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*Department of Media and Communications public lecture*

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

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# **Beyond the Berlusconi Common Sense: a New Model of Politics for the 21st Century**

**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 (eg. 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 Bongiorno, 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 enjoys 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

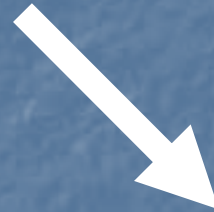


# Commodification of politics





# 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 Sarkozy 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





# Life style politics



# Life style politics



# Televised politics





# Televised politics



Where do Italians stand?



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