Technology-driven campaigning, social media and the 2019 European Parliament elections

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"Europe is a thought that needs to become a feeling"

- Bono
Technology-driven campaigning

1. Collect and compile online and offline data about voters
2. Apply computational methods to analyze it
3. Design messages that target clusters of individuals

RESULT

Personalized political messages that persuade and mobilize
Social media’s transnational potential

- Same platforms used around Europe and the world
- Same digital tools, same architectures, same habits
- English as the lingua franca
- Automated translation overcoming language barriers
- Tools for scheduling messages according to different time zones
Is technology used to maximize the transnational potential of social media in the EP?

Research based on
- interviews with communicators for six EP party groups
- Twitter data overview for EP party group accounts looking for indicators of transnational communication
  - Languages
  - Users
  - Topics
Case study: ALDE

Keyword Analysis of Tweets
The words used in tweets by ALDEgroup

Tweet Word Cloud
Most common words used in tweets by @ALDEgroup

order right follow today states make tomorrow most take political must here: “the time there were citizens situation proud agreement system the... better live join full will which freedom ensure member work meps more watch only women than according everyone happy liberal hearing alde report panamapapers good countries @guysterhofst http://europa.eu @sophieinveld seminar event stand people news free @eu_commission rules #brexit calls need week want from important read @sophieinveld those lets their welcome about been @jzekcz reaction europe very fight next rights call should european #eplenary human
Case study: Greens

Keyword Analysis of Tweets
The words used in tweets by GreensEP

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Tweet Word Cloud
Most common words in tweets by @GreensEP

#eutrade from just @eu_commission great thanks change action work fight time press @ph_lamberts event protection stop against conference stand like join come countries know should hearing free debate important citizens says good dont people need last time were their over here #plenary will european them starting here follow europe commission @europarl_en states call happy committee next read some check watch parliament show climate report more #panamapapers after start refugees there today @ben_beachy calling rules week @skakeller live into would well been make meps co-president news! When green rights news miss take member look live: want policy must protect trade about
Limits of social media use in EP Party groups

- MEPs’ skepticism towards the potential of social media
- Poor social media communication skills from the politicians’ side
- Lack of resources
- **Political divisions** within EP party groups
- **Risk aversion** in content creation
Conclusions

The European institutions, and the EP groups with them, were not early adopters or innovators in the communication realm

No technology-driven communication

Inconsistent use of social media and of technology in general

Under-utilized potential for pan-European communication via social media