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Elections, Webspheres and Ecosystems
Mapping and Comparing the Campaign Style and Dynamics of the Polish 2011 and French 2012 Elections

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Networked Elections

- Claim that Web 2.0, social networking and mobile internet is causing a communication revolution
- Networked individualism leading to networked relationships, work, play etc…
- What about networked politics
  - The preserve of a minority
  - Facilitated through features that permit doing more than reading alone
  - Argued that to be part of network you have to let the network in

Comparators

1) Performance Scores - Web 1.0/2.0;

2) Communication style/direction
     informing; engaging; mobilising; interacting

3) Targeting strategies - audiences

4) Campaigning style – E-rep/Marketing

5) Impact on vote share

6) Reach online and vote share

7) Embeddedness in election ecosystems

Average performance online

	POLAND	FRANCE
Overall	**.427**	.410
Web 1.0	**.570**	.533
Web 2.0	.341	**.368**
Informing	.494	.480
Engaging	.393	.364
Mobilising	.383	**.458**
Interacting	**.424**	.414
Browsers targeted	**.568**	.480
Information seekers targeted	.467	.463
Issue Activists targeted	.421	.445
Supporters targeted	.464	.455
Members targeted	.435	.437
E-Representation strategy	.387	.379
E-Marketing strategy	**.479**	**.430**

Comparing between and within nations

- Normalisation hypothesis confirmed, party size and resources key explanatory factor for online campaign sophistication
  - Polish Fringe parties an outlier to an extent
- Centrist parties outperform extremes
  - Polish extreme right focus on mobilisation
- Equalisation between Poland and France

Regression Analysis

- Major parties embrace online best apart from newly formed parties

- The most established parties also focus least on their online environment

- Right wing parties are most interactive
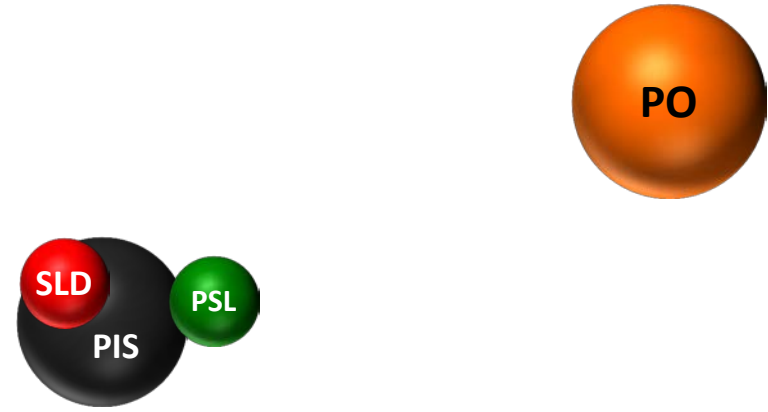
Votes, Performance and Reach

- New parties, Major parties win most votes
- Parties who inform and mobilise do worst in elections
- Parties with the broadest reach online gain more votes, even controlling for party election record
- Parties with more mentions in the press perform better
- Large followings indicate electoral support

