An analysis of Silvio Berlusconi's mediated persona in the Italian press
“Sono il Gesù Cristo della politica. Sono una vittima, paziente, sopporto tutto, mi sacrifico per tutti”.

During a campaign rally in 2009 Silvio Berlusconi explains that he is “the Jesus Christ of politics. I am a patient victim, I put up with everyone, I sacrifice myself for everyone.”

“Bunga bunga è il suono di decine di milioni di teste italiane che sbattono contro il muro, disperate.”

Journalist Beppe Severgnini explains on April 4 2011 in Corriere della Sera what Bunga Bunga means. “Bunga Bunga is the sound of millions of Italians, desperately banging their heads against the wall.”

“È peggio la casta dei giornalisti di quella dei politici.”

Politician Beppe Grillo explains in a blog post on 29 March 2013 why he avoided interviews during his 2013 political campaign: “Italian journalists are even worse than their politicians.”
Abstract

This study investigates the mediated persona of Silvio Berlusconi in the Italian press. It does so using three aspects of Italian life. First of all, a short analysis of the Italian history shows that in certain parts of Italy a strong sense of clientelism exists, as well as a high level of amoral familiarism and distrust towards the government. Secondly, Berlusconi’s personal history made him very skilled in using marketing principles for political gain making him a typical celebrity politician. And thirdly, the Italian press history enabled Berlusconi using these marketing principles because the media are historically structured for political instrumentalization. These three aspects helped investigate the question whether or not it was Berlusconi’s media power that helped him stay in power for almost twenty years. Using a qualitative content analysis on three Italian papers during two scandals Berlusconi has recently faced – having sex with an underaged prostitute and a fraudcase that involved bribing a judge – this study shows that, in a time of crisis, Berlusconi indeed uses his own paper to mediate his persona as being anti-establishment and a patron for the entire country. He does so using marketing- and celebrity politician principles such as the use of his private life to overcome public problems. Since this image is not only seen in the pro-Berlusconi paper Il Giornale, but also in the anti-Berlusconi papers, this study concludes that Berlusconi’s mediation in the Italian press is done in a very succesfull manner. It is therefore likely that it played a large part to his stay in power.

Key words

Silvio Berlusconi, Italy, journalism, political instrumentalization, clientelism, amoral familiarism, political marketing, celebrity politician, mediated persona
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Introduction: *Vada a bordo, cazzo!*

Italy has always been a superstitious country. Even in the middle of traffic cars often stop when a black cat crosses the street or are forced to stop when a pedestrian is avoiding a stepladder on the sidewalk. But despite these precautionary measures, bad luck does occur on the peninsula. Because it was on a Friday the 13th that the Italian cruise ship *Costa Concordia* sank near the banks of the small *Isola del Giglio*, in the West of Italy. The captain, Francesco Schettino, navigated the largest existing Italian cruise ship too close to the shore in order to entertain some members of the crew. The ship, with 4,200 people on its decks, ran aground and flipped over. Several people died, thousands were in shock and the world feared for severe ecological consequences. The captain himself, preserved from any personal bad luck, survived the shipwreck, went home and ordered a take away meal hours after the accident happened.¹

In the days following the disaster, however, captain Schettino got arrested by the police and was accused of multiple manslaughter. It was the start of a national debate; a debate that wasn’t about whether or not Schettino was capable of navigating the *Costa Concordia*. No, it was mainly about why he had abandoned the cruise in the middle of a shipwreck. According to maritime customs, a captain should always be the last to abandon his ship.² The days passed and the discussions continued. Because Schettino was released from jail and placed under house arrest, (left wing) Italian commentators published their well practised mantras about how nothing ever changes in Italy; multiple manslaughter, but he walks, they seemed to think.³ Whether or not this was just, it revealed, yet again, a deeply rooted mistrust of the Italians in everything official – in this case the judicial system.

The entire situation seemed to remind many citizens of the ‘old Italy’. Or, to be more specific: the Italy of the former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, *Il Cavaliere* (or “the Knight” as is he known and likes to be known) who had just left office. This comparison was based on several parallels (Berlusconi started his working life singing and entertaining on a ship just like the *Costa Concordia*) of which the most important one was that both Berlusconi and Schettino seemed archetypical Italians who prefer show and fun above obeying the rules. Both got themselves and others in trouble and both Berlusconi and Schettino seemed to have literally chosen for themselves at the end of the day.

Within this analogy the Italian press used to interpret the situation, the contrast with ‘the new Italy’ was also apparent. When captain Schettino left the *Costa Concordia*, an officer of the coastguard spoke to him via radio and when this conversation was released to the public, Officer Gregorio De Falco became an instant hero. By using explicit language – “*Vada a bordo, cazzo*” (go back on board, asshole) – the coast guard tried to talk back some sense into the deserting captain. And by doing so he showed that a certain sense of duty and correctness did actually exist in modern Italy.⁴

¹ Bas Mesters, ‘‚zeemansgroet‘ van kapitein werd cruiseschip mogelijk noodlottig’, *NRC Handelsblad* (16-01-2012)
³ Ibidem
⁴ Bas Mesters, ‘Schettino is symbool van het oude Italië’, *NRC Handelsblad* (19-02-2012) 7-8
The sentence went viral, became a trending topic on Twitter and got printed on t-shirts. The modest De Falco thus became a symbol of change these first weeks of January 2012. A large part of it was wishful thinking, of course. The parallel made between the shipwreck and the indigent political situation of the country was the main reason for his popularity. Italy (especially the left) was in desperate need of new heroes. Some Italians hoped that their new Prime Minister, Mario Monti, would act as correct and modest as De Falco had done. They hoped he would safe their ‘sinking’ Italy before it was too late. But, most of all, they hoped that their own former captain, Silvio Berlusconi, had also fled his sinking ship for good, as Schettino cowardly did. They hoped he’d stay out of Italian politics after having dominated it for almost twenty years.

But why were so many Italians in an almost desperate need for new heroes? And why did these new heroes had to be, above all, decent, modest and correct? The answer seems to be: because that was everything Silvio Berlusconi was not.

Silvio Berlusconi left office in November 2011, after some members of the European Union pressured Italy into changing their government. They thought Berlusconi’s government, and especially the PM himself, unfit to deal with the economic crisis of the time. After a couple of days of domestic turmoil and political tension, on a Saturday night, Berlusconi literally left office through the backdoor.

Berlusconi might not have been the problem solver he wanted to be, but what he was, however, is incomprehensible and fascinating at the same time. Because, how can a former cruise ship singer become both President of the biggest football club, the richest man of the country, absolute media mogul possessing several newspapers and almost all television and be Prime Minister of the country at the same time? How is it possible that this extremely powerful person is faced with several charges of corruption, is convicted for having ties with the mafia and is accused of having sex with under aged hookers while he’s in his seventies and, at the same time, gets himself re-elected over, and over? He internationally shamed himself and his country by calling U.S. President Barack Obama tanned. He said that German Chancellor Angela Merkel has an “unfuckable fat arse” and proposed that, whilst being president of the European Union, a European member of parliament should play a Nazi

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5 This indigent political situation refers to the euro crisis which hit southern European countries especially hard at the end of 2011. For Italy this meant that borrowing rates were over 7 percent, the unemployment rate was more than 8 percent (the percentage for youth employment was far higher) and the black market was approximately a fifth of Italy’s $2 trillion economy. Italy’s total debt was 120 percent of its GDP. Because of his unstable coalition Berlusconi wasn’t able to impose his promised budget cuts and according to various experts the proposed cuts by his government would actually only worsen the situation.

6 Mesters, ‘Schettino is symbol van het oude Italië’, 8

7 The common fear amongst European leaders was that after Greece, Ireland and Portugal, also Italy’s economy would fall and needed help in order to rescue the Euro. And were the first three mentioned economies together account for 6 percent of the European economy, Italy was good for 16 percent by itself. If Italy would have fallen, the end of the Euro would probably have been inevitable. The only solution was a $40 billion austerity package in Italy. Since Berlusconi wasn’t able to push this package through the parliament, but a counter package by the opposition could count on a majority, European pressure to resign became so high that he finally left office.

8 Iñaki Oñorbe Genovesi, ‘‘Berlusconismo’ zal in Italië nog lang doorwerken, de Volkskrant (14-11-2011) 4
hangman in a new Italian movie about the Holocaust. How is it possible that such a man has had so much power almost twenty years?

In probably any other country, the amount of (political) scandals Berlusconi has faced would have meant his resignation from politics and even judicial persecution. In Italy, however, his empire remained untouched. It was thanks to foreign pressure that he finally left office in 2011. How was this possible? Why did the Italians tolerate the behaviour of their leader and why did they keep re-electing him?

I think a large part of the answer lies in the power he has had through his media empire. While being Prime Minister, he possessed almost 90 per cent of the television channels, several magazines and an important newspaper. It seems plausible that Berlusconi was able to manipulate the electorate to some extent through his media power. Apparently something must have had an effect on the electorate because he was re-elected three (almost four) times and it is not likely that this was because of his policy. In my thesis I would like to test the hypothesis that it was his media-power that did the trick. In other words: how was the news discourse about Berlusconi framed in situations (scandals) that would normally (and in probably any other country) lead to the resignation of a politician? For instance: in this thesis I analyse the news coverage about a supposed sex-scandal with an under aged hooker as well as a scandal surrounding the bribing of a judge; two scandals that weren’t the immediate reason for Berlusconi’s resignation. If the news discourses reporting these scandals were indeed framed in terms that were positive of Berlusconi and his Prime Minister-ship, could this have contributed to his stay in power?

The structure of this thesis

In order to answer the above questions, several aspects need further explanation. Firstly Berlusconi himself; who is he and how could specifically he become who he became (i.e. extremely powerful)? Secondly, the Italian peninsula needs some explanation. Berlusconi could probably not have done what he did in any other country than Italy. Why is this? Why does he apparently fit his country? Thirdly: the notion of political marketing needs to be introduced. In relation to Berlusconi’s media power this seems a very useful term because due to his commercial background, the former Italian PM was able to use several marketing techniques in his political and media career. Fourthly, it is important to analyse the Italian press to some extent. Is there a tradition of a partial or non-neutral press and are Berlusconi’s media part of this tradition? If the answer is positive – if there indeed is a tradition of a non-

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9 Iñaki Oñorbe Genovesi, ’In 20 jaar tijd verspeelde Berlusconi alle kritiek’, de Volkskrant (09-11-2011) 2-3
10 Of course it can’t be proven that voters didn’t re-elect Berlusconi due to his policy. It is a fact though that the economical situation in Italy worsened while he was in power and that he didn’t follow most of his big promises. For example: Before the 2001 elections Berlusconi, on live television, signed his so-called Contratto con gli Italiani (contract with the Italians). In this agreement Berlusconi promised five big changes once he was chosen (simplifying the tax system, halve the unemployment, finance new public works, raise the pension and suppress the crime wave). If he would not have achieved 4 out of 5 goals, he would formally agree not to enter into the next election. Journalist Marco Travaglio (in: Peter Gomez, Marco Lillo and Marco Travaglio, Papi: uno scandalo politico (Milano 2009)) stated that none of the five points were actually complied. In conclusion he says: “Although he missed all five goals, Silvio Berlusconi is re-nominated. So he does not even maintain the sixth and final commitment.”
neutral press – this might be part of the reason why the Italian electorate allowed Berlusconi’s omnipresence.

This thesis is subdivided in five chapters that are based upon the terms from figure 1.1. Throughout the first chapters I formulate four premises (the letters A, B, C and D in figure 1.1) that are based on the theories used in this thesis. In the fifth chapter I have tested these premises using a qualitative-interpretative content analysis (on which I elaborate in chapter 4, the method chapter).

![Diagram: Italy, Silvio Berlusconi, Political Marketing, Journalism & Media power, and their interactions]

**Figure 1.1: The main terms used in this thesis, and their interaction**

The first chapter is about Berlusconi and can be read as a brief biography of the man. Because, when writing a thesis about Berlusconi, it is vital to understand who he actually is. How powerful is he? Which media does he own? Who does he owe? And to whom does he pledge allegiance? In this chapter I also try to explain how his public image was constructed; an image that proved to be so persistent. In order to do this his youth and emergence as a rich businessman and media mogul are shortly outlined and also his ties with the underworld and his first political steps are summarized. This rather descriptive chapter is placed before any further theoretical elaboration because despite the given that this thesis isn’t about the person Berlusconi, a certain knowledge of his career is essential to appreciate and understand the analysis that constitutes the bulk of it.

In the second chapter I start with a short socio-historical analysis of Italy. This is important because it is unlikely that Berlusconi would be the PM of any other country than Italy. Berlusconi seems to belong with the Italian peninsula and that has reasons with roots deep in history. Especially the lack of Social Capital (in short: the ability of people to work together in a group) due to the existing clientelism (a vertically based patron-client power structure inherited from the ancient Romans that creates a strong dependency upon a local leader) and the influence of amoral familiarism (a system in which trust within the family is high but marginal on a communal level) plays an important role. Berlusconi has shaped his way of doing politics according to these characteristics of Italian society and this interaction (A in figure 1.1) brings me to the following premise: Italy and Berlusconi are the hand and the glove. The way Berlusconi does politics and uses the media are only possible in Italy. In chapter 2 I formulate the more specific premise that I have tested using the content analysis.
An important part of Berlusconi’s rise to power is his ability to use his marketing on a political level. Therefore the concept of mediated persona, which forms a linkage between the usage of different media forms and the image of a politician, as well as that of the celebrity politician are outlined and applied to analyse Berlusconi’s situation in Italy. By using his fame and power, Berlusconi was, in a populist manner, able to present himself as the right man for the job.

The theory of communications scientist John Corner about mediated persona forms an important basis. Corner uses three political spheres (the political sphere, the private sphere, and the sphere of public and popular) to outline the different types of mediated behaviour. I use his theory to justify my second premise which is about the interaction between Berlusconi and political marketing (B in figure 1.1). Namely: Berlusconi embodies the shift of commercial techniques from the market towards politics. In chapter 2 I formulate the more testable premise that I have used for the content analysis.

In the third chapter I argue that the position of the media in Italian society since the indicated shift (that of commercial techniques from the market to the political sphere) can only occur if one has media power (D in figure 1.1). In other words: one needs media power to mediate his own image in a positive way. And by using his media power, Berlusconi’s persona was probably marketed (mediated) in a certain (positive) way. I try to justify this by again using John Corner’s theory about mediated persona. According to him there are three broad types of mediation that are being used to report about the action of politicians in the above mentioned three different spheres: (1) political publicity, managed by the politician and his or her staff; (2) interactive news-making, where politicians and the news media work together to build the politician’s image; and (3) journalistic revelation, where the politician loses any control of media coverage. The premise that it is likely that pro-Berlusconi papers will be a product of the first two types of mediation, whilst the anti-Berlusconi papers will be a product of journalistic revelation, is tested with the use of a content analysis.

In this third chapter I also try to explain the interaction between the Berlusconi and his media power (C in figure 1.1) because if the media landscape would have been different, Berlusconi could probably not have gained so much media- and as a consequence political power. The above mentioned characteristics of the Italian society (the lack of Social Capital, the amoral familiarism and clientelism) also have had several influences on the development of the Italian media landscape. Therefore the common normative ideals that exist in journalism might differ from the ones in Italy. First I shortly outline these normative ideals that exist between democracy and journalism and by using the Mediterranean model from media scientists Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini, I try to explain why the normative ideals in Italy differ from those in other countries. I further outline the pressure from modern commerce on Italian journalism and this again leads me to a premise: Berlusconi and especially his media power are (from an Italian normative perspective) bad for journalism. Giving a conclusive answer to this premise, however, is too ambitious for this research and is therefore not the main target of this thesis. Because of this I do speculate about the possible answer, but I don’t extract a testable premise.
So, in this thesis I formulate and use four premises (especially A, B and C from figure 1.1) in order to research in what ways the news discourses around Berlusconi’s (mediated) persona were framed, what themes emerged and how his persona was constructed through press coverage. In what ways did the press, at times of crisis, engage with, adapt, protect, or reconstruct his persona? I investigate this by analysing two scandals that had something to do with the former PM (the sex scandal surrounding the 17-year-old Karima El-Mahroug (better known as Ruby) and a corruption scandal that had to do with the bribing of several judges; the David Mills-case) and the coverage about the scandals in the Berlusconi-owned paper Il Giornale, a more neutral newspaper the Corriere della Sera and an oppositional newspaper called La Repubblica.

As I will explain more thoroughly in the fourth chapter, I have chosen to analyse these three particular newspapers because, first of all, they are without exception big national newspapers with a large market share and with a focus on general news. More importantly, however, together they represent three different sides of the journalistic spectrum in Italy. Where Corriere della Sera can be considered as a newspaper without strong political parallels (a neutral paper so to say), Il Giornale is not only read by right wing Berlusconi voters, but is also owned by Berlusconi.11 La Repubblica is the biggest ‘oppositional’ newspaper and has strong political parallels with the Italian left wing.12

In this fourth chapter I will also argue why I have chosen to analyse the two specific cases used in this study. The most important reason is that the David Mills corruption case can be seen as rather exemplary for Berlusconi’s (political) career. The same goes for the second case: Ruby-Gate. Besides corruption charges, also sex scandals are something which have haunted the former PM of Italy throughout his career and this particular one was without a doubt the most serious. By using these scandals, speculations about the rest of Berlusconi’s career based upon this thesis will hopefully be more accurate as a result.

In the fourth chapter I will also elaborate on the method I use to test the formulated premises, namely a qualitative-interpretative content analysis that is based on Wester, Pleijter and Renckstorf’s method described by Fred Wester,13 in combination with Philipp Mayring’s method as described by him in 2000.14 I will present the findings of the analysis in the fifth and final chapter.

So, in summary: in the following pages I try to analyse how Berlusconi was portrayed by the Italian media. Was this mediated image or persona the reason he could do what he has done for almost twenty years? Namely: entertain, earn money, get elected, get mocked and attacked, make jokes, stay out of jail, offend women and foreigners, stay alive, earn more money, be the hero, exaggerate, make love, exaggerate about making love, win football games and votes, broadcast and, last but (presumably) not least, govern Italy.

11 Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, Comparing media systems. Three models of media and politics (Cambridge 2004) 102
12 Ibidem
Chapter 1: Silvio Berlusconi

1.1 An Italian Story

When Silvio Berlusconi is campaigning in 2001 for his second term as Prime Minister, around 21 million Italian families receive a copy of *Una Storia Italiana; An Italian Story*. Almost the entire population was now the owner of the autobiography of *Il Cavaliere*. With 127 pages, highly illustrated and composed of un-Italian like sentences no longer than ten words, it used less than five thousand words altogether. By using this glossy-like campaign brochure, Berlusconi strongly focussed on the lower-educated part of society and in those same 2001 elections more than 65 per cent of those with only fifth grade education voted for him while only 35.9 per cent of the voters with a high school diploma of higher did. The book had structure which is often used in fables: a happy beginning, troubles and struggles in the middle but an eventual triumph that led to a happy end. It is the narrative of a heroic or mythical story; a resemblance that Berlusconi pursued his entire life.

The story starts on an early autumn Tuesday, just before the beginning of the Second World War. On 29 September 1936 Silvio Berlusconi was born. His father, Luigi Berlusconi, was a clerk at a small bank in Milan and his mother, Rosella Rossi, was a 25-year-old housewife. Silvio was the first child of three and was born in the year in which Benito Mussolini proclaimed his colonial empire after his troops entered Adis Abeba. The two siblings of Silvio, Antonietta and Paolo were born in 1943 and 1949. When Silvio’s mother, *Mamma Rosella*, was pregnant of Antonietta, the family was evacuated from Milan to Como. Silvio’s father, who refused to join Mussolini’s retreated troops, sought refuge in Switzerland and Silvio, seven at the time, would not see his father again for almost two years. This absence, Berlusconi wrote in *Una Storia Italiana*, formed his character in a lot of ways. He apparently wanted the Italian voters to believe that his strong need for independence, pride and determination are existing and true and all find their roots in these two last years of the war.

After the war, Silvio was sent to a boarding college run by priests, the Sant’Ambrogio in Milan. The rules were strict. The boys boarding there could only go home for a few days every school year. The day began at seven and ended at nine. Silvio’s school records show him to have been a student who obtained the highest grades, though never the maximum for good behaviour. One of the most repeated anecdotes about Berlusconi’s days at the Sant’Ambrogio is that of him selling his completed homework to his friends for sweets or money. The other story being told is that he lacked profound religious conviction. By telling these stories Berlusconi tried to show that it was already clear from early on that he would never become a true Christian Democrat like Aldo Moro or Giulio Andreotti, men who would lead Italy into the 1990s. On the contrary, he tried to feed the popular myth that from very

15 Silvio Berlusconi, *Una storia Italiana* (Milan 2001)
16 Alexander Stille, ‘Silvio’s shadow: Italy's ex-prime minister forged a new power paradigm, echoed today in America and elsewhere, in which journalism is merely a political weapon.’ *Columbia Journalism Review* 45.3 (2006) 38
young he already possessed a certain talent for making good deals by ‘bending’ the rules. In the next chapter I further elaborate on Berlusconi’s constructed persona and try to show that he also used the anti-authoritarian sentiments from these anecdotes and that a large part of the Italian electorate actually appreciates it.

Together with one of his best school friends, Fedele Confalonieri, who would later become the President of Berlusconi’s television company Mediaset, Silvio started singing. By the age of sixteen, the two boys were organising improvised performances during the summer holidays. One of Berlusconi’s first jobs was singing Frank Sinatra songs on cruise ships like the Costa Concordia in the Mediterranean where he grew accustomed to entertaining large groups of people with jokes, songs and so on. In Una Storia Italiana several anecdotes about this period are written down. Especially his ability to overcome personal misfortunes using charm, nerve and sexuality are highlighted. This self-cultivation of his image as a charming, slightly sexist person has helped him, as I will argue later in this thesis, to overcome the numerous amounts of sex-scandals he has faced. In one of the stories it is told that during performances Berlusconi often left the stage to dance with pretty girls on the dance floor in order to entertain the crowd. Confalonieri, who was jealous, threw Berlusconi out of their group, only to rehire him again after nightclub owners complained that a band without Berlusconi wasn’t as entertaining for a crowd as it was before.

