contributed to an interdisciplinary perspective in which media are approached not only as technological or textual objects, but also as institutions, organizational environments, systems of mediation, and spaces in which social meanings are produced and negotiated.

Between 1995 and 2000, he was Co-Founder, Chairman, and Chief Executive Officer of CNN S.A. in Buenos Aires, where he was involved in the management of publishing and communication activities and served as Editor-in-Chief of *Notiziario CNN*.

After returning to Italy, his professional trajectory increasingly focused on journalism, institutional communication, press relations, and editorial management. From 2004 to 2006, he served as Press Officer for the Office of the Delegate of the Mayor of Rome for the Protection of Consumer and User Rights, developing media relations activities and communication initiatives concerning consumer protection. From 2006 to 2007, he was Head of the Communication Office of Lazio Service S.p.A., where his responsibilities included corporate communication, media relations, editorial initiatives, and the development of communication projects for the organization.

In 2002, he founded AJCOM, developing professional activities in journalism, press office management, media relations, and integrated communication. Through this experience, he has worked across a wide range of institutional, corporate, cultural, scientific, and social contexts, combining editorial production with communication strategy and the analysis of media visibility. His professional activity has involved the conception and implementation of communication campaigns, press offices, editorial products, media monitoring activities, events, surveys, and information projects, as well as the coordination of relations with national and international media.

This long-standing professional engagement with journalism has also provided an empirical background for his subsequent academic interest in the mechanisms through which information becomes socially visible and meaningful. Direct experience with news production, editorial selection, media relations, audience response, and the circulation of information has contributed to his research interest in the relationship among media institutions, journalistic practices, publics, technological infrastructures, and processes of social interpretation. In this respect, his academic

and professional trajectories can be understood as mutually reinforcing dimensions of the same broader inquiry into communication as a social process.

His experience also extends to organizational leadership and the development of research, publishing, and communication institutions. As Co-Founder and President of the International Center for Social Research, he has promoted activities aimed at supporting social-scientific research, interdisciplinary discussion, and the dissemination of knowledge. His subsequent involvement in the creation and management of publishing initiatives has further connected research activity with scientific communication and editorial practice, contributing to the development of spaces in which academic research, professional journalism, and public communication can interact.

He has participated in a wide range of academic seminars, specialist programs, and workshops, including the Winter School on Environmental Crimes, the Cyber Threats Workshop, and the CBRN Risk Communication Program at UNICRI – United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute; the International Congress of Protocol at the International Ceremonial and Protocol Organisation; the Seminar on International Contracts and Arbitration at the University of Bologna; and the Seminar on Peacekeeping at CARI – Argentine Council for International Relations.

His earlier publications include *Le Club des Jacobins* (1990), *The Unsustainable Spell of Becoming* (1991), *Elementi per una Teoria Generale del Diritto* (1992), *Elementi di Economia Politica* (1992), *Natural Resources Management in International Law: A Legal Framework* (1994), *I salotti di Venere* (1998), *Guerra y Paz: los conflictos de la última década* (2001), *L'influenza dei mass media nella genesi dell'ideale estetico* (2007).

Over the course of his academic and journalistic career, he has developed an interdisciplinary body of scientific, scholarly, and professional work spanning sociology, media and communication studies, international affairs, digital culture, audience research, User Experience, environmental policy, sustainable development, demography, and CBRN risk communication.

His most recent scientific research is situated primarily at the intersection of sociology, semiotics, media studies, and digital communication, with particular attention to the transformations produced by platformization, algorithmic mediation, artificial intelligence, and the changing relationship between media, publics, and social meaning.

Within media and audience studies, his research has examined the transition from broadcasting to datacasting, the platformization and applicativization of television, algorithmic recommendation systems, online audiovisual consumption, and the transformation of mass audiences into increasingly distributed and datafied publics. His sociological and ethnomethodological work has addressed Membership Categorization Analysis, practical reasoning, journalistic meaning-making, social intelligibility, national identity, migration, alterity, and the media construction of social boundaries.

In visual, semiotic, and transmedia studies, his research has investigated the cultural organization of the gaze, voyeurism as a transmedial structure of visual experience, the aesthetics of post-truth, and, more recently, the semiotic construction of political leadership, credibility, and populist identity within digital media environments.

A further strand of his research concerns User Experience and digital design, approached not merely as professional design practices but as interdisciplinary fields connecting cognitive processes, human-centered research, technological mediation, business models, ethics, and social organization. His publications in this area address User Experience Research, usability, prototyping, Nielsen's heuristics, cognitive biases and dark patterns, Service Design, Product Thinking, Business Design, user testing, interface theory, artificial intelligence, and digital healthcare platforms.

His recent scientific output also includes collaborative and supervised research across different disciplinary areas. Under the supervision of Prof. **Alberto Marinelli** and Dr. **Ellenrose Firth**, he has investigated the transformation of audiovisual seriality within the YouTube ecosystem, focusing on the interplay among platform infrastructures, algorithmic recommendation systems, audience practices, fandom, and cross-platform circulation in the production of cultural value. Under the supervision of Prof. **Guido Vitiello**, he has investigated voyeurism and the cultural organization of the gaze across different media and artistic forms. Under the supervision of Prof. **Bianca Terracciano**, he has examined the aesthetics of post-truth and the semiotic construction of leadership and credibility in digital populism. Under the supervision of Prof. **Susanna Maria Roberta Esposito**, he has addressed the relationship between climate change, health, and the social perception of environmental risk.

Throughout his career, Dr. Jantus Lordi de Sobremonte has received numerous honors, titles, and decorations from academic, civil, and international institutions in recognition of his professional activities and his commitment to education, diplomacy, international cooperation, and social

development. Among his distinctions are the Crowned Belgium Bronze Medal (2023) and the rank of Officer of the Order of the Belgian Cross (2022), acknowledging his contribution to European cultural and academic collaboration.

In 2020, he was appointed Kentucky Colonel by the Commonwealth of Kentucky and named a *Paul Harris Fellow* by Rotary International. He also received the *Rotary Plaque of Appreciation* for his service and contribution to the success of the Third Alzheimer's Conference organized by the Rotary Club Roma Capitale.

In 2019, Dr. Jantus Lordi de Sobremonte was formally received as a Professed Confrere of the Royal Confraternity of the Holy Constable (*Real Confraria do Santo Condestável São Frei Dom Nuno de Santa Maria*) under the Royal Patronage of H.R.H. Dom Duarte Pio de Bragança. That same year, he was appointed Commander of the Order of Saint Maurice and Lazarus, and Knight of the Royal Order of the Crown of the Kingdom of Georgia. His earlier honors include Knight of the Order of the Belgian Cross (2018), Officer of the Order of Merit of Savoy (2001), Knight of the Order of Saint Maurice and Lazarus (1999), and the WOIR Medal for Merit in the Service of Peace (1999).

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