Beyond the "Berlusconi Common Sense". A New Model of Politics for the 21st Century

Professor Paolo Mancini
Professor at the Dipartimento Istituzioni e Società, Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, Università di Perugia

Professor Terhi Rantanen
Chair, LSE
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Paolo Mancini
(Università di Perugia)
Common sense

- Media mogul
- Corruption and mafia
- Exotism
- Stereotypes of Italian culture
All true, but....don’t forget

- Specific contingencies
- Deeply rooted factors
All true but......don’t forget

Specific contingencies

- 1992 cleanhands, bribery city
- Disappearance of all Italian old political parties
- The fall of Berlin wall
Consequences

- 1994 political market
- A vacuum at the center of Italian political spectrum
Instruments

- A new party (Forza Italia) established thanks to market research

- Television ownership

- Understanding of TV culture
All true but...don’t forget

Deeply rooted factors

- an elite press (around 5,000,000 copies a day in total)
- TV as main public agenda setter
- a long tradition of partisan journalism
- after 1980 a mixture of savage commercialization mixed together with partisanship
But there is something else....
The new politics is marked by a lack of commitment to traditional institutions (such as political parties, labor unions and civic associations), yet composed of temporary alliances around issues and values linked to everyday life (such as morality, identity and worldview). These alliances can be associated with new social movements (e.g. environmentalism or the ethical treatment of animals) or identity politics (e.g. race, sexuality, gender). But are generally ones that offer more individualistic forms of expression (Jones, 2005, p. 20)
“The society that has been created by television is “naturaliter” a rightest society. It is the society of Sanremo Music Festival, sport, Tv ads, Pippo Baudo, Mike Buongiorno, Beautiful and so on. It is not Berlusconi who won, it is the society that his mass media organizations have created that won. This is the society that enjojes to look at stupid families sitting around a table celebrating either this or that product” (N. Bobbio, 1994)
Three main changes

- Commodification of politics
- Life style politics
- Televised politics
And Berlusconi is not alone......
......even if his political adventure is deeply rooted within the political culture of the country
Commodification of politics
Commodification of politics
Commodification of politics
Commodification of politics
Life style politics
Life style politics
Life style politics
“The gates of the Elysee Palace usually open only for limousines. The presidential staff park their vehicles outside the small courtyard on the rue Fauburg Saint-Honorè. But several times a week, they make an exception and the tall wooden doors swing open and a chic young woman drives on the gravel aboard a motor cycle. Juli Imperiali, 26, comes to give Nicolas Sarkosy his workout, applying her patent method to make him stretch, sweat and run. Putting the President in touch with his pelvic floor, the former dancer and gymnast sculpts his shape and boosts the famous energy that earned him the name “Speedy”… Imperiali says that in ten months she has helped Sarkozy, a teetotal chocolate addict, to drop nearly 4kg and two trousers sizes. “His body has radically changed”, she says “he is a dream pupil. He is always ready and motivated”. Her method focusing on the perineal muscles at the bottom of the pelvis, not only improves posture and delivers a healthier body and mind, but it also improves the sex lives of all her clients. Imperial claims” (The Times, January, 20, 2009)
Life style politics
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Televised politics
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Where do Italians stand?
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