Where this anecdote might be true, fact and fiction often coexist in the book. For instance: Berlusconi says he studied at the French Sorbonne’ for two years and toured with Confalonieri in Lebanon. But in real life he was never an official student at the famous Paris University. Confalonieri did actually go to Lebanon, but not together with Berlusconi. Berlusconi might have thought these to anecdotes too vivid not to use for the construction of his identity towards the 2001 elections. His image or persona becomes that of a world traveller and a scholar thanks to these stories and apparently this was more important for Berlusconi than the actual truth. One might argue that, for the major player in journalism he would later become, this pragmatic choice at the expense of the truth isn’t the most honourable or ethical one.

Even though not in Paris, Berlusconi did study. During his Law degree in Milan, Silvio’s father asked him to maintain himself in his living. He did so by selling vacuum cleaners, singing and working for a real-estate agent. Partly because of his extra-curricular activities, Berlusconi only graduated in 1961, aged 25. But his thesis, focusing on building real estate, obtained the highest vote possible and received a prize from an advertising agency. If we have to believe his biography, it was Berlusconi’s dream to become a real-estate agent. And so he did.

1.2 Milano II

The two most eminent foreign biographers of Berlusconi, Paul Ginsborg and Alexander Stille, both claim that the early sixties in Milan should be seen as a golden age for the Italian real-

19 Ibidem 14
20 Berlusconi, Una Storia Italiana, 12-15
21 Stille De inname van Rome, 35
22 Ibidem, 16
estate sector. In contrast to many other periods in Italy’s post-war history there was nearly full employment and the so called ‘economic miracle’ was in the process of making northern Italy one of the world’s richest economies. A good transport system, membership of the new European Common Market, design flair and the availability of large quantities of cheap labour from South Italy were elements that produced an un-Italian economic boom. Berlusconi graduated at exactly the right time. After having worked in paid employment for a short time, he decided to start for himself. His only problem was a lack of initial capital. When he found a piece of land, however, he persuaded his old boss to financially support him.

After this first project, it was time for something more ambitious but it came as a surprise that a murky Swiss company, whose real proprietors never have been identified, allowed a 27-year-old constructor to lead the big operation he obtained. At first, nobody wanted to buy the almost 4,000 apartments but Alexander Stille writes in his book that a large pension fund invested several millions because Berlusconi (according to Berlusconi) managed to persuade the vice-president of the company to invest in the project. After a bacchanal in which both men discussed the private parts of Caucasian women, the vice-president decided to go along with Berlusconi. Stille adds that another explanation seems more likely. Later investigations have shown that it is highly plausible that Berlusconi paid bribes and other sort of slush money to this vice-president. In this thesis I use the press coverage of the David Mills case as a part of my content analysis. This Mills case, which officially ended in 2012, is also based around bribes and slush money so without ever being convicted to a jail sentence, the above history shows that Berlusconi had to fight against the image of being corrupt throughout his entire working life.

In 1970 Berlusconi began his third and his largest building project: Milano II (Milan two). This project made his name and fortune because it was an absolute success. The financing of Milano II, even more that the financing of his second project, nonetheless remains a great mystery. The sources of capital used are buried in a jungle of different offshore companies and nominal proprietors. Paolo Borsellino, a Sicilian magistrate, explained in 1992 that Berlusconi might as well have been used to launder money from the Mafia. Two months later Borsellino was killed in Palermo by the local clan Cosa Nostra. In 2002, however, Berlusconi was acquitted by the Palermo courts of any involvement in the murder of Borsellino and Giovanni Falcone (a Sicilian judge who also got killed). The judge noted nonetheless that links between Berlusconi’s company Fininvest and the Cosa Nostra have been ascertained. Those links, said the judge, meant that the accusations of pentiti (penitent Mafiosi) who implicated Berlusconi were “not entirely implausible”.

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23 Ginsborg, Silvio Berlusconi, 16-17
24 Stille, De inname van Rome, 35-36
25 Ibidem, 39
26 Ginsborg, Silvio Berlusconi, 22-23
27 Tobias Jones, The dark heart of Italy (Kent 2002) 187
1.3 The Sicilian connection

Berlusconi as a businessman was besides omnipresent also very enigmatic. Throughout his entire career, the question that always surrounded him was: is he an honest (business)man or not? Especially when he got engaged in politics, he presented himself as anti-establishment, as a modern man, able to ‘cure’ the sick country. The opposition however, always accused him as being very much part of this sick ‘old’ Italy. This debate, which still lasts at the moment of writing, has had a tremendous effect on his image and the way his persona was mediated throughout the years and is basically about the question if he is essentially good, or bad for Italy. The answer to this question all comes down to one crucial issue: did he have ties with the Mafia? Because if he has, it is very well plausible that he was blackmailable during his career and that many of his political choices were made to benefit the Mafia. Besides that, the Mafia is known for its clientelist structure. If Berlusconi thanks his rise to power to the Mafia, it means he was part of their patron-client relationships. This would shed a different light on his own political usage of these relationships, about which I elaborate more in Chapter 2.

From early on, there existed a significant Sicilian connection, mainly personified by his Palermo born university friend Marcello Dell’Utri, who would later become the head of Berlusconi’s advertising company, Publitalia.\(^{28}\) In 1974 Berlusconi took a giant step in the construction of his own image by buying the giant eighteenth century Villa Arcore with 147 rooms just outside Milan. From here he would direct his business empire (which, in 2013, was good for approximately six billion euros) and invite heads of state from all over the world.

The purchase of Villa Arcore is surrounded by suspicion though. The 22-year-old heir, the Marchesina Anna Maria Casati Stampa di Soncino, decided to sell the massive house after the death of her father. Her legal consultant, Cesare Previti, lead the sale of the house, including an overwhelming collection of Old Masters and antique books, for a price of 500 million lire; a sum for which you could buy a considerable flat in the centre of Milan at the time, but nothing more. After the deal was concluded Previti became Berlusconi’s own principal lawyer.\(^{29}\) Years later, in 1995, Previti would be sentenced for bribing judges for Berlusconi’s benefit, amongst other things.\(^{30}\) As a consequence Berlusconi made sure that parliament approved a law (called the Schifani Law) by which the five highest authorities of the country could not be sentenced while in function. Because of this law, Berlusconi was never convicted for any wrongdoing concerning this case.\(^{31}\)

The villa underwent a nouveau riche facelift (an indoor swimming pool, a television wall, etcetera) and Berlusconi asked Dell’Utri to lead this overhaul. Not long after his arrival, Dell’Utri assigned Vittorio Mangano, a young Mafioso from Palermo, to take care of the villas stables, even though there was only one horse to look after. In 1965, Berlusconi married Carla Elvira Dall’Oglio and they had two children: Maria Elvira and Pier Silvio. In the late 1960s early 1970s kidnapping of wealthy people or members of their family was quite widespread in Italy and Berlusconi’s family had been threatened in this way several times.

\(^{28}\) Ginsborg, Silvio Berlusconi, 23
\(^{29}\) KRO Reporter international, ‘Berlusconi’ http://player.omroep.nl/?aflID=11010473 (24-05-2011)
\(^{30}\) Stille, De inname van Rome, 47
\(^{31}\) Ine Roox, Berlusconi, staatsman of clown? (Antwerpen 2010) 25
The most plausible reason for Dell’Utri to install Mangano was thus to offer some sort of protection. Mangano came from a powerful Sicilian family and might have served as a guarantor. Magistrate Borsellino once described Mangano as ‘one of those personalities who acted as a bridgehead for the Mafia organisation in northern Italy’. 32

While Mangano lived at the villa he invited many people and introduced them to Dell’Utri and Berlusconi. Even though their testimonies vary, Berlusconi and Dell’Utri both claim that once their suspicions about Mangano were aroused they directly sent him away. Mangano went back to Palermo and became the leader of the powerful Porta Nuova clan. Years later, he was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment for double homicide, amongst other crimes. 33

In the last twenty years, almost 40 penitent ex-Mafia members have testified and said that Dell’Utri was the main intermediary between Berlusconi and the Mafia. They also stated the Mafia at first blackmailed Berlusconi, but later invested millions in his corporations and thus created reciprocal ties. These statements have never been fully proved and Berlusconi and Dell’Utri always said that these stories where lies from clemency seeking criminals who, by corrupting Berlusconi, tried to soft-soap the “communist and anti-Berlusconi” judges. 34 In 2010 Dell’Utri did get convicted and sentenced for seven years due to ties with the Mafia, but because of several laws and rules he never served jail time and still remains Berlusconi’s closest friend. 35

1.4 Citizen Berlusconi

In 1994, ninety-seven per cent of the Italian population had heard of the name Berlusconi, while only fifty per cent knew the name of the then governing PM, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi. 36 Another poll showed that Berlusconi was the most beloved figure in a sampling of Italian school children (followed by Arnold Schwarzenegger and Jesus Christ, in that order) so backed by this popularity Berlusconi decided to run for Prime Minister of Italy. 37 His oldest friend Confalonieri said in a 1994 interview that you only get a chance like this once in a lifetime. “It happened to Napoleon, and now it happened to Berlusconi: he saw an opening and in three months time he took Italy…” Confalonieri thought Berlusconi was a marketing genius. His company could grow so big because it was able to fill in the voids in the market. “Milan has no suburbs…?” Confalonieri continues, “…here is Milano II! There are no advertising agencies for small- and middle large companies? Let’s found Publitalia! There is no commercial television? I’ll start Canale 5. No shopping malls? Etcetera… until Forza Italia.” 38 And Confalonieri was right. Berlusconi was indeed an extremely good marketer. He was able to detect the voids in the Italian market before anybody else and he was able to sell his products. In chapter 2.3 of this thesis I introduce that the so called Hoover factor (named after the product he sold in his early career – the Hoover vacuum cleaner) which explains that

32 Ginsborg, Silvio Berlusconi, 26
33 Ibidem, 27
34 Stille, De inname van Rome, 51
35 Roox, Staatsman of clown, 30
36 Stille, Silvio’s shadow, 38
37 Ibidem
38 Stille, De inname van Rome, 173-174
all the talent and flair for commercial seduction and especially marketing that Berlusconi learned in his earlier careers were later applied to his politics.³⁹

But besides being a good marketer, Berlusconi probably could not have become such a successful and especially such a popular politician without the backup of his television empire. Because twenty years before, in 1974, Berlusconi had decided to found a local news station for his newly built suburb Milano II. In the first couple of years, Berlusconi saw this as a pleasant extra for the inhabitants of his project but in the 1980s, while on a political level the debate about commercial television became more and more vividly, he decided to take his television empire to the next level.⁴⁰

The national discussion about commercial television followed a period without strict regulation whatsoever. Only in 1976, the Constitutional Court had laid down some guidelines (national broadcasting was reserved for public television, only local broadcasting was left free for commercial actors) but most of this was wilfully ignored by the politicians. For the rich Berlusconi, these were perfect conditions. His newly found company Mediaset bought a great number of local stations in the whole of Italy, ensuring clear reception everywhere, and he all called them Canale 5. By broadcasting the same shows on all local channels at the same time, he cleverly – and semi-legally – outflanked the rules. By 1984, he had bought out the rest of the competition and Mediaset owned three channels, representing 43 per cent of the television market of the time.⁴¹

In October of the same year, three magistrates in Rome, Turin and Pescara ordered Berlusconi to stop broadcasting in those cities. Their argument was simple: the ruling of the Constitutional Court in 1976 said that commercial actors could only broadcast locally, and Berlusconi, in fact, was broadcasting nationally. As a consequence, all Mediaset channels in those regions went blank.⁴² For many Italians, this was a very inconvenient experience since Berlusconi’s channels were broadcasting many children programs and soap operas which needed daily viewing in order to understand the storyline. So when the channels went blank, the public outcry was huge. People were ‘robbed’ of their daily episode of Dallas and Dynasty and Berlusconi was enabled to present himself as the man representing ‘freedom’ against ‘oppression’.⁴³ In his footsteps Prime Minister Bettino Craxi, quickly issued a decree law ordering the resumption of national commercial transmissions.⁴⁴

Following this decree, Law 223 (better known as the Mammi law; named after Oscar Mammi, the telecoms minister of the time) was proposed and with the considerable help from Craxi, and two other powerful politicians Andreotti and Forlani, it finally passed in 1990. It sanctioned de facto national broadcasting by Berlusconi and it thus officially ended the monopoly of the state-owned RAI. By that time five government ministers resigned because they opposed the new legislation. They were afraid of Berlusconi’s omnipotence (he also possessed the largest publishing house of the country, several magazines and a major newspaper) but the PM Craxi, who was also godfather of Berlusconi’s daughter and best man

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³⁹ Beppe Severgnini, La pancia degli Italiani, (Milano 2010) 60
⁴⁰ Ginsborg, Silvio Berlusconi, 19,37
⁴¹ Francesca Anania, Breve storia della radio e della televisione Italiana (Roma 2009) 96-101
⁴² Ibidem, 102
⁴³ Jones, The dark heart, 125
⁴⁴ Ginsborg, Silvio Berlusconi, 37-38
at his second wedding, was the one who ratified the law. This was in his personal interest as well, because helping a popular person like Berlusconi could have some electoral benefit. In the weeks following the Mammi-law, Craxi’s accountant received 23 million Lire from a company Berlusconi owned. For this alleged bribe Berlusconi got sentenced for two years and four months in jail but on appeal years later, the new media mogul was acquitted. The crime had passed its term of limitation. Berlusconi and his monopoly were left untouched once again. 

Thanks to this law Berlusconi was now able to transmit live news broadcasts. The normal democratic relationship between a media tycoon such as Berlusconi and sympathetic political leaders is that the media mogul follows politics. He derives advantage from the actions of politicians, and repays it with benevolent of the same. Like a true patron and client, Berlusconi was given something he wanted – a television empire – and he could repay Craxi by framing the news for his benefit. Whether or not this actually happened isn’t the scope of this thesis but what is important that at this point in history nobody could know that Berlusconi would later, as a politician, become the one benefiting the most from his newly acquired media power.

1.5 Forza Italia

In 1990, the Mammi-law confirmed Berlusconi’s near monopoly of commercial television and allowed him to transmit ‘live’. In other words: it gave him the opportunity to make news broadcasts. For the befriended politicians it was of course very useful to have a friend who could use his news broadcasts to repay them with benevolent treatment. It seemed that the new formed status quo was one in which Berlusconi’s empire could prosper in peace. He became richer and richer, his television empire was safe and sound and his friends in government were where they always had been: in power. In 1993, however, Berlusconi founded his own political party Forza Italia (a famous Italian football chant meaning Go, Italy). And only several months after the foundation of this party, he was Prime Minister of Italy. Why did Berlusconi break this convenient status quo? It was because of the world of Il Cavaliere was about to collapse in the months prior to his party’s foundation.

The (centre- and right wing) political parties, who had always functioned as his friends and protectors in the construction of his business- and especially his media empire, were all being charged with political corruption. Under the daring leadership of Francesco Saverio Borelli, a group of magistrates and judges tried to extinguish corruption from Italian politics. Their main target in operation Clean Hands (Mani Pulite) were corrupt politicians from the ruling parties; the Socialists and Christian Democrats in particular. Great heads fell, and they fell hard. The most renowned one of them was Bettino Craxi, former Prime Minister and close

45 Anania, *Storia della radio e della televisione*, 109-110
46 Jones, *The dark heart*, 125
47 Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing media systems*, 278
48 Ginsborg, *Silvio Berlusconi*, 57-58
49 Ibidem
friend of Berlusconi. As charges against him grew more substantial, he fled the country, seeking refuge in Tunisia, where he eventually died.51

Besides corrupt politicians, also businessmen became targets. Directors and managers of FIAT, Olivetti, Ferruzzi and other big companies were all placed under investigation. Out of utter despair and guilt, some of them committed suicide. In Milan, the San Vittore prison became the new home for those who held power until the 1990s. Milan itself became known as Tangentopoli: the city of bribes.52

The Mani Pulite operation had many severe consequences. First and foremost the deeply rooted honour of the Italians fell a victim to what had happened. The scandal had shown that the Italians had acted too gullible towards their businessmen and especially their political leaders and henceforth the national level of trust in politicians reached its lowest point since long.53 Secondly, the parties who had ruled Italy since the war could not overcome the blows they had taken and the Christian Democratic party even ceased to exist after it was proven that former PM Giulio ‘mister Italy’ Andreotti had strong ties with the mafia. The only party which wasn’t deeply wounded by the developments was the Communist party, because they were never allowed to govern.54

For Berlusconi the scandal had several rigorous consequences as well. Craxi, his protégé in the government, had fled the country and Andreotti and Forlani, the two powerful Christian Democrats who had helped Berlusconi gain his television power, were also hurt by Mani Pulite. Questions about Berlusconi himself were thus on everybody’s lips. Furthermore Aldo Brancher, a direction member of Berlusconi media company Fininvest was arrested. He was accused of bribing a minister for the sake of Fininvest and was held in prison. The police hoped he would say what everybody thought, namely that Berlusconi had ordered the bribe. But despite several days of incarnation and tough interrogation, Brancher kept quiet.55

A left wing election victory, which in 1993 seemed inevitable, would mean a new balance of power on the television market. The left opposed Berlusconi’s omnipotence and openly spoke about taking away two of Berlusconi’s channels. Also, a newly proposed media law would make sure that Berlusconi’s company Fininvest wouldn’t be profitable anymore with the consequence that most of its bank loans would be retrieved. The only option for the downfall facing Berlusconi to prevent bankruptcy seemed to get involved into politics himself.56

The electoral campaign that followed was never before seen in Italy and was characterised by two main elements. The first one was the new and ambitious use of marketing expertise (see chapter 3) that had a confusing impact on the electorate through which Berlusconi effectively could present himself as anti-establishment.57 Secondly, the

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51 Ginsborg, Silvio Berlusconi, 60
52 Ibidem, 61
53 Stille, De inname van Rome, 153-154
54 Ibidem, 155-161
55 Ibidem, 150-151
56 Ibidem,152
57 As will be explained more thoroughly in chapter 2, Berlusconi used a lot of his earlier obtained marketing techniques in his first political campaign. And by applying the same successful marketing principles on politics, as he had used on, for instance, television commercials he was able to use the familial character of Italian television as well as the historically grown individualism of the Italians to construct his own mediated persona in a way that fitted with the wishes of the electorate.
birth of the first Italian smear campaign was a fact. Everywhere, on television and in the newspapers, suspicions were made against the left wing parties and politicians. Struck by these attacks and lacking a sufficient response these elements, combined with the utter confusion due to Mani Pulite, made that the presumed winners, the Communist Party, lost the elections and that Forza Italia provided the Prime Minister for the first time in their short history.58

The first one to openly mention the option of Berlusconi entering the political arena, by the way, was his earlier mentioned Palermo friend Marcello Dell’Utri; the Sicilian-connection. It was also him who ordered a politician to first study the possibilities of a new centre-right party and to lobby for its eventual support. The fact that specifically Dell’Utri, a friend of the earlier mentioned mobster Mangano and others of disrepute, was the relay pump of Berlusconi’s political ambitions made some Sicilian magistrates raise their eye-brows. Some of them even suggested that the Cosa Nostra pressured Berlusconi into politics after they had lost their political connection with the abolished Christian Democratic Party. Though this is not a scenario which can be proven, it is a fact that both Dell’Utri and lawyer Cesare Previti – another early supporter of Berlusconi’s political ambitions – were later convicted of having connections with the Mafia. Also, several penitent ex-mafia members have said this scenario to be the truth about Berlusconi’s first steps into politics.59 So without being able to prove it, it does however seem plausible that Berlusconi entered politics out of the Mafia’s interest, his own interest, or a combination of the two. It seems that the interest of the Italian people came third.

1.6 “Jesus Christ of politics”

On November 2011, after 17 years in politics, Berlusconi was forced to step down as Prime Minister of Italy. In the meantime he had been Prime Minister three times, had formed several coalitions with the populist right wing party Lega Nord and the post-fascist party Alleanza Nazionale and faced more than 50 confidence votes in parliament.60 On a personal level he conceived five children, divorced two wives, was accused of throwing Bunga-Bunga parties (i.e. sex orgies) and having paid sex with a minor. He survived cancer, a heart attack and a public assault with a mini-statue of the Milanese Duomo.61 He has been convicted by court several times for bribing judges, politicians and business relations but he never went to jail because of his personally imposed Immunity Law (the Schifani Law) and the new statute of limitation that his own government shortened to a period of only five years.62 According to Forbes magazine, Berlusconi was worth $6.2 billion in 2011 ($12.8 billion ten years earlier) but under his rule the Italian economy has got into deep trouble. The unemployment rate rose to more than 8 per cent; the black market is probably a fifth of Italy’s $2 trillion economy;

58 Tommaso Parlatore, Italy’s 1994 elections. Berlusconi’s strategy and style (Kent 2011) 13
59 Stille, De inname van Rome, 163-189
60 Genovesi, In 20 jaar tijd verspeeld Berlusconi alle kritiek, 2-3
61 Ibidem
62 Bas Mesters, Rechtszaken van Berlusconi, NRC Handelsblad (07-10-2009) Opinie en Debat 3-4
Italy’s debt was 120 per cent of its GDP; and borrowing rates were over 7 per cent. By letting the third largest economy of the continent fail, he played a large part in Europe’s recession.63

Of course, he has done good things too. Since one of the major problems of Italian democracy had been its ill working bureaucracy, Berlusconi was indeed a good leader. He reduced the vagueness, stood for quick decisions and was, to some extent, good for business. Also, he promised to make the judiciary more effective, and he kept his promise. Cases now need to be in front of Court within a considerable amount of time. The irony of it all is that the one who benefited the most from this legislative was Berlusconi himself. He has been acquitted several times because of the new 5-year statute of limitation. And with these new laws, Italy consequently became a hotbed for white-collar corruption.64

Berlusconi himself, however, still believed he had done a good job. On 4 November 2011, he told a news conference at the end of a G20 summit: “The life in Italy is the life of a wealthy country: consumptions haven’t diminished, it's hard to find seats on planes and our restaurants are full of people.”65 Also, why wouldn’t people still invest in Italy? Berlusconi: “Italy is now a great country to invest in... today we have fewer communists and those who are still there deny having been one. Another reason to invest in Italy is that we have beautiful secretaries... superb girls.”66 On his personal accomplishments with women, he said in April 2011: “When asked if they would like to have sex with me, 30% of women said, ‘Yes’, while the other 70% replied, ‘What, again?’”67 And on his entire political career he was quite clear as well: “In my opinion, and not only mine, I am the best Prime Minister we can find today (…) I am the Jesus Christ of politics. I am a patient victim, I put up with everyone, I sacrifice myself for everyone.” In an earlier interview: " [I am] the best political leader in Europe and in the world (...) there is no-one on the world stage who can compete with me."68

And to some extent, a large part of the Italian electorate agreed because they weren’t the ones who send him away.69 The oppositional demonstrations against Berlusconi that were already going on for years hadn’t accomplished anything. Despite all the scandals, Berlusconi was re-elected three times. He was still living his American Dream; his Italian story. In the end, it was the European Union and the foreign press that ‘crucified’ the ‘Jesus Christ of politics’; not the Italians.