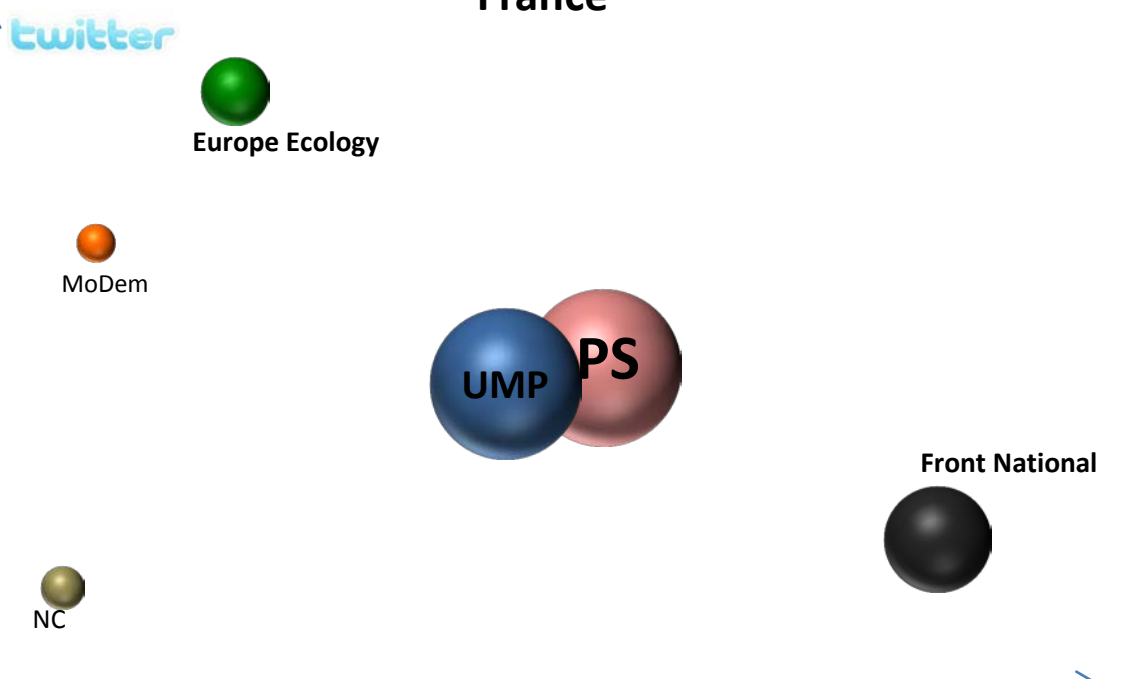**Community size and vote share**

Bubble size = Vote share

Poland

PO

SLD
PSL
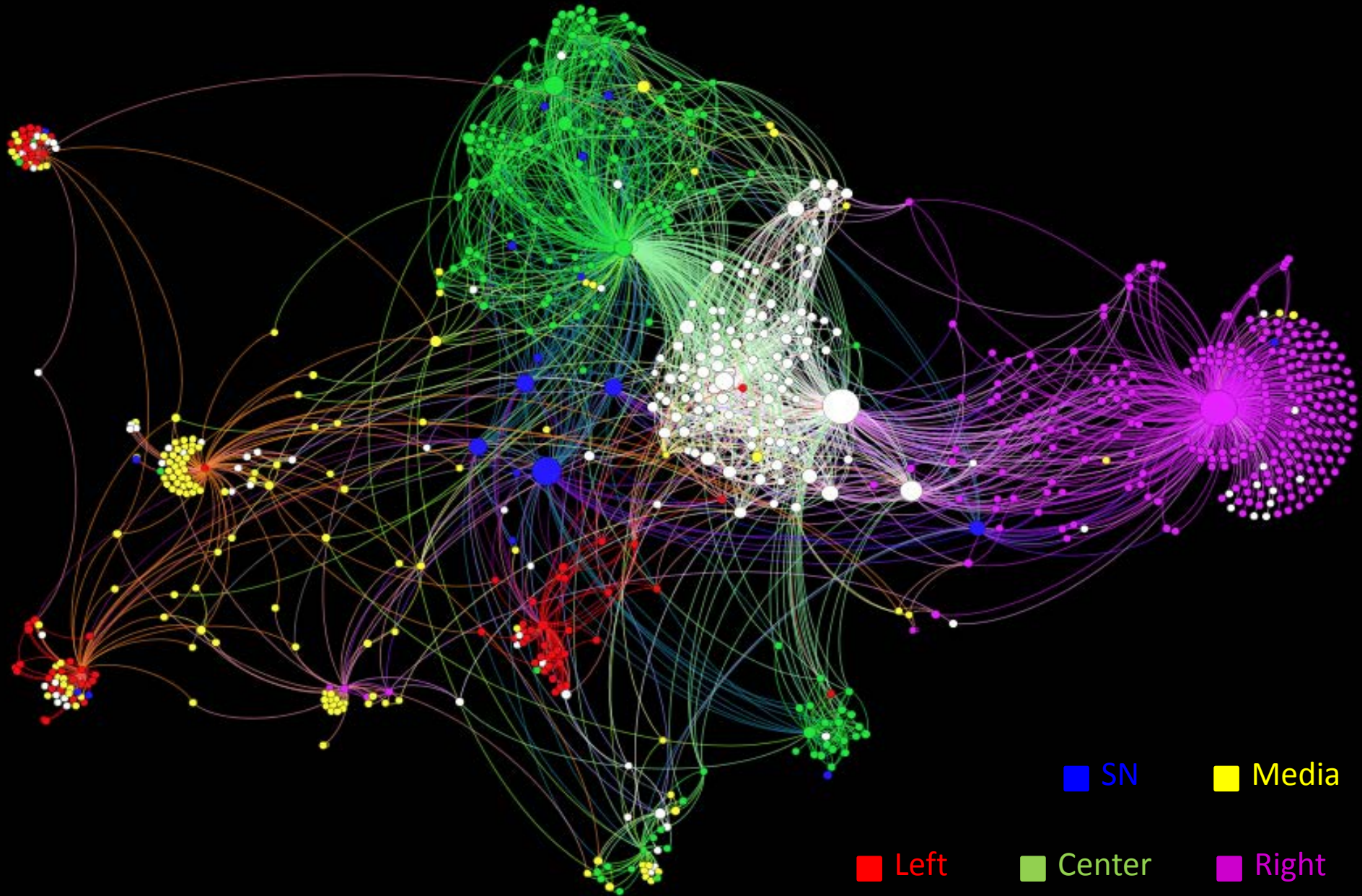PIS

facebook

POLAND   r = .550
FRANCE   r = .544

twitter

POLAND   r = .644
FRANCE   r = .612

France

Europe Ecology

MoDem

UMP PS

Front National

NC

Web Sphere Poland

SN Media

Left Center Right

Concluding thoughts

- Parties have embraced the Internet fully but not all are networked parties
  - Interaction almost caught up as a strategy
- Reach (by parties and in media) a key measure
- Social networks central to the political communication/campaign ecosystem
- Reach (online and offline) *seems* to earn votes
- But... Is online reach and media mentions simply a measure indicating previously very successful parties win most coverage, followers and votes?