64 Roberto Saviano, ‘Silvio Berlusconi has always acted in his own – not Italy’s – interests’, The Guardian (11-11-2011) 7-8
65 BBC.co.uk, ‘BBC News – In quotes: Italy’s Silvio Berlusconi in his own words’, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-15642201 (08-11-2011)
66 Ibidem
67 Ibidem
68 Ibidem
69 See footnote 7
Chapter 2: Italy and the leader it deserves

2.1 A non-existing history

It is unlikely that Berlusconi would be the PM of any other country than Italy. He belongs to the Italian peninsula and that has reasons with roots deep in history. In this chapter I try to explain that the lack of Social Capital, the existing clientelism and the influence of amoral familiarism all play important roles in answering questions about Berlusconi’s image in the Italian press, because these characteristics of the Italian society shaped the media landscape as well as Berlusconi’s way of doing politics. His use of clientelist traditions, for instance, seems to derive from Italy’s history. But, then again, writing a history about Italy is difficult, because, in fact, the Italian history doesn’t really exist. Of course, one could write histories about Lombardy and Lazio or about Sicily and Trieste but a history about the entire, united country is extremely difficult to write.\(^70\)

Right after the unification in 1861, when Giuseppe Garibaldi marched to Rome with his thousand men army and Camillo Benso di Cavour became the first Prime Minister of Italy, riots broke out in the south of the new country. Some historians even speak of a civil war. The southern regions, who never asked for unification with the north, were now saddled with a new national debt of money spent in the north; most of the old monasteries were closed due to new laws; children had to go to school instead of helping their parents in the field; and taxes increased.\(^71\) But the northern parts of the country weren’t pleased with their southern countrymen either. In a correspondence between Cavour and Luigi Farini (who would later become Italy’s fourth Prime Minister), the latter says that the south bears a stark resemblance with Africa. “Compared to these peasants”, he wrote “the Bedouin are the *fiori di virtù civile*, the very flowers of civilization.” Farini continues by stating that the south was ignorant, lazy, superstitious, cowardly and above all: immoral.\(^72\)

This distinction between the north and the south has had a long history already. Around 1300 Italy was roughly divided in four regions: the south, the centre and two different northern parts. The south was part of the kingdom of Sicily, a feudal monarchy founded by the Normans and with roots in Muslim and Roman rulership; the centre was part of the Papal States; a mixture of feudalism, tyranny, and republicanism; and the north was divided in one area which gave birth to the 14\(^{th}\) century republicanism, and another one which lay further north and had, by this time, fallen prey to signoral rule.\(^73\)


\(^{71}\) Jaap van Osta, *Een geschiedenis van het moderne Italië* (Amsterdam 2008) 101-103

\(^{72}\) Duggan, *La forza del destino*, 257

The different histories of these four different regions have had a tremendous effect on today’s Italy. Throughout the entire history these four areas have had different rulers and different political traditions. For example: the northern Italian republican city-states were constantly under pressure from enemy clans who attacked them with bloody strife, so most of them (the ex-communal republics in figure 2.1) relied on strong individual despots or signori who could afford mercenary armies. The communal republics (figure 3.1), however, were less under siege and could protect themselves by engaging in strong societies and tight alliances within the community itself. This required, of course, a high level of social capital and mutual trust.

The southern states, on the other hand, have known a totally different development. From 1504 until the unification in 1861 all of Italy south of the Papal States was ruled by the Habsburgs and later the Bourbons who systematically promoted mutual distrust and conflict amongst their citizens. By doing so, they (efficiently) destroyed horizontal ties of solidarity in order to maintain the dominance of vertical ties of dependence and exploitation; the so called patron-client relationships. This system of clientelism is basically a mandatory and mutual agreement between an individual (the patron) with authority, social status, wealth or some other desired good, and another person (the client) who benefits from these features. The client pays the patron with work and loyalty, and in return, the patron offers him economical and physical protection. This system dates from the early days of the Roman Empire, where clientes and patronii maintained similar ties.

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74 Putnam, Making democracy work, 134
76 Fulvio Cammarano, Parole chiave della storia contemporanea (Roma 2004) 157
77 Putnam, Making democracy work, 136
78 S.N. Eisenstadt en L. Roniger (1984), Patrons, clients and friends; Interpersonal relations and the structure of trust in society (Cambridge 1984) 314-316
In the Papal States, a similar development took place, though it was less intense as in the south. The Catholic Church was also built on vertical and feudal ties but is some cities within these regions there was also place for republicanism.\textsuperscript{79}

The consequences of these histories were best captured by political scientist Edward Banfield who analysed the backward character of southern parts of Italy using the term ‘amoral familiarism’.\textsuperscript{80}

\section*{2.2 Amoral familiarism and Social Capital}

Amoral familiarism can be translated into a lack of social capital, where social capital stands for the ability of people to work together in a group. In order to do this, there has to be a certain level of mutual trust. Because if group members don’t trust each other, it is unlikely the group will function as a whole. But in Banfield’s \textit{Montegrano} (a fictional community he uses to describe the south) social capital does exists within the family, but it doesn’t exist on a communal level.\textsuperscript{81} German scholar Niklas Luhmann made a distinction between the terms ‘trust’ and ‘confidence’ which is helpful in this perspective. He says that confidence mainly focuses on maintaining the \textit{status quo} (I have confidence in the fact the roof won’t fall down), while having trust actually requires taking a risk (I will lend you half of my fortune because I trust that you will return my money).\textsuperscript{82} So, to use Luhmann’s distinction between trust and confidence: there is a certain level of (familiar) confidence in \textit{Montegrano}, but there is no (communal) trust.

Banfield says that an amoral familiarist has an absolute lack of trust in his community. This means that there are several families fighting a battle of all against all. None of these families, for instance, would ever cooperate with another family, because they don’t trust each other. If family X lends a plough to a neighbouring family Y, family Y will produce more food. This means that family Y obtains a stronger position on the same local market family X is active on. Trust in the fact that this friendly action repays itself – trust in the principle of postponed reciprocity – doesn’t exist because the historical rulers kept destroying these horizontal ties amongst their citizens to thwart any organised opposition. Neighbouring family Y might as well lend their horse to family X when they need it, but one can’t be sure of this reciprocal behaviour; the stakes are high and the risk of not earning enough money to eat is a risk too high to take. And besides the familiar confidence people have in their own family (in these rural regions family members were part of each other’s \textit{status quo} – the blood ties of families were extremely important and, using the above mentioned example, stronger than a roof that wouldn’t fall down, so to say) reciprocity only exists in a direct form. Family Y will only lend their plough to family X, if family X lends them their horse right away.

Banfield states that a society in which this amoral familiarism rules, is doomed to be less successful than one in which there is more social capital.\textsuperscript{83} And looking at figure 2.2, this seems to be the truth.

\textsuperscript{79} Cammarano, \textit{Storia contemporanea}, 107
\textsuperscript{80} Edward Banfield, \textit{The moral basis of a backward society} (New York 1958)
\textsuperscript{81} Francis Fukuyama, ‘Introduction’, \textit{Trust: the social virtues and the creation of prosperity} (New York 1995) 8
\textsuperscript{82} Anthony Giddens, \textit{The consequences of Modernity} (Cambridge 1992) 31
\textsuperscript{83} Banfield, \textit{The moral basis of a backward society}, 83-87
In the northern parts of Italy a high level of mutual trust and social capital arose in order to keep out the shared enemy. If the community members didn’t work together, the enemy would destroy them. In the south, however, the enemy already ruled them and by actively destroying horizontal ties of solidarity a lack of social capital with a high level of amoral familiarism originated.

These theories are backed up by the work of Norbert Elias, a German sociologist, who in his famous *The Civilizing Process* states that the fear of hostile involvement indeed contributed to the level of civilization in a specific area. This fear, Elias says, forced people (kings and knights but also merchants and citizens) to work together. Consequently large interlocked networks of interdependence arose and evolved.

This basic tissue resulting from many single plans and actions of people can give rise to changes and patterns that no individual person has planned or created. From this interdependence of people arises an order sui generis, an order more compelling and stronger than the will and the reason of the individual people composing it. It is this order of interweaving human impulses and strivings, this social order, which determines the course of historical change; it underlies the civilizing process.

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84 Putnam, *Making democracy work*, 97  
86 Ibidem, 240
2.3 Political consequences

Robert Putnam, a professor at Harvard University, shows in his book *Making Democracy Work* that Elias and Banfield seemed to have been right; there is indeed a strong correlation between the four historical regions mentioned above, and the level of civilisation in today’s Italy. The most civic areas (he basis them on various aspects like membership of sporting clubs, percentage of people voting, government efficiency, newspaper circulation, etcetera) can be seen in figure 2.2 (which comes from his book) and are the ones with the historical republic communal tradition, while the least civic areas are the ones who have had a long history of clientelism and suppression. The most civic areas, according to figure 2.2, are also the areas which are currently the most efficient, the least corrupt, the richest and they have the most trust in politicians. So, a high level of civilisation in today’s Italy seems to derive from a community in which there existed a high level of mutual trust, based on horizontal ties, while the less civic areas originate from societies where vertical power structures like patron-client relationships used to rule.\(^87\)

The existing amoral familiarism and the lack of social capital as described above has had far stretching consequences on a political level. A candidate who runs for office will, according to the electorate, only do this from an amoral familiarist point of view. In other words: he does everything for personal benefit. He will try to enrich himself at the expense of others. This, of course, leads to an image of corrupt politicians and governments who suffer from a high amount of distrust. It has to be said though, that from a clientelist point of view, being corrupt isn’t a bad thing for a politician. If the patron, who is also politician, enriches himself and becomes more powerful as a consequence, the clientele will benefit from this. Thus, being a corrupt politician can be seen as potentially resulting in favorable patronage (i.e. a good patron). Running politicians, who themselves were born with the same ideas, shall likely answer to these stereotypes and become corrupt as a consequence. That the democracy still functions, seems unlikely – why would people still vote? But it is also explainable from an amoral familiarist point of view. According to Banfield, politics often plays a minimal role in a very local, poor and ill-educated society. If a local patron tells its clientele to vote for a certain politician in return of something material, money for instance, this option is more appealing than voting against a corrupted system on principled grounds. This patron, on his turn, offers money because he also receives benevolent action from the one he’s helping.\(^88\) And according to Figure 2.3, the strength of the civil society indeed has its consequences for voting patterns. The areas without much social capital were mainly pro-Berlusconi in the 2001 elections.

\(^87\) Putnam, *Making democracy work*, 95-98  
\(^88\) Banfield, *The moral basis of a backwards society*, 100
Figure 2.3: Voting outcome in the 2001 Italian general elections

It would be, of course, absolutely unjust and rather stupid to say that that all Berlusconi voters are backwards, or that Berlusconi bought his votes in these areas. But it is a fact that most of his votes come from places where civil society isn’t fully developed and where amoral familiarism is still strong. His voters live in the regions that are most defined by a history of clientelism.

Italian journalist Beppe Severgnini tries to explain the relation between the strength of the civil society, and especially the influence of clientelism on the one side and Berlusconi’s success on the other side in his book *La Pancia Degli Italiani* (translated as *Mamma Mia* but meaning the gut feeling of the Italians). In it he analyses Silvio Berlusconi’s success using ten factors. One of them is the *Medicifactor*, named after the clientelist family who ruled the city of Florence in the late middle ages. When writing about the patron Cosimo de’ Medici, Severgnini says that he was as omnipresent as his impressive statue on the central square of Florence.

Again, the parallel is surprising. In his many years of political activity, Mr. Berlusconi has also shown he is capable of loyalty, amnesia, forgiveness, spite, exaltation, and rejection. He has done nothing to pave the way for an orderly passage of power. The party is a mere pedestal for the signore. Its task is to support his monument.

Further in the chapter Severgnini writes:

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89 Shin, *Mapping Italian politics*, 41
90 Severgnini, *La pancia degli Italiani*, 108
In Italy, the powerful have no need to justify their actions. The current electoral law (…) decrees protected lists and complete freedom to add or remove candidates. The beneficiaries are Mr. Berlusconi and the heads of the other parties. This is one of the reasons why the Italian Parliament shelters twenty or so convicted criminals, as well as about eighty individuals under investigation, on trial, or exonerated by a statute of limitations.91

It seems that Berlusconi, like a typical patron, took care of his personal clientele. You could even say that he presented himself as if though the entire country was his clientele.

The French sociologist Emile Durkheim states that leadership is not so much the personal loyalty of a group directed towards its leader, but more of an emotional bonding that occurs within the group itself.92 Durkheim uses the example of the church to explain how the collective tension (or effervescence as Durkheim calls it) within a group can cause symbols and persons to become extraordinary representatives of that group; they become a totem. Durkheim thus states that a beloved and supported leader (like Berlusconi) isn’t as much seen an individual but is seen by some as the incarnation en personification of the group. A country gets the leader it deserves, so to say.93 And Berlusconi seems to have willfully accepted and strengthened this role as totem of the group by continually trying to align his personal fortune and faith to that of Italy. In 2009, for example, after the foreign press made some accusations against the corrupt character of Berlusconi, he said: “Discredit is thrown not just on the prime minister; it also sullies our products, our businesses; everything made in Italy.”94 He indeed tended to align his own fortune to that of Italy. So if people abroad were aghast by Berlusconi’s behavior, and personally attacked him, the signore raised a shield: the Italian nation. Just like the de’ Medici family was Florence; Berlusconi tried to be Italy. The voters in the areas that have a history of clientelism apparently appreciated this type of behavior, because they repaid Berlusconi with their votes.

In the introduction I wrote that I would formulate several premises throughout this thesis and that those premises would be tested using a qualitative content analysis. One of those premises is that Italy and Berlusconi are the hand and the glove; that they belong with each other. Being a patron of the entire country is an image that Berlusconi is keen on presenting. So I presume that in the situation of a crisis (a sex scandal or a corruption case) Berlusconi tries to align Italy’s fortune and faith to that of his own. He takes the position that it is unpatriotic to accuse him of any wrongdoing, since accusing him is the same as accusing the whole of Italy. It was my expectation that a pro-Berlusconi newspaper would indeed reserve more space for this argument than an anti-Berlusconi paper. The latter will presumably print more arguments that detach the two. And looking at the two cases I have analysed, this seems to be the truth. In chapter 5, where I present all my findings, I will elaborate further on the matter but my research shows

91 Ibidem, 109
92 Dick Pels, Het Volk bestaat niet. Leiderschap en populisme in de mediademocratie (Amsterdam 2011) 138
93 Ibidem, 139-141
94 Severgnini, La pancia degli Italiani, 117
that, first of all, Berlusconi indeed has the tendency to align his own fortune to that of the Italian peninsula, and that, secondly, *Il Giornale* indeed gives him all the space necessary to do so. In 25 per cent of the examined articles, Berlusconi was able to say that allegations against him were hurting Italy while no disagreeing articles were written down. In the other 75 per cent of the articles, both sides of the spectrum were written down but, as is explained more thoroughly in chapter 5, also these articles were very politically coloured. In none of the examined articles, not even a political column or a letter from a reader, only the other side of the argument the subject. The following quote is an example from an article about Ruby-gate that belonged to the first 25 per cent:

> The whole world has made fun of the now universal term bunga-bunga, everywhere in the world people now think about what happens in the bed of Il Cavaliere. Everybody has followed him step by step, during dinner, after dinner, in his bedroom. (...) ‘These allegations hurt the credibility of the entire system, also the credibility of Italian politics.’

As can be read, in this article Berlusconi not only gets all the room he needs to make his point, the *Il Giornale* journalist also backs his argument throughout the entire piece by interpreting Berlusconi’s quote in such a way that is positive for Berlusconi. In *La Repubblica*, however, a totally different image comes to be.

> Bersani: “They are humiliating Italy” (...) “We're here against the laws *ad personam* that the prime minister continues to use in order to save himself. We are here to demand justice. We are here because the law is equal for everyone.”(...) “He will never go away, Berlusconi will never surrender. But this is not Libya, this is not Egypt. I'm tired.” (...) “Berlusconi puts us in a position of pure humiliation and utter shame before the entire world. It is a shame!”

Here the oppositional leader Pier Luigi Bersani gets all the room he needs, without any counter argument presented by the journalist, to say the total opposite. Not the allegations against Berlusconi are hurting Italy internationally, but Berlusconi is responsible for the shame ‘before the entire world’.

### 2.4 A consequence of history: individualism

The reason why Berlusconi could be successful in specifically Italy is partly based on the above described building upon clientelist traditions. That wasn’t however the only reason. In a country defined by a lack of social capital and a high level of amoral familiarism, atomism or individualism is normally stronger. This has two effects that have something to do with the rise of Berlusconi. First of all, a high level of individualism or atomism creates a fertile ground for the rise of populist politicians. Secondly, a high level of individualism means that

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95 See appendix I Table I.2 number 18 for the original Italian quote
96 See appendix V Table V.2 number 18 for the original Italian quote
97 Putnam, *Making democracy work*, 134
(political) advertisement works well in a country.\textsuperscript{98} In this paragraph I will shortly discuss both terms in relation to Berlusconi.

2.4.1 Populism: politicizing a-political aspects

According to Dutch sociologist Dick Pels, modern populism forms a complex reaction to historical developments that made societies more international, more meritocratic, more vulnerable to media influences, and consequently more individualistic.\textsuperscript{99} In a nutshell: due to the succumbing of traditional standards (Pels talks about the Dutch process of ontzuing but in Italy the \textit{Mani Pulite} scandal is probably the historical equivalent) a certain sense of belonging disappears between citizens. They no longer belong to a group per se, but become individuals first and foremost (in large parts of Italy this individualism was already strong because of the lack of social capital, the existing amoral familiarism and the historically shaped and vertically based clientelist ties).\textsuperscript{100} Populist politicians try to recreate this sense of belonging by constructing new group identities that are based on this new form of individualism. Therefore, the most important notion expressed by these politicians is often that of individual freedom: the freedom (or even the right) to do and have whatever you want (a famous Dutch populist politician Pim Fortuyn, for instance, always used the exemplary catchphrase “At your service”, like he was trying to say: “I’m here to cater all your needs”).\textsuperscript{101}

Besides stressing the notion of individual freedom, populist leaders often articulate, but mostly activate, the gut feeling of discord and discontent that the people within these new groups feel.\textsuperscript{102} They state that they (like true representatives) speak “in name of the people”, but in reality they speak “instead of the people”. French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu calls this phenomenon the oracle effect, ‘thanks to which the spokesperson gives voice to the group in whose name he speaks.”\textsuperscript{103}

Berlusconi was very good in using these populist features. In chapter 1.4 is explained that already in the beginning of his career, \textit{Il Cavaliere} was able to represent himself as the man protecting ‘freedom’ against ‘oppression’ when several cities made him stop broadcasting soap-opera’s. And Berlusconi seems to have very well understood the populist sentiments concerning the notion of freedom throughout his entire career. For example: the eventual name of his political party wasn’t coincidentally \textit{Popolo della Libertà} (People of Freedom). And besides the ability to verbalize and activate this modern individualism, he also knew how to activate the gut-feelings of the electorate (or how to activate Durkheim’s effervescence of the collective); he knew, in other words, how to use the oracle effect. One of his techniques was the politicizing of a-political aspects of society.\textsuperscript{104}

The earlier mentioned succumbing of traditional standards, which is an important premise for the emergence of populism, probably initiated in Italy when the fall of the Soviet-Union made the second largest party of the country, the Communist Party, openly struggle

\textsuperscript{98} Stille, \textit{De inname van Rome}, 178
\textsuperscript{99} Pels, \textit{Het volk bestaat niet}, 7
\textsuperscript{100} Ibidem, 25
\textsuperscript{101} Ibidem, 50
\textsuperscript{102} Ibidem, 75
\textsuperscript{103} Pierre Bourdieu, \textit{Language and symbolic power} (Cambridge 1991) 211
\textsuperscript{104} Pels, \textit{Het volk bestaat niet}, 12
with their ideals but even more so when the corruption scandal *Mani Pulite* showed that the ruling parties had been fraudulent for years and years. Because of this, the group identities based on Christian Democratic and Communist values were scattered and the way was paved for Berlusconi to ‘construct’ new identities. Berlusconi, like a true populist, found new ways to unite the people by politicizing apolitical aspects of society (or at least aspects that are traditionally viewed as apolitical); aspects that weren’t stained by controversy in contemporary history and that were highlighted in all the media.

A good example of Berlusconi’s tendency of politicizing apolitical matters, are his football endeavours. In 1982 Italy had won its first World Cup since 1938 and football fever was at its height. As Ginsborg writes in his biography of Berlusconi: “The opportunity to link personal and municipal sporting triumph to national television audiences and both to consumer advertising was too great for Berlusconi to turn down.”

So in 1986 Berlusconi bought the then ailing A.C. Milan and by signing highly talented players as Van Basten, Gullit, Baresi and Rijkaard he made Milan one of the most successful teams in football history. And as the clubs president he was perceptible at every major win.

His status as a football mogul gave Berlusconi working class appeal and made him popular amongst many younger voters. It was no coincidence that the name of Berlusconi’s first political party, *Forza Italia*, was a popular chant amongst Italian football fans.

### 2.4.2 Political marketing: the hoover factor

Besides the emergence of populism, another consequence of a high level of individualism in modern Italy is the possibility of market-based (political) advertisement to prosper. In Chapter 1.4 it was noted that one of the reasons of Berlusconi’s rise to power was his ability to sense and notice the voids in the Italian market, fill them with his products, and sell them. It is because of this that another factor used by the above mentioned Severgnini is called the *hoover factor*, named after the product Berlusconi sold in order to finance university: the Hoover vacuum cleaner. In short: all the talent and flair for commercial seduction that Berlusconi learned in his earlier careers in construction, television, advertising and selling vacuum cleaners were later applied to his politics.

Using Joseph Schumpeter’s half a century old theory about political marketing, political scientist John Street says in his article about celebrity politicians that there indeed exists a strong analogy between the world of politics and the world of commerce. While the businessman deals in oil, the politician deals in votes. Both are governed by the operation of

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105 Ginsborg, *Silvio Berlusconi*, 53
106 Another example of this politicizing of football is in 2010 when, after a period in which arch enemy Inter Milan had won several titles, Berlusconi bought the best striker in the world: Zlatan Ibrahimovic. Research had shown that if the president wouldn’t do anything to help his club, he risked loosing 20-25 percent of Milan supporters who voted Berlusconi’s PDL (half a million votes). At first, Ibrahimovic didn’t score enough goals but according to Berlusconi, Milan’s biggest problem was that their games were mainly led by left-wing referees. The next season, Milan won the *scudetto* and Ibrahimovic was top scorer of the club.
107 Ginsborg, *Silvio Berlusconi*, 55
108 Stille, *De inname van Rome*, 178
109 Ginsborg, *Silvio Berlusconi*, 60
the market and success in business and success in politics are both a matter of producing a product that customers want. Competition ensures that the best wins and the marketing techniques used to persuade voters and customers are becoming more and more similar. This widespread use of marketing techniques has raised several concerns about the state of the democracy in general. In summary: it raises complaints about the trivialisation of politics, increases political cynicism (politics is just appearance) and hinders the accountability of politicians.111

Of course, this theory isn’t flawless and there has been a lot of critique since it was first published, but the above mentioned complaints have been made about Berlusconi’s Italy as well. And looking at how Severgnini explains his hoover factor, it seems that certain aspects are applicable to the peninsula under Berlusconi’s rule. When he entered politics, for instance, twenty-six of the most loyal employees of his advertising company Publitalia were placed in charge of the electoral campaign. They applied the same successful marketing principles on politics, as they had used on television commercials. For example: in Berlusconi’s television shows, housewives were often (successfully) manipulated by the hosts who in passing ‘casually’ talked with awe about products of advertisers. In the middle of a program the host suddenly said he was feeling rather good today because he drank a specific type of coffee. A coffee that, by the way, was extremely tasteful and delicate. The same now happened with political ‘products’ in talk shows. Famous television personalities (often non-political figures) kept mentioning Berlusconi out of the blue, and always with awe. As though it was coffee being marketed, the main message here was: Berlusconi is extremely successful and anti-establishment.112

A small example of these marketing techniques used to mediate Berlusconi’s anti-establishment character is about his personal wealth. Because after the corruption scandal Mani Pulite, Berlusconi – strange as it sounds because he was mentioned several times as being involved – benefited strongly from the new grown political distrust. This self-made-man was so rich, the casually dropped argument in many television shows went, that he could never be bribed. There would be no need for rich politicians to be corrupt as they already had sufficient money.113

Street places an important footnote about the concept of political marketing, however. He says that seeing political communication just as a branch of commercial marketing is a misconception. The analogy should at least be expanded with a comparison with another business: show business.114

2.5 Mediating the persona; the celebrity politician

So besides being a branch of commercial marketing, political communication is also very much comparable to show business. According to Street, it is therefore necessary nowadays that in order to fully understand modern politics, politicians should also be seen as ‘artists’ or ‘performers’ (Street talks about ‘symbol creators’).

111 Ibidem, 85-86
112 Stille, De inname van Rome, 178
113 Jones, The dark heart, 197
114 Street, The Celebrity Politician, 91-92
The suggestion is that who ‘we’ are, is created via, among other things, the rhetoric of those who seek political power. This is not marketing as selling to an established market or ‘demographic’; this is about creating an identity (that may subsequently be exploited by marketing strategies) Creating such an identity depends on the use of the symbols and devices of poetry, song, processions and the like.\textsuperscript{115} Creating such an identity thus depends on the use of (popular) culture; just like an artist does.

Street continues by paraphrasing historian Frank Ankersmit who says that politics is about aesthetics, rather than ethics. This means that the ‘irrationality’ of the emotions plays an important role in a voter’s choice. Therefore, a leader must somehow embody these irrational sentiments of the electorate just as a celebrity must somehow embody the sentiments of the audience. And the politicians can of course learn a lot from the techniques used by these celebrities.\textsuperscript{116} For example, the way a politician is dressed for a certain occasion represents his political position to some extent. A green tie can create the conception that the politician cares about sustainability while no tie at all might unconsciously point to the fact that the politician hasn’t lost contact with the blue-collar ‘working man’. Street says that within democratic politics, political communication is performed through different dress codes and lifestyle choices as much as by political ideology or policy decisions.\textsuperscript{117} He calls politicians who answer to this type of behaviour ‘celebrity politicians’.

Bernard Manin, a French political scientist, states in his book The principles of representative government that there is a historical transition happening from parliamentarianism and the party democracy to a so-called ‘Audience’ democracy.\textsuperscript{118} In this type of democracy personal aspects of a politician, such as behaviour and trustworthiness, have become important pillars for the electorate to base their votes upon.\textsuperscript{119} The electorate bases the level of this trustworthiness on media appearances. ‘How does (s)he act?’ But also: ‘what does (s)he wear?’ and ‘how does (s)he look?’. Consequently, the private life of a politician, but also the way he or she walks and talks, has become more and more important. It tells if somebody can be trusted. Or as Manin puts it: ‘What we are witnessing today is not a departure from the principles of representative government, but a change in the type of elites

\textsuperscript{115} Ibidem, 92-93
\textsuperscript{116} Ibidem, 91
\textsuperscript{117} Ibidem, 94-95
\textsuperscript{118} Bernard Manin, The principles of Representative Government (1997 Cambridge)
\textsuperscript{119} The reason for the above mentioned transition is, according to Manin, the fact that most of the traditional parties have ideologically moved to the center of the political spectrum. The consequence is that the debates between parties have become less ideologically-based and that they focus more on specific political details. This means that these debates have become technical and complex and thus more difficult to understand for a large amount of the electorate; it requires more and more knowledge to fully grasp the political content discussed. Therefore, the electorate focusses on different aspects upon which they can base their vote. Aspects such as trustworthiness, They trust a politician to make good choices for them. And even though Manin didn’t base his research on Italy, I think his theory is still applicable to the peninsula. Of course, there still exists a big division between the right and the left but it is also true that the differences between the two main parties have become less ideological, and more practical – i.e. also in Italy, the political content in debates has become more difficult for the electorate to fully understand.
that are selected. And these new elites bare a stark resemblance with what we traditionally call celebrities.

Berlusconi seems to have been a perfect example of this new type of elite – a celebrity politician. For him, the use of these celebrity techniques weren’t uncommon. The poll mentioned in chapter 1.4 (Berlusconi better known than Jesus and Schwarzenegger amongst schoolchildren) made it clear that there had been a revision of traditional identities and values accorded to Berlusconi. Values that are more in line with what we traditionally associate with celebrities of the sport- and entertainment industry instead of traditional religious and political examples. So besides being an excellent marketer, Berlusconi also tried to bridge the widening gap between the representatives and the represented by being a celebrity politician. He seems to fit perfectly in the new, media based, ‘Audience’ democracy.

According to communication professor John Corner, being a celebrity politician requires a lot of attention to ones mediated persona. He says that how a politician is being represented in the media, is part of his or hers political performance nowadays. This involves new conventions of political marketing and campaigning, and can be seen as a type of personal ‘branding’ of a politician. According to Corner, this ‘branding’ of the political personhood can be done in three broad modes. Namely: iconically, vocally and kinetically.

Berlusconi seems a master in all three of these modes. Iconically, for instance, he always makes sure he is well presented in pictures and on videos. He is almost never caught off-guard and seems fully aware of his visibility in public. Even when he was assaulted in front of the Duomo in Milan at the end of 2009, he was apparently aware of the possibility of positive publicity because he immediately and theatrically showed his bleeding face to all the cameras. His bleeding face became an iconic image. And because his suntanned body is constantly well-dressed, his expression is characterized by his (very often) face-lifted smile and because instead of becoming bald, he seems to have more and blacker hair every year, he attempts to extract the maximum benefit from being a never changing symbol. While actual research on Berlusconi’s physical characteristics still has to be done, one can speculate about its outcome. Earlier works from for instance communication professor Joshua Meyrowitz as well as from historian Laurence Rees show that physical aspects of presidential candidates do have an effect on how esteemed they are valued; the ‘look of the leader’ does have an effect on the electorate.

120 Manin, The principles of Representative Government, 220
121 Stille, Silvio’s shadow, 33
123 Ibidem, 69
A second element John Corner uses, is the vocal element. This means that on a political level how one says something becomes maybe as important as what one says. Without the backup from much scientific research one can however say that also this feature of Berlusconi seems very much cultivated. In his own autobiography, for instance, the anecdotes about his eloquence and charm are ubiquitous. Berlusconi seems proud of his theatrical past as a singer and entertainer and these anecdotes show that from very early on he understood the possibilities of his abilities as a performer; abilities that – especially in an ‘Audience’ democracy – are almost a sine qua non for winning elections.

Berlusconi is also kinetically very strong. The example Corner gives to clarify this factor is that of the ‘political self’ in action and interaction (for example, the ‘high politics’ of the international conference and the ‘low politics’ of the visit to the factory) which on television requires an almost choreographic attention. This difference between the ‘high’- and the ‘low’ politics is something that Berlusconi fully seems to understand. He is extremely well-equipped to adapt time and again to his changing environment. When he speaks to a victim of a natural disaster, one can imagine, his lowered voice makes him vocally sound considerate. On a kinetic level, his outstretched arms give the impression that he is supportive in every sense and by acting the way he does (in front of the camera’s) he makes sure the iconic image of him being a father figure for his people is created. On the other hand, however, he can (iconically) come across as a true world leader when he puts his both hands (kinetically) on the shoulders of Barack Obama and Angela Merkel during a G8 summit and

Figure 2.4: Berlusconi showing his bleeding face to the gathered press right after the attack in Milan; and a doll of Berlusconi with a bleeding face, for sale in Naples in the days immediately following the attack.  

126 Pictures from AFP and AP  
127 Corner, Mediated Persona and Political culture, 69  
128 Ibidem
when, in his speech, he speaks fast and eloquent he (vocally) presents himself as the problem solving politician Italy and Europe need him to be.

One of factors of the earlier mentioned journalist Beppe Severgnini has a lot to do with this ability to adapt to his changing environment and is called the Zelig factor (named after the chameleon-like protagonist in the Woody Allen movie Zelig). In the media, Berlusconi’s mediated persona has a talent to transform into his conversation partner. According to Severgnini, he talks like a football fan in the stadium. He makes sexist jokes amongst construction builders. He is pro-European in Brussels but Euro-sceptical in London. In the presence of women he is a good father and if necessary he is a wise man amongst elderly. In Naples he is a Napolitano and when in Milan he is, of course, Milanese. He tries to come across as trustworthy by being ‘one of our own’ or ‘part of the family’ and at the same time as good leader by being the country’s patron and pater familias. And this seemingly populist feature of Berlusconi works well in Italy. In a country were horizontal ties of solidarity haven’t developed profoundly (due to clientelism) and political distrust is high, the construction of a shared identity with the leader based on personal interests and ideas is effective. Whether you’re left- or right-wing, every Italian man loves women (or food, or football, or wine, etcetera).

2.6 The use of the private sphere

A further conceptualization about the way these ‘new elites’, or celebrity politicians, try to mediate their personae is made by the earlier mentioned John Corner, who states that there are three different spheres in which politicians move nowadays: the sphere of political institutions and processes, the sphere of public and popular and the private sphere. In the first sphere – the one of political institutions and processes – politicians try to establish their identity as politicians and they enjoy career development by taking on various posts and duties involving policy. The performance of politicians in this sphere is rather technical and this sphere is therefore not usually subject to direct media projection. The second sphere is that of the public and the popular, which is the fully mediated complex of settings in which politicians are seen as ‘public figures’. It is the sphere of a demonstrable representativeness and in this sphere they develop reputations, draw levels of support and are judged as good or bad. As Corner says:

It is in this sphere that the identity of the politician as a person of qualities is most emphatically and strategically put forward, with inflections towards what are perceived as the contours of popular sentiment or sectional value (for example, the youthful, the ordinary, the thoughtful, the cultured, the funny [e.g. the Zelig factor, JVDP]). These contours will frequently, of course, have strong national features as well as ones with a more international character.

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129 Severgnini, La pancia degli Italiani, 78
130 Ibidem, 79
131 Ibidem, 73
The third sphere is that of the private. The private realm and the personal background of a political figure will, of course, feature in the formation of their identity and their career but it also – now, under the influence of celebrity politicians, more than ever – is being used as a resource in the manufacture of political identity and in its repair following misadventure. Such use, as Corner says, attempts to engage ‘human’ rather than ‘political’ values. When such a misadventure occurs, politicians have the possibility to ‘go personal’. The use of the private sphere in political situations is thus a major political risk, but also an enormous political opportunity.

Berlusconi very well understood the possibilities of this private sphere looking, for instance, at the use of his auto-biography *Una Storia Italiana* in the 2001 elections. A way of going more ‘personal’ is hardly thinkable. Berlusconi used this commercial technique for his political endeavours. Besides that it is a typical show business way of being mediated. Another example of matters from Berlusconi’s private realm being mediated can be found in the reports about Ruby-gate. As I have already made clear, I have used this scandal (and also the Mills-case) to elaborate on my second premise (B in figure 1.1) which is that Berlusconi embodies the shift of commercial techniques from the market towards politics. I thought that, based on marketing and show business principles, Berlusconi would attempt to ‘go personal’ to overcome these kind of (media) scandals. On a more practical level this means that in pro-Berlusconi papers, the discourse will presumably be more about the private sphere of Berlusconi whilst in non-Berlusconi papers the discourse takes place outside this sphere. The latter probably reserve more space than pro-Berlusconi papers for people saying, for instance, that Berlusconi becomes blackmailable due to his scandals, or that he abuses his power.

In the fifth chapter of this thesis I’ve largely verified these presumptions with my content analysis. As expected, the discourse in *Il Giornale* more frequently is about Berlusconi’s private life as compared to the presumed neutral paper *Corriere della Sera*, which purposely avoids discourse about Berlusconi’s private life. In the following quote, for instance, the paper explicitly explains why, in some articles (21 per cent), it does not write about Berlusconi’s private life.

The allegations are serious (but the presumption of innocence is the cornerstone of our legal culture) and not only affect the private life of a person, but serve to establish credibility, consistency, honesty, common sense and responsibility to a leader.

Besides the fact that ‘going personal’ forms an important part of the Prime Ministers defence in especially the Mills case (which makes it newsworthy already) this article explains that since Berlusconi is an important public figure, accusations in the Ruby-gate scandal are indeed private, but also important to print since Berlusconi is seen as an international symbol for Italy. If he is perceived as dishonest and inconsistent, that has severe effects on Italy’s credibility in the rest of the world.

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132 Ibidem, 75-76
133 Ibidem, 77
134 See appendix III Table III.2 number 11 for the original Italian quote
The pro-Berlusconi paper *Il Giornale*, on the other hand, shows no difficulties letting Berlusconi use his private life for political purpose. The following quote, for example, is from a 300-word open letter Berlusconi send to the paper during the Mills-case. The letter was news in all three papers, but this particular quote was only printed in *Il Giornale*. It is also the most direct example of discourse about Berlusconi’s private life in the entire letter.

The understanding I have from situation, in combination with the affinity from my family and those who love and know me, gives me the strength to continue the battle for the full recognition of my complete innocence.\(^{135}\)

The fact that this personal quote wasn’t printed in *La Repubblica* nor in *Corriere della Sera*, but that other parts of this personal letter were estimated as news, shows that there are different degrees of discourse using the private sphere in every examined article. This is an important footnote since my research showed that *La Repubblica*, unexpectedly, lets Berlusconi ‘go personal’ in more than half the examined articles. That is remarkable, since I presumed that an anti-Berlusconi paper would avoid discourse in the private sphere.

There are of course explanations for this outcome, but the most important one is that it doesn’t automatically shows that *La Repubblica* is pro-Berlusconi all of a sudden. The above open letter is a good example of that. Where *Il Giornale* lets Berlusconi fully ‘go personal’ by quoting him about his family and those who love and know him, *Corriere della Sera* almost didn’t give Berlusconi any room to ‘go personal’. *La Repubblica*, on the other hand, did quote a lot of personal details but at the same time interpreted his quotes in an often negative manner. It is striking, none the less, that *La Repubblica* printed so many articles with a discourse using the private life of the PM. That shows that Berlusconi – like a true celebrity politician – not only used his private sphere as a resource in the manufacture of his political identity and in its repair following misadventures such as Ruby-gate or the Mills-case. But that these attempts to engage ‘human’ rather than ‘political’, were not only endorsed by his own media, but also by the oppositional newspaper *La Repubblica*. This means that Berlusconi’s use of his private sphere in political situations was not only adequate (a final verdict in Ruby-gate has yet to come, and for the Mills case, Berlusconi hasn’t spent one day in prison) but is was also mediated very successfully.

On the frontpage of Berlusconi’s *Il Giornale* a journalist wrote the subsequent line about Ruby-gate, which is exemplary. The journalist wrote it as a defence for Berlusconi, who was, according to the journalist, falsely accused just because he is a public figure. According to him, the opposition used details from Berlusconi’s private sphere just to slander Berlusconi’s political deeds. Unintentionally, however, the same line sums up every possible argument directed against Berlusconi’s own misuse of his private sphere. It therefore shows everything there can be said about the mediation of Berlusconi as a successful celebrity politician.

Why are the judges, the entire parliament and all our parties busy with this case? Is it not a matter for priests, families, and psychologists?\(^{136}\)

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135 See appendix II Table II.2 number 5 for the original Italian quote
Chapter 3: The Italian media

3.1 Journalism and democracy

The Italian media landscape is one of a kind. This is of course not the most telling statement since every country’s media landscape is essentially one of a kind, but the Italian media landscape does deserve some special attention. On the one hand because the Italian system has known a truly unique historical development, and on the other hand because its major player, Silvio Berlusconi, was also the country’s most important politician for almost twenty years. In this chapter I try to show that the specific development of the Italian media (which is closely intertwined with the country’s history) is at the same time the most important reason for Berlusconi’s omnipresence in it. The Italian media system, as opposed to many other western countries, allows strong political parallels between journalism and politics. This was the main reason why Berlusconi could obtain so much media power. Furthermore, I try to make plausible that Berlusconi used this media power for political gain. Because if the discourse around his persona was differently mediated in his own media than in the oppositional media, and if the intended purpose of this mediation was to win votes, an influential part of Italian journalism might have repudiated its democratic function.

Of course, journalism always had many functions throughout history. At first, it provided information to economic actors about prices and events such as wars or shipwrecks and later it gave entertainment in the form of, for instance, human interest stories. Also, it attained a certain democratic function. Political opinions have always been widespread in journalism. From the beginning of the print era, and particularly from the Reformation in the sixteenth century, political advocacy slowly became a central function of the print media, and by the early nineteenth century, when the newspaper began to emerge as a force in political life, this became its principal function.

Nowadays it is widely accepted that good (political) journalism is vital for the functioning a healthy democracy. It provides information to citizens so that they can make rational and reasoned choices in elections. It has a certain watchdog function for those in power and thus operates as a Fourth Estate. Also journalism can be used as a mediator between the public and the politicians. It assures they hear one another. And furthermore, journalism still functions as an advocate. It can give voice to unheard opinions and by doing so it contributes to the public debate. For the above functions to actually contribute to a deliberate democracy, it is absolutely necessary that there exists a neutral, objective and plural press. If not, the citizens might vote for the wrong reasons on the wrong persons; those in high functions can abuse their power; it will be harder for politicians and citizens to understand one another; and many opinions will (deliberately) stay unheard.

136 See Appendix I Table I.2 number 14 for the original Italian quote
137 Hallin and Mancini, Comparing Media Systems, 102-103
138 Ibidem, 26
And this neutral, objective and plural press didn’t emerge until deep into the nineteenth century, beginning of the twentieth century and mostly in the Anglo-American countries. Before, journalists tended to be rather biased and the normative ideals of objectivity and neutrality weren’t ubiquitous. Walter Lippmann, a then famous American columnist, is one of the first to state that objectivity should be considered the most important facet of professional journalism. By using principles such as factuality, fairness, non-bias, independence, non-interpretation, neutrality and detachment, journalists from the Anglo-American tradition have since tried to maintain their objectivity in order to fulfil their democratic function.  

It has to be said though, that Italian journalism traditionally differs from journalism in other western countries. This is a crucial distinction because it helps understand why Italians did not en masse oppose Berlusconi’s omnipresence in the media. As opposed to journalism in English speaking countries, Italians are traditionally more used to a slightly biased press. Almost all news media tend to have a certain political preference or have political parallels. It is also more common that media personnel are active in the political life and that the career path of a journalist is shaped by his or her political affiliation.

3.2 The Mediterranean model

According to media scientists Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini the reason for the above sketched deviant or distinctive characteristics of Italian journalism has its roots deep in history. In their study *Comparing Media Systems* they state that western journalism can roughly be divided in three main models; the democratic corporatist-, the liberal- and the polarized pluralist model. The dimensions they use to distinguish between different models are the development of media markets, with particular emphasis on the strong or weak development of a mass circulation press; the amount of political parallelism, which is the degree and nature of the links between the media and political parties; the development of journalistic professionalism; and lastly the degree and nature of state intervention in the media system.

The democratic corporatist model (mostly northern Europe) includes countries with a high level of social capital and, consequently, an early development of the bourgeoisie. With it, the newspaper industry evolved early and the countries in this model thus continue to have a very high newspaper circulation. Here, party papers coexist next to commercial papers and so-called opinion-oriented journalism is of less importance, but it does still exist. The liberal model (mainly the English speaking countries) on the other hand is characterized by a relative early emergence of a commercial mass-circulated press. This means that newspapers normally don’t show a strong political preference and are very information-orientated. Journalism is highly professionalized in these countries and tries to be as objective as possible. Journalistic autonomy in this model however, is more likely to be limited by commercial pressures than in other models.

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141 Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing media systems*, 28
142 Ibidem, 21
143 Ibidem, 11-18
The last model, the polarized pluralist model, also called the Mediterranean model, is the most applicable to Italy. In the countries within this model, press-freedom came relatively late so there only emerged an elite-orientated press with a relatively small circulation. Because of this small circulation, newspapers weren’t really profitable. In order to survive they were dependent on political donations and subsidies. Journalists therefore developed a strong political leaning. Professionalization of journalists is low and there is a strong focus on politics over other news stories.\footnote{Also, opinion-orientated or advocacy journalism is more present in comparison to other models.} For the development of the Italian media market in particular, several specific contemporary historical facts play an important role as well. Especially the occurrences after Napoleon's defeat in 1815 are considered crucial. During the following ‘Restoration’, newspapers primarily served to fight out battles between tradition and modernity. This resulted in the emergence of a vigorous opinion press that would later play an important role in the nineteenth century unification known as the Risorgimento. Besides Garibaldi – the father of the nation – the two most important statesmen of that period, Mazzini and Cavour, were journalists. This meant that the already opinion-oriented newspapers were indispensable in organizing and mobilising movements in that period; movements that would prove vital for the eventual unification of Italy.\footnote{The press did remain gearing towards the elite, though. After all, 60 per cent of the population was still illiterate and, more importantly, there was a strong linguistic diversity. Only during the unification in the 1860s did the Florentine dialect became the official language and by that time only two to three per cent of the population could understand (let alone read) this Tuscan dialect. It was not until the rise of television that eventual linguistic unification happened on a national level.} The press did remain gearing towards the elite. Though. After all, 60 per cent of the population was still illiterate and, more importantly, there was a strong linguistic diversity. Only during the unification in the 1860s did the Florentine dialect became the official language and by that time only two to three per cent of the population could understand (let alone read) this Tuscan dialect. It was not until the rise of television that eventual linguistic unification happened on a national level.\footnote{The strong party press that developed during the nineteenth century evolved further in the twentieth century.} The birth of Fascism enforced the traditions of politicized press because under the rule of Benito Mussolini – who was as a journalist himself – only fascist journalists passed his in 1928 established state-exam which was (and still is) mandatory in order to practise the profession.\footnote{Immediately after the liberation and the fall of Mussolini in 1945 professional journalists had to pass their entrance exam. The exam that was introduced by Mussolini in 1928 and was part of the fascist Albo Professionale, that was under the direct control of the Fascist party. In 1963, after the order survived under a body of self-control, a law decree re-stated the necessity to take a state-exam and the Ordine dei Giornalisti was founded. The 1963 law provided the Ordine to be divided into three categories: the professionisti (full-time journalists), the pubblicisti (paid part-time journalists who also practice other professions) and the praticanti (fulltime journalists undergoing an 18 month traineeship in a media outlet). Praticanti can become professional journalists after undergoing an 18 month paid traineeship, the so-called praticantato, or by attending a special two-year journalism course where instead of receiving a salary, participants are required to pay significant fees and take a challenging entrance test. The next step is to pass an oral and a written exam and aspiring journalists can choose between several exam sessions every year. On a side note, it is quite shocking to report that the written exam had to be taken on a typewriter until 2009, when the use of the laptop was finally allowed.} The concept of professionalism in journalism remains a difficult one since there isn’t a positive correlation between journalism education and professionalism; i.e. not all good journalists have followed “professional” training. Hallin and Mancini spent a fairly large part of their book to the concept of professionalization. They base their definition upon three characteristics: (1) the level of autonomy; (2) the distinct professional norms; and (3) the public service orientation. For a further understanding of this concept I hereby refer to their very well written chapter about the concept (Hallin and Mancini, \textit{Comparing Media Systems}, 31-41).\footnote{Christopher Duggan, \textit{La forza del destino. Storia d'Italia dal 1796 a oggi} (Bari 2008) 237-240} \footnote{Ibidem, 243} \footnote{Hallin and Mancini, \textit{Comparing media systems}, 100} \footnote{This required state-exam that was introduced by Mussolini in 1928 and was part of the fascist Albo Professionale, that was under the direct control of the Fascist party. In 1963, after the order survived under a body of self-control, a law decree re-stated the necessity to take a state-exam and the Ordine dei Giornalisti was founded. The 1963 law provided the Ordine to be divided into three categories: the professionisti (full-time journalists), the pubblicisti (paid part-time journalists who also practice other professions) and the praticanti (fulltime journalists undergoing an 18 month traineeship in a media outlet). 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1944, those required licences only went to anti-fascist journalists as a form of counter propaganda so the system of a strongly politicized and non-plural press stayed the same until the end of the war.\textsuperscript{150}

Even though the fascist era interrupted the development of a pluralist party press, it did re-emerge strongly after the war ended. Half of the Italian newspapers in the late 1940s were in fact party papers.\textsuperscript{151} The party paper of the PCI, the Communist Party, was, for instance, the biggest paper of the country during the 1960s and also \textit{Il Popolo} of the Christian Democrats and \textit{L’Avanti} of the Socialists played an important role in contemporary press history.\textsuperscript{152}

By this time press and politics were also heavily intertwined via subsidies. Even today the total amount subsidies have been estimated about 15 per cent of the revenue of the press.\textsuperscript{153} The policy of subsidizing the press costs the Italian taxpayer more than €100 million per year.\textsuperscript{154} Besides that Italian journalists get cheap train tickets and better pensions and health benefits than the Italian average.\textsuperscript{155} According to Hallin and Mancini however, Italian journalists don’t outshine in their high level of professionalization. On the contrary: one traditionally entered journalism through clientelist ties. One of the main reasons that, for instance, Berlusconi could obtain his monopolistic share in broadcasting was because his strong, clientelist ties with the then reigning socialist party and especially their leader, Bettino Craxi.\textsuperscript{156} And because of this nepotistic state of affairs, journalism education wasn’t necessary. It was more important to know the right people. Journalistic education only appeared, albeit slowly, in the 1980s, when a more market-orientated print-press emerged.\textsuperscript{157}

### 3.3 Political instrumentalization of the media

In the late 1970s and the 1980s businessmen became aware of the commercial and political opportunities of newspapers; they could use it for political instrumentalization. According to Hallin and Mancini, instrumentalization in news is “the control of the media by outside actors – parties, politicians, social groups or movements, or economic actors seeking political influence – who use them to intervene in the world of politics.”\textsuperscript{158} The Milan daily \textit{Il Giorno}, for example, was founded by the owner of a state-owned oil company with the intent of gaining more political voice. And he wasn’t the only businessman who got involved in journalism. Giovanni Agnelli, the former FIAT president, controlled \textit{La Stampa}. Cesare Romiti, a former manager of FIAT and now a fashion mogul controlled the \textit{Corriere della Sera}. Carlo De Benedetti, president of Olivetti, is the current owner of \textit{L’espresso} and \textit{La

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{150} Bergamini, \textit{La democrazia della stampa}. 95
\item \textsuperscript{151} Ibidem, 95
\item \textsuperscript{152} Bergamini, \textit{La democrazia della stampa. Storia del giornalismo}, 98-105
\item \textsuperscript{153} Hallin and Mancini, \textit{Comparing media systems}, 121
\item \textsuperscript{154} Rothenberg, ‘Adjusting the cold mirror’, 164
\item \textsuperscript{155} Hallin and Mancini, \textit{Comparing media systems}, 121
\item \textsuperscript{156} Ibidem, 137
\item \textsuperscript{157} Ibidem, 112
\item \textsuperscript{158} Hallin and Mancini, \textit{Comparing media systems}, 37
\end{itemize}
Repubblica and Raul Ferruzi, owner of a large chemical company, used to control Il Messaggero for many years. Last but not least, business magnate Silvio Berlusconi wielded control over an estimated 90 per cent of Italian television: direct control through his family’s ownership of three commercial channels (the Mediaset group) and indirect control of RAI, Italy’s public television. Furthermore the Berlusconi family still owns the advertising agency Publitalia, which controls 60 per cent of the television ad market, Italy’s largest publishing house, Mondadori, the news weekly Panorama and two daily newspapers.

All these men have strong political influence through their commercial companies and according to Hallin and Mancini having a newspaper plays a key role in the ability to influence the political process. The media are used for instrumentalization rather than being neutral or impartial and due to the above sketched press history, Italians have grown accustomed to this practice. They accept it because for them, it is normal. In the earlier mentioned article by John Corner about mediated persona the author states that there are three broad types of mediation that are being used to report about the action of politicians in public life. These three ways in which the discourse around their persona is being mediated are: (1) political publicity, managed by the politician and his or her staff; (2) interactive news-making, where politicians and the news media work together to build the politician’s image; and (3) journalistic revelation, where the politician loses any control of media coverage.

Building on the instrumentalization theory of Hallin and Mancini one could state that the commercially owned Italian papers are probably a product of interactive news-making. The owner is probably not directly involved in the making of the news but there is most likely a certain control. Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese, both journalism professors, conclude in their study that newspaper content indeed very often reflects the political views of the owner. And several other studies have since showed that this argument is indeed very plausible. So it is likely that the same is true for Italian newspaper owners, who after all own their paper for political voice.

The assumption that because of the high level of instrumentalization the journalistic content in Italy is more likely to be a product of interactive news-making, leads me to a my third premise (D in figure 1.1): in times of a scandal the Berlusconi-owned newspapers will probably be a product of political publicity or interactive news-making, while the oppositional newspaper probably will be a product of journalistic revelation (from Berlusconi’s point of view, of course). This means that they will presumably highlight different opinions and facts about the same events. The one paper will be shedding a politically beneficial light for Berlusconi while the other paper will try to show negative facts and consequences. Because

159 Bergamini, La democrazia della stampa. Storia del giornalismo, 152
161 Hallin and Mancini, Comparing media systems, 114
162 Corner, Mediated Persona and Political culture, 77
164 One of the numerous examples comes from K. Kenney and C. Simpson, who used a content analysis to test the ownership theory of Shoemaker and Reese by examining coverage of the 1988 Presidential race by the Washington Post and Times. They found the publicly owned Post was fair and balanced in its news coverage while the privately owned Times was frequently biased. (see: K. Kenney and C. Simpson, ‘Was coverage of the 1988 presidential race by Washington’s two major dailies biased?’, Journalism Quarterly 70 (1993) 345-355)
one could of course make the argument that negative news about Berlusconi, is good news for the opposition. With my content analysis I largely verified this premise. As can be read in chapter 5.3 especially the analysis about Il Giornale showed the expected outcome. 68 per cent of all their articles (even 90 per cent in the Mills-case coverage) mainly highlight the positive effects of Berlusconi’s policy, while none of the articles about the two cases only highlight the negative effects of the same policy. Not even letters from readers or opinion based columns. That means it is highly plausible that Il Giornale is a product of interactive news-making, maybe even political publicity (again: zero per cent of the articles were anti-Berlusconi). As for La Repubblica and Corriere della Sera: they show the same outcomes as during the other two premises. Corriere della Sera has almost the same amount of articles as La Repubblica in the anti-Berlusconi category (37.5 versus 38 per cent), and even less articles in the pro-Berlusconi category C1 (9 versus 16 per cent). That means that, based on these figures, Corriere della Sera is not only less neutral than expected, but also more anti-Berlusconi than the left-wing paper La Repubblica. It also means that, as expected, it is very unlikely that these two papers are a product of interactive news-making from Berlusconi’s point of view. Too many negative articles about Berlusconi are printed in both the papers.

3.4 The state of Italian journalism

In the introduction of this thesis, figure 1.1 shows four premises that would be introduced throughout this paper. The fourth premise however – Berlusconi and especially his media power are bad for Italian journalism – is one which is hard to research using a qualitative content analysis. Also, the question itself isn’t flawless because it assumes that there is some sort of ‘universal’ normative perception of good and bad. Therefore, this question and especially the answer are open to more speculation. It does however remain an important question for this thesis because when giving answers about how the Italian media mediated Berlusconi’s persona, it is vital to at least bear in mind that Berlusconi has some really strong ties with the media, and not only through ownership.

In the Italian polarized pluralist model the most important element of political communication is the process of bargaining within the political parties. As a consequence, the majority of this communication doesn’t take place in the public sphere. The public sphere is a term first used by German sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas. It is an imagined area – part of the social life – in which the public opinion is formed. It exists when individuals come together to talk about matters of public interest. If this public body grows bigger, mass media is required in order enable communication. In Italy however, a large part of this political communication takes place outside the public sphere. It is usually carried out informally and behind closed doors where the information isn’t made available for the public. This means that the public opinion can’t be formed in the way it should. The media, whose

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165 Therefore, I try to answer this question from an Italian normative perspective (of which the development is described by Hallin and Mancini in Comparing media systems).
166 Hallin and Mancini, Comparing media systems, 132
purpose it is to enable communication by spreading this information, doesn’t fully function because its owners have historically participated in this bargaining process; they were closely related to the negotiating parties involved (sometimes as politicians themselves or otherwise as important commercial agents). Because of this, some normative journalistic principles like the watchdog function evolved in a different way than in other countries.¹⁶⁸

With the growing influence of commerce in journalism the idea that the abolition of feudalism and the consequential emergence of the public sphere in the 18th century is slowly rescinding.¹⁶⁹ The growing influence of neo-liberalism in journalism has allowed commercial actors into the journalistic field and this “re-feudalization of the public sphere” is making active citizens into inactive consumers. This means that the gaps between those with information capital and those without it are widening.¹⁷⁰

In Italy, the public sphere was never as evolved as in other countries because social capital is historically low.¹⁷¹ And this given plus the fact that the political communication in the public sphere is underdeveloped due to the existing political parallels, means that the democratic function of journalism in Italy is already under a large amount of pressure. But since the emergence of the commercial mass media, since the re-feudalization of the public sphere so to say, there seems to be a transition going on even further away from the normative journalistic ideals.

Communication scientist Michael Delli Carpini and political scientist Bruce Williams explain in their article Let Us Infotain You that the walls between hard news and entertainment are slowly eroding.¹⁷² They state that the objectivity norm from the early twentieth century used to be the holy grail in the serious press and that the more popular media, like the yellow press, always had more subjective tendencies. But now, they say, the irrefragable wall between the two is no longer irrefragable. According to them, this process results in the birth of a new sort of journalism: infotainment; a combination between information, and entertainment. This transition occurs because the earlier notion of pure objectivity no longer seems tenable in modern philosophy – everything is subjective to some extent. Other reasons are new commutative technologies in modern journalism and especially the new economy of mass media: commercialization.¹⁷³

Brian McNair, a professor in Journalism, says that this commercialization lowered the standard of political journalism.

In recent times the intensifying co modification of journalism (…) has favored the evolution of forms of political infotainment, a focus on sensation and drama in the political sphere, and the representation of democratic politics to the public as something akin to a soap opera. The popular vernacular for this process is “dumbing down,” although this is more than a critique of the intellectual content of political journalism,
but also of its increasing focus on matters deemed trivial from the normative perspective. Political journalism should be about economic policy, foreign affairs, and other matters of substance, it is argued, rather than the love lives of politicians, or their ability to look good on TV.\textsuperscript{174}

The main function of political journalism – to inform citizens in a deliberate democracy – thus seems less apparent. Of course, Delli Carpini and Williams, as well as McNair are talking about Hallin and Mancini’s Liberal model. That doesn’t mean, however, that their critique can’s be translated to the Mediterranean model. Also in the Mediterranean model, even with its existing political parallelism, informing citizens remains an important aspect of journalism. And as I will try to make plausible in the section below, also in Italy, citizens nowadays barely get enough information to make rational and reasonable decisions on whom to vote.\textsuperscript{175}

3.5 Italian infotainment

The major relay pump of the shift towards infotainment is, as has been said before, commercialization. The commercialization of Italian journalism in particular took a big flight with Berlusconi entering the television stage. At the end of his political career in 2011 he owned 90 per cent of Italian television.\textsuperscript{176} Berlusconi, as can be read in chapter 1.5, got involved with journalism in the 1970s after he built Milano II. For Italian journalism this meant that advertising revenues became more important than ever before. The advertising arm was barely distinguishable from the broadcasting business since Berlusconi’s own advertising company Publitalia was responsible for a large part of the television advertising market (in 2012 that number was around 60 per cent). The left hand was closing deals with the right hand. At first, it seemed Berlusconi had no political ambitions whatsoever and that his \textit{leitmotif} in television was making money first and foremost.\textsuperscript{177} Berlusconi was the first to introduce this mass advertising and he became extremely rich by doing so. His advertising company Publitalia – founded in 1979 – made 12 billion lire in 1980, 900 billion by 1984 and 2,167 billion by the end of the decade.\textsuperscript{178} This commercial motive meant that television changed and with it the television news.\textsuperscript{179} And if the political coverage indeed began focusing on matters that seem trivial from the normative perspective of good and objective journalism, as McNair states, Italian journalism might have started to repudiate its democratic function.

And it has to be said: sometimes the news truly seems like a soap opera with Berlusconi as one of the protagonists. He tends to personalize politics in extreme ways, as I have argued in this thesis. In a news broadcast of October 2010 Berlusconi replied to some left-wing politicians who said he would help the country by resigning as PM.

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\textsuperscript{174} McNair, \textit{Journalism and Democracy}, 242
\textsuperscript{175} Kees Brants, ‘Informatief, hard en toch leuk: Journalistieke stijlen en politieke bias in tv-interviews’, In: Kees Brants en Philip van Praag, \textit{Politiek en media in verwarring} (Amsterdam 2005) 152
\textsuperscript{176} Roox, \textit{Staatsman of clown}, 33
\textsuperscript{177} Jones, \textit{The dark heart}, 124
\textsuperscript{178} 2,167 billion lire is slightly more than 1 billion euro
\textsuperscript{179} Jones, \textit{The dark heart}, 33
\end{flushright}
Left keeps saying: ‘Berlusconi go home!’ And I have to confess: they abash me to some extent [Berlusconi is quiet for some moments]. The truth is: I have twenty houses… so I don’t know which home they mean.180

This anecdote was of course meant as a joke and shouldn’t guide premises about Berlusconi’s politics, but it is a good example, however, of Berlusconi’s tendency to align his political affairs with his personal life. And the media storm that followed was, for its part, a good example of infotainment. In chapter 2 I sketched that Berlusconi’s tendency to align his own fortune to that of Italy as well as his custom to take political matters into the private sphere are strongly related to the Italian history. This quote can be seen as an example of this. It was this quote that made the evening news and the actual reason for the left-wing critique was largely and willfully ignored.181 So, especially in a country where the public sphere wasn’t already particularly strong, infotainment in journalism is a development worth noticing.

3.6 The importance of television

The trivialisation of the Italian news due to infotainment is best seen on the country’s most important (and Berlusconi-owned) medium: television. And maybe it’s because the Reformation’s iconoclasm left Italy relatively untouched, or maybe it’s because of other reasons, but Italy has always remained a very visual country. Almost every city has several churches filled with delicate frescos, the architectural style is very sophisticated and some of the best painters and sculptors in history were born on the peninsula. The consequences of a visual aesthetic rather than a literary culture are evident everywhere. It’s hard to find something ugly, and when you find it, it is often graffiti written down on a beautiful palazzo. Also, on a more low-brow level, the Italians themselves seem rather occupied with their own visual culture in the sense that the most famous fashion brands, as well as some of the most stylish cars in the world derive form their country. In this light, it is not strange that in Italy more people watch television than in most other European countries.182

In contrast to the newspaper market, that has a longer history, the current state of Italian television is largely a product of the relocation of power in the 1970s; the so called lottizzazione. Until that point public television was entirely under the influence of the ruling party, the Christian Democrats, but with the introduction of several commissions and laws the media landscape changed.183 By the 1980s the first and most important channel was still in the hands of the Christian Democrats, but RAI 2 now belonged to the secular parties while RAI 3 became the Communist channel.184 With the collapse of the traditional party system following the Mani Pulite inquiry, this system slightly changed but it is still considered normal that RAIs

180 Severgnini, *La pancia degli Italiani*, 20
181 Ibidem, 21
182 Jones, *The dark heart*, 110
184 Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing media systems*, 108
1 is closely linked to those in power and is more conservative, while RAI 3, the smallest of the three, is linked to the left-wing.\textsuperscript{185}

The situation on the four commercial channels (excluding non-news channels such as the Italian MTV and Deejay TV) is comparable. Also here Berlusconi is the major player. His Mediaset is the biggest with three channels while only the smaller seventh Italian channel, La7, isn’t owned by Berlusconi.\textsuperscript{186}

A strong example of the Italian emphasis on the visual, are the dancing half naked girls – the so called Veline – who are ubiquitous on Italian television. For a large group of young girls it is a childhood dream to become such a Velina and parents are surprisingly supportive in the choice of their daughters’ career paths because under Berlusconi it has become a springboard for political careers. For instance: a woman who hosted a television show about sexy nightclubs was made undersecretary of tourism and that a former Miss Italy contestant and television presenter became a member of the European Parliament.\textsuperscript{187} And what if a veteran politician felt diminished debating legislation with a lingerie model? Berlusconi’s answer: “The left has no taste, even when it comes to women.”\textsuperscript{188}

It is because of this attitude towards women that several critics conclude that Italy is the land that feminism forgot.\textsuperscript{189} And for Berlusconi this seems particularly true. He seems to see (beautiful) women as useful, rather than intelligent. It is the visual that is more important because sex sells everywhere, but maybe even more so in Italy. And Berlusconi was one of the first to realize that. With his new formed media monopoly he was able to seize a large part of the RAI viewers with programs based around sex.\textsuperscript{190} He bought some of the best watched talk show hosts of the time and in their new programs they were constantly accompanied by scantily dressed girls, who happily became part of Berlusconi’s clientele (during the Ruby-gate case it became known that a lot of these Veline were “regulars” at Berlusconi’s infamous Bunga Bunga parties).\textsuperscript{191} It was a perfect example of infotainment. While the hosts talked about politics, the cameras zoomed in upon the Veline from below and behind, showing all their anatomical fine points whenever possible. And the viewers apparently liked it because they watched the programs en masse.\textsuperscript{192}

The reason why Berlusconi’s advertisement based marketing tricks that lead to this infotainment worked especially well in Italy is possibly because it adapted to the long existing individualism in the country.\textsuperscript{193} As outlined in chapter 2, before Berlusconi, Italians never had a strong historically-based ‘Italian’ identity in common. This was especially true for families with lower education and lower income; they are normally less involved with civil society

\textsuperscript{185} Ibidem, 109
\textsuperscript{186} Andreavreede.com, ‘La7 en de nieuwsvoorziening in Italië – Andrea Vreede’, \url{http://www.andreavreede.com/blog/la7-en-de-nieuwsvoorziening-in-itali/} (16-09-2012)
\textsuperscript{188} Ibidem
\textsuperscript{189} Lorella Zanardo, \textit{Il corpo delle donne} (2010)
\textsuperscript{190} Roox, \textit{Staatsman of clown}, 55
\textsuperscript{191} Luigi Ferrarella, ‘Feste di Arcore, spuntano due nuove testimoni, Corriere della Sera (13-04-’11) 6
\textsuperscript{192} Ginsborg, \textit{Silvio Berlusconi}, 43
\textsuperscript{193} Stille, \textit{De inname van Rome}, 178
because amoral familiarism is still strong. They therefore spent more time amongst each other and are more dependent on television than others. Their communal passivity and privatism, however, are not the most effective safeguards against journalistic messages projected from the screen. Journalist Barbie Nadeau explains in a Newsweek article that Berlusconi could obtain the amount of power he had obtained because many Italians believed his messages sent from the screen. His very well marketed Italian story was their Dolce Vita or even better: their American Dream. “Berlusconi knows the Italian psyche well in part because he’s created it through his media influence”, Nadeau writes. The Italian media historian Peppino Ortoleva argues that Berlusconi was able to use his media power to impose a value system that has gradually determined a substantial cultural hegemony over the country that is hard to resist. Mike Bongiorno, a famous Italian television host, seems to agree. He paraphrases statistics which state that Italian children of five to six years old watch television three or four hours a day and that old people watch even more. “In Italy,” he says, “we live for television; we take our arguments from it. Perhaps I’m exaggerating a bit, but it is like that. Anything we do, we do thinking about the television.” So if the screen explains the news in a certain ways, why not believe it?

According to Berlusconi’s biographer Paul Ginsborg, the character of Italian television reinforces this process. “The Italian television”, he says “is distinctly familist – in the sense of putting its own acquisitive instincts and interest first, and very rarely being portrayed as willing to sacrifice some part of these for the good of civil society, let alone the State. It is the incarnation of negative freedom.” And by using this feature of television to market and deify his own success story, Berlusconi benefited immensely from his television power. In 2001 surprised social scientists found that the strongest predictors of a voter’s orientation was no longer class or church per se, but what television channels one watches and for how long. In short: the more hours the voters watched, the more likely they voted for Berlusconi. Also, if a voter only had a grade-school diploma or he or she stated they had not read a book over the past year, it was likely the voter choose Berlusconi. In the 2001 election more than 65 per cent of those with only fifth grade education voted for him while only 35.9 per cent of the voters with a high school diploma or higher did. His promised liberal revolution wasn’t likely to be beneficial for those poorer segments of society, so it seems plausible that they voted more on gut feeling and image than political agenda only. And that gut feeling is likely to have been aroused by television.

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194 This statement is further explained in paragraph 2.2 where I use Edward Banfield (amoral familiarism) and Norbert Elias (civilizing process) their arguments about this particular subject and also paraphrase Robert Putnam’s study of Social Capital in different Italian regions.
195 Barbie Nadeau, ‘Not just any old charlatan’, Newsweek 21 (2011) 8
196 Daniele Albertazzi and Nina Rothenberg, ‘This tide is not for turning’, in: Charlotte Ross, Clodagh J. Brook and Daniele Albertazzi, Resisting the Tide: Cultures of Opposition under Berlusconi (2001-06) (New York 2009) 7
197 Ginsborg, Silvio Berlusconi, 106
198 Ibidem, 109
199 Stille, Silvio’s shadow, 37
200 Ibidem, 38
3.7 Berlusconi and journalism

The fact that television is extremely important and powerful in Italy, and that Berlusconi owns a large part of television still doesn’t answer the question whether Berlusconi – from an Italian normative perspective (of which the development is described by Hallin and Mancini in *Comparing media systems*) – is bad for journalism. According to Berlusconi biographer Ginsborg the “normal” democratic relationship between a media tycoon such as Berlusconi and sympathetic political leaders is that the media mogul follows politics. “The media tycoon lurks behind politics, but is not in politics”, Ginsborg writes.\(^{201}\) The media tycoon derives advantage from the actions of politicians, and repays it with benevolence of the same. As noted chapter 1.4, this existing status quo between Berlusconi and Craxi got swept away following the *Mani Pulite* operation in the early 1990s after which Berlusconi responded by getting involved in politics himself. With the introduction of the Mammi law in 1990, Berlusconi had already obtained the opportunity to broadcast “live” and could therefore compete with news broadcasts from the public RAI.\(^ {202} \) By using several techniques (such as the *Veline*, for instance), Berlusconi immediately obtained a large audience so the narrative logic of commercial news became increasingly dominant in Italian journalism. This narrative logic had strong emphasis on personality and private matters (c.f. my analysis in chapter 5.2 about the use of the private sphere in his own newspaper) and by the time this new narrative logic was accepted by the public, Berlusconi himself entered the political stage. And because he was such a good story, he could dominate the news.\(^ {203} \)

It would be rather stupid to state that the Italian normative principles concerning good quality journalism were thrown out once Berlusconi became involved in politics. He was the owner of the media group and never functioned as editor in chief. But whether it was done with an agenda or not, Berlusconi did seem to notice the importance of media control from early on. According to Berlusconi biographer Alexander Stille, once he came in office, in 1994, Berlusconi dedicated an extraordinary amount of his energy to gaining control of state broadcaster RAI. Employees who were specifically denounced by Berlusconi were fired or marginalized while trusted companions were placed in high functions. According to Stille two of the three public channels became “puppets of the new prime minister”.\(^ {204} \)

And without saying that Berlusconi ever had any direct involvement with the journalistic content (at least not on the record), several research studies on state television do show that under Berlusconi’s government, the RAI journalists were strongly advised to change their methods.\(^ {205} \) Prior to the 2001 elections (after a period in which Berlusconi wasn’t president), Mediaset dedicated almost twice as much airtime to Berlusconi than to his opponent while RAI offered a more balanced representation.\(^ {206} \) During his campaign, Berlusconi and his allies already attacked RAI for broadcasting shows by the famous journalists Enzo Biagi, Michele Santoro and Daniele Luttazzi because, according to Berlusconi, they were too critical of him. Berlusconi said: “Biagi, Santoro . . . what’s the

\(^{201}\) Ginsborg, *Silvio Berlusconi*, 57

\(^{202}\) Ibidem, 58

\(^{203}\) Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing media systems*, 278

\(^{204}\) Stille, *Silvio’s shadow*, 32

\(^{205}\) Ibidem

\(^{206}\) Albertazzi, ‘This tide is not for turning’, 7
other one called? . . . Luttazzi, have used public television, paid for by everyone, in a criminal manner. And I believe that it is a specific duty of the new management to ensure that this won’t happen again”.

Once in office, Berlusconi enforced the removal of these journalists their shows from television. From now on, the new shows that RAI broadcasted had to use the so called ‘sandwich method’: all the political stories began by stating the government’s view, followed by one or two sound bites of the opposition and ended with a rebuttal from again the government. In figures, this meant that Berlusconi himself got 50 per cent of the air time on public broadcasts whilst the opposition accounted for less than 20 per cent. The other 30 per cent were devoted to Berlusconi’s party members.

In chapter 5.3 of this thesis I show that the same goes for the family owned newspaper Il Giornale. During the two scandals examined (the Mills-case and Ruby-gate) 68 per cent of the articles were very pro-Berlusconi, while zero per cent (not even open letters from readers) was anti-Berlusconi.

Ferdinando Giugliano, an Oxford University scholar and Berlusconi-expert, also gives several examples of journalism that helped Berlusconi’s cause. One of them is about Maria Luisa Busi, an experienced journalist and anchor who wrote a public letter of resignation because she couldn’t agree with the editorial choices made. In the letter she claimed that RAI 1 is now mostly “a combination of infotainment and of politically biased reporting”. According to Hallin and Mancini, Italian journalism does indeed have a strong political bias. The influence of infotainment due to commercialisation however, is something that, according to Busi, came with Berlusconi and is the reason for a further decay of journalistic principles. Therefore Giugliano concludes that, thanks to the commercial journalism that came with Berlusconi, the Italian democracy has lost an important umpire.

In a secularized media environment with a healthy competition this wouldn’t even be a major problem, but Berlusconi’s control also outstretches the media he owns himself. According to Alexander Stille Berlusconi not just uses his own media to attack enemies, but he also co-opted many other media outlets by finding way to give their journalists money. For example: the famous and respected RAI host Bruno Vespa writes a column for Berlusconi’s magazine Panorama, as does Francesco Pionati, the most important political reporter on public television. Stille: “Thus, the two journalists who are most heard on the government broadcasting system received what amounts to a second salary from the politician they cover most frequently.” He continues: “Several important political columnists for the two

208 Ibidem
209 Stille, Silvio’s shadow, 33
210 Busi went to L’Aquila to make an item about the post-earthquake reconstructions. Over there protestors accused her and her news of lying about the real state of the city in order to support the idea that the government has acted quickly and properly. In reaction Busi made a statement indicating that she does not respond for the editorial line of the TG1 and she also acknowledged that the reconstruction is far from being complete. After giving this statement, strong editorial critique rained down on Busi, who, days later, wrote her public letter of resignation.
212 Ibidem
213 Stille, Silvio’s shadow, 39
main centrist newspapers, *La Stampa* and the *Corriere della Sera*, have also received money from Berlusconi as columnists or consultants.”

Another example was the ban on political talk shows in 2010. In the first months of that year, prior to the then important local elections, RAI decided to cancel all political talk shows. The official argument was that there were too many political parties. It would simply require too much broadcast time to give them all a voice on public television. However, this decision was seen by many as a device to (effectively) block (the in 2001 already blocked) Michele Santoro, a left-leaning and well watched journalist, from the screen. And since the commercial networks were not under this particular jurisdiction, Berlusconi’s Mediaset channels were left with a monopoly on political talk shows. This meant that in these particular elections the right-wing parties got much more air-time than their left-wing colleagues. Another effect was that the already ailing RAI lost 7 million euro in advertising revenue; money that went straight to Mediaset.

In Chapter 5 I show that Berlusconi is very influential in the print media as well. Not only his own newspaper *Il Giornale* mediates his persona in a very positive way, but especially when it comes to framing the news as if though it is part of Berlusconi’s private life, his influence outstretches his own media in a surprising manner.

So, in conclusion, when speculating about the question whether or not Berlusconi is good for Italian journalism, his apparent monopoly (through ownership and other ways) is an important fact to bear in mind. Even more importantly however, is how he uses his media power. The answer to this question is built upon speculation. It is unlikely that there are records of Berlusconi giving direct orders to the different editors in chief. It is also unlikely however, that Berlusconi had nothing to do with some editorial choices made. And whether Berlusconi was the one ordering certain choices, or whether the editors who apparently liked Berlusconi’s political idea’s made those choices for him, the fact remains that some situations were way too convenient for Berlusconi’s cause to just be a coincidence. Alexander Stille comes with an example of the former prosecutor Antonio Di Pietro, once the hero of the Milan anti-corruption investigation, who became the object of a brutal press campaign. Papers and television stations (owned by Berlusconi) accused him of taking bribes. Stille:

> The charges amounted to nothing--no evidence of bribe-taking emerged and he was never placed on trial--and Berlusconi's newspaper *Il Giornale* agreed to pay a significant amount in damages and print a long article retracting much of what the newspaper had been saying for several months. But the result of the charges was that Di Pietro was gradually transformed from a major rival of Berlusconi to a mostly marginal figure.

It has to be stressed again that there are no *direct* ties between Berlusconi and the journalistic content of the media he owned, so whether he directly used his media influence for political

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214 Ibidem
217 Ibidem
218 Stille, *Silvio’s shadow*, 39
gain is a question that I cannot answer. What one can assert is that he does benefit immensely from the media he owns. He benefits through the amount of time he is given to present his views and mediate his persona; through benevolent columns of journalists; through the besmirching of his competitors and so on. It can’t be said that Berlusconi is directly responsible for the actions of his journalists but it can be said that the journalists who work for him help strengthening Berlusconi’s powerbases by the way they do their work. And maybe that’s because they would otherwise be fired, or maybe that’s because they really believe in his views, but it seems that, even in journalism, Berlusconi operates like a true patron. So when speculating about whether or not Silvio Berlusconi is ‘bad’ for Italian journalism the answer can’t be conclusive. It does however seem highly plausible that when Berlusconi leaves politics, the situation of Italian journalism – and in its wake the Italian democracy – will improve.
Chapter 4: Research corpus and method

4.1 Research corpus

In this study I test several premises to examine whether or not Silvio Berlusconi thanked his 20-year-long political career at least partly to his media power. I do this using a qualitative-interpretable content analysis on the articles from three Italian newspapers about two scandals that Il Cavaliere has recently faced. In the following paragraphs I will first of all pay attention to my research corpus. I shortly explain why I have specifically chosen the three newspapers I use in this study; namely La Repubblica, Corriere della Sera and Il Giornale. Furthermore I explain my choice for the two cases I have examined. After that, I discuss the research method I have used.

4.1.1 Three different newspapers

Italy knows a very visual culture and that watching television can be considered a true national pastime. The influence of the printed media is not to be underestimated however. Besides that, the different scopes that exist within Italian journalism, one could argue, are best seen in the newspaper market. I therefore focus newspapers in this study.

As on television, some Italian papers are considered left-wing, some are considered to be more conservative and some are in control by those in power. This is best seen in the three papers I have chosen to analyse in this study, which are, of course, all big national newspapers with a large market share and a focus on general news (as opposed to gossip, for instance).\(^{219}\) Where Corriere della Sera can be considered as a moderate-conservative newspaper without strong political parallels, Il Giornale is not only read by right wing Berlusconi voters, but is also owned by Berlusconi. La Repubblica is the biggest ‘oppositional’ newspaper and has strong political parallels with the Italian left wing.\(^ {220}\) These political parallels become clear in Table 4.1.\(^{221}\) In this figure the political parallels are subdivided from paper to paper and from political party to political party. The figure shows the number of voters of a given party that read each paper per hundred readers of that paper in the population as a whole. Figures over 100 thus indicate that voters of that party are overrepresented in the paper’s readership; figures below 100 indicate that they are underrepresented.\(^ {222}\)

\(^{219}\) Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing media systems*, 94
\(^{220}\) Ibidem, 102
\(^{221}\) It has to be taken into consideration that table 4.1 is based on data from 1996. This doesn’t mean, however, that the outcome of this figure isn’t representative anymore. According to the above mentioned Bergamini, the Italian newspaper industry can be considered as a rather static one. This means that it is likely that the numbers from table 4.1 are still accurate. But since the data is so old, the figure mainly serves as an indication.
\(^{222}\) Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing media systems*, 102
As can be seen, *Corriere della Sera* is read by the most neutral audience, *Il Giornale*, on the other hand, is mainly read by Berlusconi voters and *La Repubblica* is the most popular paper amongst left-wing readers (the official communist party paper *L’Unità* is not taken into consideration since the market share is limited and the political parallels are institutionalized).

The numbers in table 4.1 of course don’t say anything about the content of the different papers. They say something about the political preferences of the readers. But backed by the earlier mentioned argument from Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese (who conclude in their study that newspaper content indeed very often reflects the political views of the owner) one can assume that these papers show a political preference as well.\(^{224}\) *Il Giornale*, owned by the brother of Silvio Berlusconi, Paolo, is considered to support Berlusconi’s political ideas while *La Repubblica*, published by the left-wing Carlo De Benedetti and founded in 1976 as a radical/socialist newspaper, is considered to be outspokenly left-wing and very critical towards Berlusconi’s policy.\(^{225}\) *Corriere della Sera* is owned by RCS MediaGroup, which is a group of some of Italy’s most powerful economic actors such as Pirelli, Fiat, Mediobanco and Capitalia. The paper has a close (and murky) history with the fascist party during the war and the Christian Democratic party until the *Mani Pulite* inquiries, but is now considered to be moderate and liberal-conservative and rather neutral concerning those in power.\(^{226}\)

As I have argued in chapter 3.3, cross-media ownership plays an important role within the Italian media landscape. The three chosen newspapers are also perfect examples of these practices. The Gruppo Editoriale L’Espresso, publisher of *La Repubblica*, for example, also

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Table 4.1: Party press parallelism in Italian newspaper readership\(^{223}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Communist Refounding</th>
<th>Democrats of the Left</th>
<th>Popular Party</th>
<th>Northern League</th>
<th>Forza Italia</th>
<th>National Alliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Corriere della sera</em></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
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<td><em>La Repubblica</em></td>
<td>124</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>La Stampa</em></td>
<td>71</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Il Giornale</em></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Il Giorno</em></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>La Nazione</em></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Il Mattino</em></td>
<td>97</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>162</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Resto del Carlino</em></td>
<td>126</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Gazzetta</em></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>203</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Mezzogiorno</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>L’Unità</em></td>
<td>165</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>L’Avvenire</em></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{223}\) Ibidem


\(^{225}\) Rothenberg, ‘Adjusting the cold mirror’, 163-165

\(^{226}\) Ibidem
owns several magazines, radio stations and some small television channels like Deejay TV. Also the RCS MediaGroup, the owner of Corriere della Sera, publishes other newspapers like the famous sports daily Gazetta dello Sport as well as 90 per cent of the free newspapers, but also books (15 publishing houses), magazines (over 30 titles) and several radio stations.\footnote{David Ward, Oliver Carsten Fues and Alessandro D’armo, \textit{A mapping study of media concentration and ownership in ten European countries} (Hilversum 2004) 104-106} Last but not least: Silvio Berlusconi. Through his company Fininvest he owns a large part of commercial television and as PM he also had significant influence on RAI. Besides that he publishes the daily newspapers Il Foglio and Il Giornale. Through his majority share of 50.3 per cent in Mondadori (a large publisher that holds roughly 30 per cent of the Italian book market and is one of the largest publishing houses in Europe) Berlusconi also has significant influence over approximately 60 per cent of the magazine market with more than 45 magazine titles (including the widely read news magazine Panorama, but mostly gossip and women’s magazines and TV-guides) and also the major cinema distributor in Italy, Medusa Film.\footnote{Ibidem, 106; and: Cepernich, ‘The changing face of the media’, 33}

This influence one has on television however isn’t directly comparable to the influence on printed media. That is because of the fact that the Italian media sector is rather complex when it comes to concentration of ownership. As compared to other European countries, the television market is highly concentrated (basically a duopoly between RAI and Berlusconi’s Mediaset, who together comprise slightly less than 90 per cent of the audience share) while the daily newspaper market is one of the least concentrated in Western-Europe.\footnote{Ward, \textit{A mapping study}, 93} This means that Berlusconi’s possible influence on the \textit{entire} newspaper market is far less than his possible influence on the \textit{entire} television market. The balance of power is totally different. He does, however, have influence in both sectors.

According to Christopher Cepernich, an Italian sociologist, the political climate of having ‘a clear division between those Italians who support Berlusconi and those who oppose him’, has its effects on both television and print journalism.\footnote{Christopher Cepernich, ‘The changing face of the media: a catalogue of anomalies’, in: Charlotte Ross, Clodagh J. Brook and Daniele Albertazzi, \textit{Resisting the Tide: Cultures of Opposition under Berlusconi (2001-06)} (New York 2009) 41} It has to be made clear though, that there are also a lot of differences between Italian print- and television journalism. Besides the obvious differences that exist between the two, the most striking one is that, as I have argued in chapter three, the Italian newspaper market far is less influential than the country’s television market. Amongst other reasons, due to a high level of illiteracy (10 per cent of the Italian population) the percentage of Italians who read daily newspapers is one of the lowest in Western-Europe.\footnote{Nina Rothenberg, ‘Adjusting the cold mirror: Berlusconi and \textit{Il Corriere della Sera}’, in: Charlotte Ross, Clodagh J. Brook and Daniele Albertazzi, \textit{Resisting the Tide: Cultures of Opposition under Berlusconi (2001-06)} (New York 2009) 165} Only 118 out of 1,000 Italians read daily newspapers but in the regions Molise and Calabria, for example, (regions that, as I argue in chapter three, are defined by a lack of social capital) only 40 citizens out of 1,000 read newspapers on a daily basis.\footnote{Ibidem} In comparison: the average in Western-Europe is about 300 readers per 1,000 inhabitants.\footnote{Ward, \textit{A mapping study}, 97} The number of Italians who watch television however, is extremely high in comparison to other

\footnotesize
227 David Ward, Oliver Carsten Fues and Alessandro D’armo, \textit{A mapping study of media concentration and ownership in ten European countries} (Hilversum 2004) 104-106
228 Ibidem, 106; and: Cepernich, ‘The changing face of the media’, 33
229 Ward, \textit{A mapping study}, 93
232 Ibidem
233 Ward, \textit{A mapping study}, 97

\end{footnotesize}
European countries. This is also shown in figure 4.1, where the markets shares in the media are reflected in a percentage of the total advertising revenues. Newspapers only stand for approximately 20 per cent of the market (the figure shows printed media, which includes magazines) so, at least economically, television is more than twice as influential as the entire newspaper industry.

Figure 4.1: Media market shares reflected in advertising revenues (2007)

Of course, this does not mean that newspapers are without influence. TV journalists often get their cues from newspapers and wire copy. A good indication of the importance Berlusconi himself imputes to the power and potential influence of print journalism can be seen in the fact he has (unsuccessfully) sued several newspapers and magazines worldwide for libel on numerous occasions. Intriguingly, several newspapers and magazines have also (unsuccessfully) sued him in return for malfeasance and unfair competition practices. Amongst them is the Italian La Repubblica as well as international media, like the Spanish El País and the British The Economist. All of this points to the key role played by the press in constructing, maintaining, and challenging the public perception of Berlusconi.

4.1.2 The two cases

There is also a reason why I have chosen to analyse these two particular cases. As noted in the introduction, the first reason is a rather practical one. Scandals such as these generate significant news coverage which allows the collection of a sizable data set for analysis. Also, scandalous news is more practical to analyse because there is much at stake so opinions are more likely to be outspoken.

I have chosen for the particular David Mills case because one could argue that a corruption scandal such as this is exemplary for Berlusconi’s (political) career. As can be read in the first chapter, doubts about the corrupt character of Berlusconi have haunted him since

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234 Ibidem, 98
235 Cepernich, ‘The changing face of the media’, 36
237 Bas Mesters, ‘Krant klaagt Berlusconi aan voor smaad’, NRC Handelsblad (23-07-2009) 5
238 Economist editor, ‘The man who screwed an entire country. A 14-page special report on Silvio Berlusconi’s Italy’, The Economist (11-06-2011)
239 Oliviero Bergamini, La democrazia della stampa. Storia del giornalismo (Roma 2010) 154
he started working. By using this scandal, speculations about the rest of Berlusconi’s career based upon this thesis will hopefully be more accurate as a result. Also, of all the corruption scandals surrounding Berlusconi, this one is the most recent as well as one of the most covered cases.

The reason why I have decided to study the second case, the Ruby-Gate, is also because it is to some extent exemplary for Berlusconi’s career. Sex scandals, or at least sexist allegations, have haunted the former PM of Italy throughout his entire life and this particular one was the most serious, as well as the most recent. Besides that, the fact that the scandal takes place in Berlusconi’s private sphere makes it even more interesting for this thesis since action in the private sphere is an often used political marketing technique of a celebrity politician (as I have argued in chapter 3.6). Both scandals took place relatively recently which makes it easier to collect the data for my research corpus. More importantly, however, since both cases are exemplary for the scandals that have surrounded Berlusconi throughout his career, they are very well suited to analyse his mediation in the different Italian papers. Because the question that remains is still: was this mediated image or persona indeed the reason Berlusconi could do what he has done for almost twenty years?

4.1.2.1 The Mills case

The David Mills case can best be described as being a corruption scandal. Mills, a British solicitor who was married to the British Labour Party politician Tessa Jowell, set up a web of offshore companies for Berlusconi in the early 1990s which were (as was later proved) used to evade tax and convey under-the-counter payments to politicians. In 2006 Mills had to stand trial for these corruption charges and during the lawsuit it became clear that in 1999, Mills received $600,000 from people linked to Berlusconi to commit perjury about Berlusconi’s involvement in the case. In 2009 Mills was found guilty of all charges, including taking a bribe, and was sentenced to four-and-a-half years in prison. In 2010, however, the Italian Cassation Court ruled a sentence of not guilty because the statute of limitations was now expired.240

Even though Mills was found guilty of taking a bribe and he officially stated that it came from Berlusconi’s people, it wasn’t until the 15th of February 2012 that Italian prosecutors officially called for a five-year prison term for Silvio Berlusconi.241 At this point the prosecutors were trying to hurry the court to reach a verdict because the charges against Berlusconi were about to expire under Italy’s new statute of limitations; the same law that set Mills free. As I’ve noted previously it was Berlusconi who changed this statute of limitation. The then widespread critique about this new law (people said Berlusconi only changed the law for his own sake) was apparent in the reports about this case as well. That is another reason why I choose to study this particular case. It is, in this sense, exemplary for other charges Il Cavaliere has faced. Out of a total of 33 trials, six didn’t reach a verdict because of

241 Ibidem
the renewed statute of limitations. The same eventually happened in this case in July 2012.

4.1.2.2 Ruby-gate

Ruby-gate is a different kind of scandal. It is a sex scandal as well as a scandal about Berlusconi’s (supposed) abuse of power. On the 6th of April 2011 a trial officially started in which Berlusconi was accused of having paid sex with a nightclub dancer Karima El Mahroug (better known by here stage name Ruby Rubacuori, meaning: Ruby the heart stealer) between February and May 2010, when she was still under the age of consent. According to the prosecution, the then 17-year-old El Mahroug stayed at Berlusconi’s Villa Arcore on several occasions (the so-called bunga-bunga parties) and that wiretaps (said to be of conversations between El Mahroug and others) indicate she had sex with Berlusconi. For this supposed crime, underage prostitution, Berlusconi could face three years in prison.

Besides that, the trial researched the accusations about Berlusconi’s supposed abuse of power. On May the 27th 2010, El Mahroug was arrested in Milan after begin accused of stealing 3,000 euros. While being questioned in prison, Berlusconi called the head of the police in Milan and pressured for her release. He claimed that the girl was related to the Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and that he tried to avoid a diplomatic crisis. El Mahroug was set free but later it became clear that she wasn’t related to the Egyptian president in any sort of way. For this supposed crime – the abuse of power – Berlusconi could face about twelve years of imprisonment.

The trial started on the 6th of April 2011 and was immediately adjourned until the 31st of May 2011. At the moment of writing, the trial still hasn’t reached a verdict.

4.2 Research method

As I have already noted in the introduction of this thesis, I test my formulated premises using a qualitative-interpretative content analysis that is based on Wester, Pleijter and Renckstorf’s method as described by Wester in 2006, as well as Philipp Mayring’s method from 2000. Wester, Pleijter and Renckstorf describe an approach which they have used in their study on German and Dutch newspapers. This approach is a qualitative-interpretative content analysis of various cases the authors say to be exemplary for their research subject. In this thesis I have used this approach as well – the cases and the newspapers I use are exemplary for the Italian situation – but I have used it in a combination with Mayring’s method from 2000. In his article about qualitative content analysis he presents a workable coding agenda that ‘works

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242 Tom Kington, ‘Silvio Berlusconi sentenced to 4 years in jail for tax fraud’, The Guardian (26-10-2012) 3
243 Ibidem
244 John Hooper, ‘Silvio Berlusconi underage sex trial begins’, The Guardian (06-04-2011) 4
245 John Hooper, ‘Silvio Berlusconi sent for trial accused of paying for sex with teenager’, The Guardian (15-02-2011) 16-17
with prior formulated, theoretical derived aspects of analysis, bringing them in connection with the text.\textsuperscript{247}

The coding scheme that Mayring used within his analysis offered a more workable approach because it forced me to define frames and operationalize them before analyzing the different texts. That was not the case with the scheme Wester, Pleijter and Renckstorf used. And since my premises are quite broadly formulated, and the main idea behind Mayring’s scheme is ‘to give explicit definitions, examples and coding rules for each category, determining exactly under what circumstances a text passage can be coded with a category’ it offered an appropriate and workable approach.\textsuperscript{248} The other steps of Wester, Pleijter and Renckstorf’s method, however, suited my research question perfectly. And since both methods are qualitative-interpretative content analyses that deal with media texts, I saw no problem in combining the two.

As for those other steps: Wester, Pleijter and Renckstorf’s method consists of an eight-step program which is necessary before drawing any conclusion.\textsuperscript{249} In this thesis, I have used the same eight-steps, but, as I explained above, for the last steps I have used Mayring’s deductive coding scheme. The work done in steps 1-4 (i.e. orienting, reading, marking and summarizing the cases) have been used in the descriptions of the cases in this chapter. The work from step 5 (i.e. making an overview of the used newspaper articles) can be found in the appendices (appendices I-VI). The work from the last three steps (i.e. formulating the interpretation frames, comparing information and interpreting the results) is done with the help of Mayring’s scheme and is explained below. The results can be found in the findings chapter, as well as in the appendices (appendix VII).

The scheme Mayring used within his research was to determine the level of self confidence in certain media texts. In order to do this, he firstly defined three different categories and established certain coding rules. When the text he analyzed fit his coding rules, it could be placed in the corresponding category.\textsuperscript{250} I have made three comparable schemes; one for each different premise. For the first premise, I have used the scheme from table 4.2.

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\textsuperscript{247} Mayring, ‘Qualitative Content Analysis’, 4-5
\textsuperscript{248} Ibidem, 5
\textsuperscript{249} Wester, ‘Interpretative inhoudsanalyse’, 197-201
\textsuperscript{250} Mayring, ‘Qualitative Content Analysis’, 4-6
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Relevant quotes</th>
<th>Coding rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 Berlusconi is good for Italy as a country</td>
<td>Arguments or quotes that show that accusations against Berlusconi are bad for Italy (or for Italian institutions, such as the judicial system)</td>
<td>(In Appendices)</td>
<td>One or more explicit arguments or quotes that support Berlusconi’s cause are used in the article, while arguments or quotes that support the oppositional cause are absent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 Neutral</td>
<td>Both arguments or quotes that show that accusations against Berlusconi are bad for Italy as well as arguments or quotes that show that Berlusconi’s behavior is bad for Italy are present in the article. Or neither arguments are present</td>
<td>(In Appendices)</td>
<td>Both sides of the spectrum are written down in the article. Or none of the arguments are mentioned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3 Berlusconi is bad for Italy as a country</td>
<td>Arguments or quotes that show that Berlusconi’s behavior is bad for Italy (or for Italian institutions, such as the judicial system)</td>
<td>(In Appendices)</td>
<td>One or more explicit arguments or quotes that support the oppositional cause are used in the article, while arguments or quotes that support Berlusconi’s cause are absent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Coding scheme used to analyze the first premise

In table 4.2 I have formulated three categories to decide whether or not Berlusconi and Italy are mediated as being the hand and the glove. As can be read in chapter 2.3, Berlusconi is keen on presenting an image of him being a patron for the entire country. My presumption was that in the situation of a crisis (a sex scandal or a corruption case) Berlusconi tries to align Italy’s fortune and faith to that of his own. He takes the position that it is unpatriotic to accuse him of any wrongdoing, since accusing him is the same as accusing the whole of Italy. It was my expectation that a pro-Berlusconi newspaper would indeed reserve more space for this argument than an anti-Berlusconi paper. The latter will presumably print more arguments that detach the two. So, when an article uses several arguments or quotes that show that accusations against Berlusconi are bad for Italy, while arguments or quotes that support the oppositional cause are absent, that article is placed in category C1. When both sides of the spectrum are written down in the article an article is placed in C2. When one or more explicit arguments or quotes that support the oppositional cause are used in the article, while arguments or quotes that support Berlusconi’s cause are absent, it is placed in C3. It is expected that most *Il Giornale* articles can be placed in C1, while *La Repubblica* articles are more likely to be placed in C3.

The actual schemes, complete with all the relevant quotes from the used articles, can be found in the appendices. The findings and conclusions based upon this and the other two schemes can be read in the next chapters.
For the second premise formulated in this thesis, I have used the scheme from Table 4.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Relevant quotes</th>
<th>Coding rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 Private sphere</td>
<td>Quotes or other parts of the text that refer solely to Berlusconi’s private life.</td>
<td>(In Appendices)</td>
<td>One or more explicit arguments or quotes that take place in Berlusconi’s private life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 non-Private sphere</td>
<td>No quotes or other parts of the text refer to Berlusconi’s private life.</td>
<td>(In Appendices)</td>
<td>No quotes or other parts of the text refer to Berlusconi’s private life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Coding scheme used to analyze the second premise

In this table I have formulated two categories that help me analyse the second premise which is that Berlusconi embodies the shift of commercial techniques from the market towards politics. Based on marketing and show business principles, I assumed that Berlusconi would attempt to ‘go personal’ to overcome (media) scandals. As noted in chapter 2.6, communication scientist John Corner states that there are three different spheres in which politicians move nowadays: the sphere of political institutions and processes, the sphere of public and popular and the private sphere. In the first sphere politicians try to establish their identity as politicians and they enjoy career development by taking on various posts and duties involving policy. The performance of politicians in this sphere is rather technical and is therefore not usually subject to direct media projection. The second sphere is that of the public and the popular, which is the fully mediated complex of settings in which politicians are seen as ‘public figures’. It is the sphere of a demonstrable representativeness and in this sphere they develop reputations, draw levels of support and are judged as good or bad. The third sphere is that of the private. The private realm and the personal background of a political figure will, of course, feature in the formation of a politician’s identity and career but it also – now, under the influence of celebrity politicians, more than ever – is being used as a resource in the manufacture of political identity and in its repair following misadventure. Such use, as Corner says, attempts to engage ‘human’ rather than ‘political’ values. When such a misadventure occurs, politicians have the possibility to ‘go personal’. The use of the private sphere in political situations is thus a major political risk, but also an enormous political opportunity, according to Corner. And based on this distinction, and the especially the fact that the private sphere can be used to overcome misadventures, my presumption is that in pro-Berlusconi papers, the discourse during a scandal such as Ruby-gate of the Mills case would more frequently be about the private sphere. I presume that pro-Berlusconi papers write about Berlusconi’s private life (C1) whilst non-Berlusconi papers will explicitly avoid discourse about his private life (C2). In other words: I presume Il Giornale articles will be placed in C1, while articles from Corriere della Sera and La Repubblica can be placed in C2.

251 Corner, Mediated Persona and Political culture, 75-76
252 Ibidem, 77
For my third and final premise I have used table 4.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Relevant quotes</th>
<th>Coding rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 Political publicity or interactive news making</td>
<td>Arguments or quotes that explain Berlusconi’s policy in a positive way.</td>
<td>(In Appendices)</td>
<td>One or more explicit arguments or quotes that highlight the positive character of Berlusconi’s policy are used in the article, while arguments or quotes that oppose Berlusconi’s cause are absent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 Both political publicity or interactive news making, as well as journalistic revelation</td>
<td>Both arguments or quotes that show that accusations against Berlusconi are bad for Italy as well as arguments or quotes that show that Berlusconi’s behavior is bad for Italy are present in the article. Or neither arguments are present</td>
<td>(In Appendices)</td>
<td>Both sides of the spectrum are written down in the article. Or none of the arguments are mentioned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3 Journalistic revelation</td>
<td>Arguments or quotes that explain Berlusconi’s policy in a negative way.</td>
<td>(In Appendices)</td>
<td>One or more explicit arguments or quotes that highlight the negative character of Berlusconi’s policy are used in the article, while arguments or quotes that support Berlusconi’s cause are absent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Coding scheme used to analyze the third premise

Table 4.4 shows the three different categories that help me analyse the third premise: in times of a scandal the Berlusconi-owned newspapers will probably be a product of political publicity or interactive news-making, while the oppositional newspaper probably will be a product of journalistic revelation (from Berlusconi’s point of view). In the above chapter about mediated persona I cite John Corner theory about the three broad types of mediation that papers use to report about the action of politicians in public life. These three are: (1) political publicity, were the news is managed by the politician and his or her staff; (2) interactive news-making, where politicians and the news media work together to build the politician’s image in the news; and (3) journalistic revelation, where the politician loses any control of his media coverage.\(^{253}\) Bases on the theory of Hallin and Mancini about the high level of political instrumentalization in the Italian media, I thought that the commercially owned Italian papers would probably be a product of interactive news-making. The owner is probably not directly involved in the making of the news but there is most likely a certain control. In other words: I thought that Il Giornale would highlight different opinions and facts about the same events than La Repubblica. The first paper will probably shed a politically beneficial light on the newsevents (category C1 in table 4.4) from Berlusconi’s point of view while the latter will presumably try to show negative facts and consequences about that same event (category C3 in table 4.4). If both sides of the spectrum are written down in the article, however, or none of the arguments are mentioned, the article belongs in the neutral category.

\(^{253}\) Corner, Mediated Persona and Political culture, 77
from table 4.4, C2. I expected that articles from the most neutral paper examined, *Corriere della Sera*, would belong to this C2 category.

For their research corpus Wester, Pleijter and Renckstorf used a sample of newspaper articles from a week prior to the event or case until a week after the event. I have done the same. For Ruby-gate, the date I have decided to use is the 6th of April 2011. This is the date that the trial against Berlusconi officially started. For the Mills case I chose the 15th of February 2012. Because even though the Mills-case was already running for years and allegations against Berlusconi were made from the beginning, this was the first time prosecutors officially called for their five-year prison term. As Wester, Pleijter and Renckstorf, I research a two week time span for which I have used the copies of the three earlier mentioned newspapers from March the 30th 2011 until the 13th of April 2011 and from February the 8th until February 22nd 2012.

For my analysis I have used 159 articles coming from three different newspapers. I have used Lexis Nexis and the on-line archives of the mentioned newspapers to find the right articles (both PDF and text). For the Ruby-gate coverage I have used the search terms “Berlusconi” and “Ruby” (I didn’t use the search term Mahroug because in most articles about the manner only the nickname “Ruby”, that became a metonym for the entire case, was mentioned instead of the name of Karima El-Mahroug). For the Mills case I have used the terms “Berlusconi” and “Mills” in my web search. With these four terms I found a total of 166 articles, of which 159 proved relevant.

All these 159 articles were read using the schemes from tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5. That means a total of 477 schemes were used. Obviously, I haven’t included all these coding schemes in the appendices. Instead, I have made twelve other schemes (appendices I-VI) that summarize the different article titles and their containing examples that can be read in combination with the schemes from tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5. The result can be found in appendix VII.

Of course, my use of method brings some limitations to this research. Most of them are the general concerns about the use of a qualitative-interpretative content analysis. For instance: the fact that in a qualitative content analysis, one first extracts the relevant parts of the text and then analyses them. That means that the method can only be used if the text itself is not

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254 Even though Berlusconi left office in November 2011, and this date is three months after his resignation, there is no reason to assume that this has any effect on the journalist content within his own media. On the one hand because no considerable editorial staff changes were made in the Berlusconi-owned media (as well as RAI by the way) in those three months and, on the other hand, because Berlusconi was still incumbent and also openly discussing his return as a PM in the near future (February 2013).

255 For the Mills case I found 8 articles in *Corriere della Sera*, 9 in *La Repubblica* and 10 in *Il Giornale* and for Ruby-gate I found 48 articles in *Corriere della Sera*, 41 in *La Repubblica* and 43 in *Il Giornale*. The *Corriere* articles were found using Lexis Nexis. Since the other two papers are not part of Lexis Nexis, I used their own websites which have similar searching devices. The seven irrelevant articles I decided not to use, were either liveblogs, photograps or webvideos. The articles downloaded from *Il Giornale* were in .pdf format. The articles from the other two newspapers were analysed using .doc format. All articles, including highlighted quotes, can be seen through the author of this thesis.

the prime subject of the examination. 257 The most important concern about the method, however, is the multi-interpretative character of the research matter. Often, texts are written in a certain context (in this case the three Italian newsrooms) but are read in a different context (as an answer to my research questions). 258 I have tried to limit this as much as possible by using Mayring’s coding scheme, but, as Mayring himself states, also his method of qualitative content analysis remains merely an interpretation of the material and should therefore be used in an explorative manner. 259 In my coding process I’ve only selected key quotes. That means that only the fragments of the articles I thought relevant were highlighted (see the below figure 4.2). By working at such a level of fragmentation, it is possible that not everything was uncovered during this research. But by strictly using the on forehand formulated definitions and coding rules, I think I’ve limited the negative effects of this method.

Figure 4.2: example of a analysed page from Il Giornale.

258 Wester, ‘interpretatieve inhoudsanalyse’, 204
259 Kohlbacher, ‘The use of qualitative content analysis’, 35
The three premises, especially the third, are all open to interpretation on my behalf, but by giving many examples in the findings chapter, I’ve tried to provide as much openness as possible.

This explorative character of my thesis doesn’t however mean that this research isn’t worthwhile. The two cases I have researched haven’t been chosen randomly. Both scandals can be seen as examples of Italian politics under Berlusconi. The same goes for the newspapers: they form, as I have tried to argue, a theoretical sample which is chosen because they represent the full spectrum of the Italian print media. I therefore hope that the explorative character of this thesis is helpful in further research.

I also have tried to make clear that Italy is a very visual country. That means that the role television journalism plays can’t be underestimated. So, while doing a research on Italian television would lead to interesting data and results, that does remain beyond the scope of this thesis. But, as I have tried to argue in the beginning of this chapter, I am assured that the conclusions of this study can, in an explorative way, be helpful in future research on Italian television and thus serves a heuristic target for the entire Italian media under Berlusconi.
Chapter 5: Findings

Some questions are difficult to leave unanswered. For me personally, there is this one question that has been fascinating me for quite a while now: why did the Italians keep re-electing Silvio Berlusconi over and over as their Prime Minister? In my search for the right answer, I’ve spent hours and hours of talking with Italian friends about this subject – first in broken Italian, but after a while I actually think they started to understand my questions. But whether they understood me or not, there always remained one problem. None of my friends could give me a satisfactory answer to why they’d allow such a man as Berlusconi to govern the country for almost 20 years? “Is it your country’s history?”, I asked them. “Is he part of your culture? Did he help create your culture?” I spoke with left-wing Italians friends, right-wing Italian friends, ashamed Italian friends, proud Italian friends and as the time passed I got more and more convinced that an important part of the answer to my question lied in the power Berlusconi has had through his media empire. And based on those conversations, but also on the newspapers and the books I read, I made the assumption that Berlusconi wasn’t re-elected due to his successful policy. No, I thought it more likely that Berlusconi was able to manipulate the electorate to some extent through his media power.

At the start of this thesis I finally wanted to test that supposition. I wanted to know how the news discourse about Berlusconi was framed in situations that would normally lead to the resignation of a politician; a scandal about a having sex with an under aged hooker, for instance. Or a large fraud case that involved bribing a judge. Luckily for me, Silvio Berlusconi was involved in exactly two of those cases and even better: they weren’t (up until now) the immediate reason for his resignation. I thought that if the news discourses reporting these scandals were indeed framed in terms that were positive of Berlusconi and his Prime Minister-ship, I could hopefully show that it has contributed to his stay in power. I could finally answer my own question.

In order to accomplish that, I formulated three testable premises throughout this thesis. Those premises are based on a variety of theories concerning Italian history, journalism in general, Italian journalism, political instrumentalization, amoral familiarism, clientelism, political marketing, celebrity politicians and mediated personae. The three premises were analyzed using a qualitative interpretative content analysis.

It took me a lot of conversations; euro’s spent on books and papers and 66 pages of thesis, but the findings from that analysis – the findings that may help me answer that fascinating question about Silvio Berlusconi – are presented in this chapter.

5.1 The hand and the glove

The first researched premise was about whether or not Berlusconi and Italy are mediated as being the hand and the glove. As can be read in chapter 2.3, Berlusconi is keen on presenting an image of him being a patron for the entire country. My presumption was that in the situation of a crisis (a sex scandal or a corruption case) Berlusconi tries to align Italy’s fortune and faith to that of his own. He takes the position that it is unpatriotic to accuse him of any wrongdoing, since accusing him is the same as accusing the whole of Italy. It was my expectation that a pro-Berlusconi newspaper would indeed reserve more space for this
argument than an anti-Berlusconi paper. The latter would presumably print more arguments that detach the two.

It was expected that from the three papers, Il Giornale printed the most articles that could be placed in category C1 (Berlusconi is good for Italy as a country) while category C3 (Berlusconi is bad for Italy as a country), on the other hand, was most likely to be filled with La Repubblica articles. Since Corriere della Sera is considered to be the most neutral paper, it was expected that the percentage Corriere articles placed in C2 (the neutral category) was the highest.

The results of my research supported these expectations. 25 per cent of the Il Giornale articles were indeed placed in C1, against only 6 per cent of the Corriere della Sera articles in this category and only 3.5 per cent of the La Repubblica articles. In C2, the most broadly formulated category, the percentage of Corriere was indeed the highest; 77 per cent against 74 per cent from La Repubblica and 75 per cent from Il Giornale. In the last category, C3, Il Giornale again showed expected percentages. None of the researched articles were placed in this category. The other two papers also showed expected results, albeit that Corriere della Sera seems less neutral than presumed. 19.5 per cent from the papers articles were placed in the third (anti-Berlusconi) category while only 3.5 per cent of the articles belong in the first (pro-Berlusconi) category. For La Repubblica this percentage is still far from balanced, but with 20 per cent in C3 against 6 per cent in C1 it is more balanced than Corriere della Sera. This could mean that the rather neutral Corriere della Sera is more anti-Berlusconi than the left-wing oppositional paper La Repubblica.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C1: Berlusconi is good for Italy (%)</th>
<th>C2: neutral (%)</th>
<th>C3: Berlusconi is bad for Italy (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Il Giornale – Ruby-gate</td>
<td>10 (23)</td>
<td>33 (77)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il Giornale – Mills case</td>
<td>3 (30)</td>
<td>7 (70)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Il Giornale</td>
<td>13 (25)</td>
<td>40 (75)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corriere – Ruby-gate</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>36 (75)</td>
<td>11 (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corriere – Mills case</td>
<td>1 (12.5)</td>
<td>7 (87.5)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Corriere</td>
<td>2 (3.5)</td>
<td>43 (77)</td>
<td>11 (19.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repubblica – Ruby-gate</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
<td>31 (76)</td>
<td>9 (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repubblica – Mills case</td>
<td>2 (22)</td>
<td>6 (67)</td>
<td>1 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Repubblica</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>37 (74)</td>
<td>10 (20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Number of articles that state that Berlusconi is good for Italy (percentages in brackets)

Based on these numbers, a couple of conclusion can be drawn. Il Giornale is the paper that mostly benefits Berlusconi by presenting the image that it is very unpatriotic to attack Berlusconi. He is mediated as if he’s indeed the patron of Italy. Besides that, Il Giornale is also the least balanced of the three papers. The 75 per cent of the Il Giornale articles in C2 is normal in comparison to the other two (77 per cent and 74 per cent), but the 25 per cent in C1 is very high. It needs no explanation that the zero per cent in C3 is low. This is also seen
through the examples I’ve marked during my analysis. In an *Il Giornale* article about the Mills case, for instance, the following line can be read:

> I do not suffer for me, but for the Italians. I am very good in resisting these allegations, but if they are directed against a normal citizen, that means the end for him.  

This quote is from an open letter Berlusconi send to *Il Giornale* (which was printed on the front page). In it, he explains why, according to him, it is wrong to accuse him of any wrongdoing in the Mills case. He says that by attacking him, the magistrate is enabled to attack the normal citizens as well; normal citizens who are helpless. It is of course a perfect example of Berlusconi trying to align his faith with that of Italy. Nobody is in fact accusing normal citizens of any wrongdoing. The interesting aspect about this quote, however, is not the fact that it is printed per se – the PM of the country said it, which is of course news – but the fact that the other side of the story is totally absent in the article. This quote was also printed in *La Repubblica* for instance, but that article was placed in the second category, C2, because of the presence of quotes from the opposition. In *Il Giornale*, on the other hand, those oppositional sounds are absent. The following quote is from an analysis that was printed on the front page next to the open letter.

> In a letter that the PM has given us yesterday, one can read the pain of a man who does not have peace with the injustice that is going on. This suffering is a price too high, we say, for a man trying to change this country for the better.

So instead of questioning Berlusconi’s statements, or giving voice to the opposition, *Il Giornale* not only lets Berlusconi align his own faith to that of Italy printing his entire letter, the paper even helps him by explaining in a front page article why it is bad for the country to accuse him of any wrongdoing.

In the reports about Ruby-gate a similar image is seen. In the following front page article, for instance, an imaginary conversation between the reader and a foreigner takes place.

> He asks you: has this incident damaged Italy’s position in the world? And you answer, yes, it was a damage to the image and credibility of Italy and its government. But then he asks you if it was him [Berlusconi, jvdp] that showed the world this ugly private story. No, you have to answer. It wasn’t him who unveiled the story. Somebody else activated so many people and spent so much money to spy on him and eventually had him disgraced in the newspapers and on television on a daily basis.

Not only is it remarkable that this opinion based article (N.B. not a column, an actual news piece) is printed on the front page, it is even stranger that the other side of the argument is totally absent. The only point made is that the “left wing” magistrate deliberately disgraced

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260 See appendix II Table II.2 number 6 for the original Italian quote
261 See appendix II Table II.2 number 5 for the original Italian quote
262 See appendix I Table I.2 number 14 for the original Italian quote
Berlusconi by spending a lot of money. Consequently, the image and credibility of Italy were damaged. A last example (again a story at a prominent place - page 3) paints a similar picture.

The whole world has made fun of the now universal term bunga-bunga, everywhere in the world people now think about what happens in the bed of Il Cavaliere. Everybody has followed him step by step, during dinner, after dinner, in his bedroom. (...) These allegations hurt the credibility of the entire system, also the credibility of Italian politics. 263

It is again a quote by Berlusconi (the last sentence) which is interpreted by the journalist without any serious attention for the other side of the argument. Therefore it is again a perfect example of a C1 article (Berlusconi is good for Italy) that is placed at a very prominent place in the paper.

Of course, only 25 per cent of the articles from Il Giornale were placed the first category. The rest of the articles gave some sort of voice to oppositional opinions. But the fact that none of the articles from this paper, not even letters from readers or opinion columns only gave voice to the argument that not the accusations against Berlusconi, but Berlusconi himself is bad for Italy leads me to the conclusion that Il Giornale, more than the other two papers, mediated Berlusconi as though he is the patron of the entire country. The fact that the articles placed in C1 mostly had a prominent place in the paper only strengthens this conclusion. If you accuse Berlusconi of any wrongdoing, according to Il Giornale, you aren’t doing Italy a favor.

But, as we know, Il Giornale isn’t the only paper in Italy. La Repubblica is considered anti-Berlusconi and, according to my research, proves to be so. Whereas 25 per cent of the Il Giornale articles were outspokenly pro-Berlusconi, 20 per cent of the articles from La Repubblica were placed in C3 (Berlusconi is bad for Italy) and can be considered anti-Berlusconi.

The following quote is from an article about democracy day (an event that Il Giornale found unfit to print), where oppositional leader Pier Luigi Bersani is very critical about Berlusconi.

Bersani: “They are humiliating Italy” (...) “We're here against the laws ad personam that the prime minister continues to use in order to save himself. We are here to demand justice. We are here because the law is equal for everyone. We're here and we'll move along the path of the laws. We will go to the Senate, we will go to the Quirinal [the presidential palace, jvdp]. We will still be here tomorrow.” (...) “He will never go away, Berlusconi will never surrender. But this is not Libya, this is not Egypt. I'm tired.” (...) “What the majority decided today is that Ruby is the niece of Mubarak! Berlusconi thus puts us in a position of pure humiliation and utter shame before the entire world. It is a shame!” 264

263 See appendix I Table I.2 number 18 for the original Italian quote
264 See appendix V Table V.2 number 18 for the original Italian quote
Bersani here basically says that Berlusconi is responsible for Italy’s bad image in the rest of the world. Even though this article is rather long and placed at a prominent place in the paper (page 2-3) nobody from Berlusconi’s party is quoted to talk about their side of the story nor does the journalist put things in perspective. Another example of this mode of working comes from a short article, printed the same day. The only quote in the article was the following:

The Berlusconi government hinders the functioning of the judicial system.265

The rest of the article consisted of an explanation of this quote. The arguments that support this view were shorty outlined, and two examples were given. The other side of the story, Berlusconi’s side, stayed totally unheard and therefore this is a perfect example of a C3 article in La Repubblica. Based on this, a reader could only conclude that Berlusconi is the one who is bad for Italy.

So looking at the examples, as well as the percentages (20 per cent for La Repubblica in C3, 25 per cent for Il Giornale in C1) the two papers are almost equally politically colored. The major difference between La Repubblica and Il Giornale, however, isn’t just the political preference. In Il Giornale no room is reserved for articles in C3, while La Repubblica did devote some attention (6 per cent of the articles) to stories with a strong pro-Berlusconi perspective. Some were letters from readers, or opinion based columns, but the voices were apparent none the less.

“I'm sorry that you have to witness this situation, but you have to believe me, I had nothing to do with these allegations. I'm sorry but I have to defend myself against these absurd attacks. (...) As always, the judges do whatever they want. (...) The Ruby trial hurts the credibility of the entire system, also the credibility of Italian politics’.” 266

The above quote is a good example of a C1 article in La Repubblica. It comes from a short article about a speech Berlusconi gave during a campaign rally. Apparently La Repubblica found the fact that the PM responded to the allegations newsworthy enough to write an article about.

A last conclusion that can be drawn based on my analysis of the first premise is that Corriere della Sera proved to be less neutral than expected, especially in comparison with La Repubblica. Whereas 6 per cent of the La Repubblica articles are supporting Berlusconi’s cause only 3.5 per cent of the articles in Corriere della Sera do so. Especially in reports about Ruby-gate, Corriere della Sera takes a very anti-Berlusconi standpoint.

Bersani, elegant on the stage, says that “politics and unions must go hand in hand and the opposition must be united: there can be a better Italy!” (...) He lists the sins of Berlusconi: “Parliament that certifies Ruby as the niece of Mubarak, the case of illegal immigrants, the

265 See appendix V Table V.2 number 20 for the original Italian quote
266 See appendix V Table V.2 number 14 for the original Italian quote
aftercare after the earthquake, the turnaround concerning Gaddafi: “He humiliates us in front of the entire world.”

This article is about the earlier mentioned event, democracy day, organized by Pier Luigi Bersani. *Il Giornale* made no notice of it, but *La Repubblica*, as well as *Corriere della Sera* did. Just as in *La Repubblica* however, *Corriere della Sera* quoted nobody from Berlusconi’s party, nor were there any interpretative sentences that put these very anti-Berlusconi quotes in any perspective. And in 19.5 per cent of all the *Corriere della Sera* articles examined, this was actually the case. In we have seen: 25 per cent of the articles in *Il Giornale* and 20 per cent of the *La Repubblica* articles leaned to one way or another. This shows that *Corriere della Sera* is almost just as politically colored as the other two papers examined. The only major difference between the other two papers and *Corriere della Sera* is that the non-neutral articles were placed in less prominent places in the newspaper. The above fragment, for example, was printed on page 11.

As I’ve said before, most of the non-neutral articles in *Corriere della Sera* were anti-Berlusconi, but there were also several articles (3.5 per cent) that only showed a pro-Berlusconi standpoint (concerning his tendency to align his own faith to that of Italy). This leads me to the conclusion that *Corriere della Sera* is indeed more balanced than *Il Giornale* (with zero per cent in C3) but less balanced than *La Repubblica* (with 6 per cent in C1).

It has to be said though, that the neutral C2 articles in *Corriere della Sera* were not all fair and balanced. The neutral category is a difficult one within this research. Because both sides of the argument are written down in an article (or none of the arguments), one might assume that the articles within this category are objective, neutral and balanced. That, however, is not always the case. For instance: the place of both arguments within the article, as well as the amount of space reserved for one side or the other, or the presence of interpretative sentences, are not taken into consideration in the results of this research. They do however exist and matter. C2 articles from *Il Giornale*, for instance, are somewhat pro-Berlusconi, even though both sides of the argument are heard. The same goes for some of the *La Repubblica* articles in C2. The following quote, for example, is a typical C2 article from *La Repubblica*.

"Instead of governing, I'm here", says Berlusconi. He talks, talks, talks without taking a break. "We know that these processes are here for the media. I cannot understand how a prime minister is put in a situation like this, with accusations that are unfounded and absurd. Inventions made up by prosecutors that are completely detached from reality." (…) Relentlessly, every phrase is a cliché. Never a fact, never an example, never a good argument. Only ideology (…) During the applause, he is able to celebrate himself in a narcissistic delirium, his virtues, his life and incite the champions of freedom against the “enemy of Italy”, the judiciary.

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267 See appendix III Table III.2 number 18 for the original Italian quote
268 See appendix V Table V.2 number 40 for the original Italian quote
In this article, which was placed in the neutral C2 category, Berlusconi is able to make his point, but his point is interpreted in such a way that the article is anti-Berlusconi none the less. Of course, some of the C2 articles are more neutral than this one. But fact is that most of the La Repubblica articles, as well as the articles from Il Giornale in the same category, were leaning heavily to being pro- or anti-Berlusconi, means that even though the bulk of the articles was in the neutral category, that doesn’t mean that the bulk of the paper is neutral.

It was however presumed that the C2 articles from Corriere della Sera were in fact neutral. That was not the case.

Berlusconi speaks of a "surreal morning." Accusations that are "based on nothing and are absurd." It is a process "of the media." "Lost time." He attacks the magistrates. "You threw mud on the Prime Minister, his government and his country – you accused the Prime Minister – in a time where we should all be as strong as possible to defend ourselves in the international arena. The judges do not work for the country, they work against our country." (...) The reactions to the prime minister’s show come very shortly after he is finished. Emanuele Fiano says: "We are dealing a President of the Council whose behavior is at the limits of subversion: the highest representative of the executive power, who arranges a stage rally outside the courthouse in Milan to shout and scream against the judiciary. That is unacceptable. Berlusconi is a broken record and its litany is to no interest to anyone. Italians are tired." 

The article continues by quoting two other members of the opposition. Berlusconi has no more quotes in the article. It is striking that while the quotes from the opposition are printed entirely, Berlusconi’s quotes are largely fragmented and paraphrased. He is able to stress his point (that the dirt thrown at him hurts the country), but the counter-arguments get more attention and space. Besides that, the journalist takes the liberty to define Berlusconi’s defence as a ‘show’. So, even though this article is placed in the neutral C2 category, a reader may put some serious question marks at Berlusconi’s line of reasoning and lean towards the standpoint of the opposition. This is only one example, but during my research I noted that most of the C2 articles in Corriere della Sera had a very anti-Berlusconi tone. Even more than the C2 articles in La Repubblica.

So, based on this analysis one can state that the anti-Berlusconi paper La Repubblica presents slightly more balanced reports concerning my first premise than the pro-Berlusconi paper Il Giornale, but that the neutral paper Corriere della Sera is not so neutral after all. It is in fact a very anti-Berlusconi paper, even more so than La Repubblica. In chapter three I already discussed Hallin and Mancini’s conclusion about the high level of political instrumentalization in the Italian printed media. They state that due to the way the Italian press history has evolved, nowadays the Italian media are used for political instrumentalization rather than being neutral or impartial. My research showed that this was indeed the case. With percentages between 74 and 77 per cent, the amount of neutral C2

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269 See appendix III Table III.2 number 44 for the original Italian quote
270 Hallin and Mancini, Comparing media systems, 37
articles was still rather high, but a closer look at those particular articles showed that they were also very politically colored. For Silvio Berlusconi himself, this was even truer. In 75 per cent of the analyzed Il Giornale articles the paper gives room for strong suggestions that accusations and allegations against Berlusconi are bad for Italy, while they almost completely embrace that line of reasoning in the other 25 per cent of the articles.

Based on the in chapter two discussed theories on Italian clientelism I also argued that it is plausible that in a time of crisis Berlusconi would try to use this system of political instrumentalization – which indeed exists according to my research – to align his own fate to that of Italy. Due to a history of suppression, certain parts of the country suffer from a severe lack of social capital and a high level of distrust and amoral familiarism. Those are, not coincidentally, the parts of the country in which Berlusconi receives the most votes because those voters are historically more sensitive or susceptible to vertically based patron-client relationships. That is a relationship in which the client pays the patron loyalty and votes, and in return, the patron offers him economical protection. If a patron is weak, that has severe consequences for the protection of the clientele: hurting a patron, hurts his clientele.

For Berlusconi it is thus very important that the Italians living in those parts of the country – his potential electorate – indeed think that he is the right leader for them; that he and Italy belong together. Because if those Italians see Berlusconi as their patron, it means that hurting him with accusations in a time of crisis is the same as hurting the entire country. Or even more important: that it is the same as hurting them personally. So if Berlusconi wants to keep winning votes in those parts of Italy – or if he wants to overcome a crisis – it is vital that he has to keep reminding those potential voters of their patron-client relationship.

This research shows that Berlusconi indeed has that tendency. “I do not suffer for me, but for the Italians”, he kept on saying in the three papers examined. “I am personally very good in resisting these allegations, but if they are directed against a normal citizen, that means the end for him.”271 Hurting me, he repeated to every journalist who wanted to hear it (especially those paid by him), is the same as hurting Italy.

So not only does the former prime minister tries to come across as the country’s patron, my research also shows that during these two scandals, the paper his family owns, Il Giornale, perfectly enables him to mediate his persona according to that image. And in Italy, it is possible to accomplish that without raising too much public fury since political instrumentalization is a persistent part of the Italian (press) history; just as Berlusconi slowly tries to become.

5.2 Going personal

The second researched premise was that Berlusconi embodies the shift of commercial techniques from the market towards politics. I thought that, based on marketing and show business principles, Berlusconi would attempt to ‘go personal’ to overcome (media) scandals. As the celebrity politician Berlusconi is, he would probably use discourse from his private life as a resource in the manufacture of his political identity as well as in its repair following misadventures (such as Ruby-gate or the Mills-case). This can be seen as attempts to engage

271 See appendix II Table II.2 number 6 for the original Italian quote
in ‘human’ rather than ‘political’ values. In the first chapter of this thesis I write about Berlusconi’s autobiography *Una Storia Italia* which he wrote prior to the (for him very successful) 2001 election. It is a perfect example of using ones private life in the manufacture of one’s political identity. My presumption was that Berlusconi would use the same ‘technique’ to overcome misadventure. But this time not through a book sent to every Italian, but through the mass media. In other words: I presumed that in pro-Berlusconi papers, such as *Il Giornale*, the discourse during such misadventures (or scandals) would more frequently make use of Berlusconi’s private life (C1), whilst in non-Berlusconi papers the discourse wouldn’t be about his private life (C2). I thus presumed that more *Il Giornale* articles would be placed in C1 than articles from the other two papers, since discourse about Berlusconi private life most likely has a positive effect on how he’s perceived. My research, however, showed otherwise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C1: Discourse about Berlusconi’s private life (%)</th>
<th>C2: No discourse about Berlusconi’s private life (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Il Giornale</em> – Ruby-gate</td>
<td>11 (26)</td>
<td>32 (74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Il Giornale</em> – Mills case</td>
<td>5 (50)</td>
<td>5 (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Il Giornale</strong></td>
<td><strong>16 (30)</strong></td>
<td><strong>37 (70)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Corriere – Ruby-gate</em></td>
<td>10 (21)</td>
<td>38 (79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Corriere – Mills case</em></td>
<td>2 (25)</td>
<td>6 (75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Corriere</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 (21)</strong></td>
<td><strong>44 (77)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Repubblica</em> – Ruby-gate*</td>
<td>15 (37)</td>
<td>26 (63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Repubblica</em> – Mills case*</td>
<td>5 (56)</td>
<td>4 (44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Repubblica</strong></td>
<td><strong>20 (40)</strong></td>
<td><strong>30 (60)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2: Number of articles in which Berlusconi goes personal (percentages in brackets)

As can be seen in table 5.2, *La Repubblica*, unexpectedly, lets Berlusconi go more personal than *Il Giornale*. The third paper on the other hand, *Corriere della Sera*, shows low figures in comparison to the other two (only 21 per cent in C1). This could (again) mean that *Corriere della Sera* is the most anti-Berlusconi newspaper of the three since a discourse that makes use of Berlusconi’s private life, can be seen as being beneficial for Berlusconi’s cause.

Of course, the fact that *La Repubblica* has higher percentages in C1 than *Il Giornale*, doesn’t automatically equal a better result for Berlusconi’s cause. As can be read below, eventual articles are completely different. Quotes about Berlusconi’s private life in *La Repubblica* are almost constantly accompanied by negative interpretations. That is not the case in articles about Berlusconi’s private life in *Il Giornale*. The percentages do however show that the discourse in *Il Giornale* and *La Repubblica* is for a very large part about Berlusconi’s private life, meaning that in these two papers, Berlusconi’s actions in the sphere of political institutions and processes, to which especially the Mills allegations actually belong, is less discussed than his actions in the less relevant private sphere. So based on these numbers one could conclude that thanks to a successful mediation, readers from *Il Giornale* and *La Repubblica* have read less articles about the (relevant) institutional aspects and
consequences of the both scandals than readers from *Corriere della Sera* (all three papers approximately wrote the same amount of articles about the cases) and have read more (irrelevant) articles about Berlusconi’s private life – whether or not those articles were positive or negative.

As I’ve said before, there are differences between the way ‘going personal’ is written down in an article. The following example is from a *La Repubblica* article about the Mills-case.

In a letter to *Il Giornale* about the Mills-case, Berlusconi laments about "the fury of some judges" against his "image of man." (...) "I have served my country - he writes – with all my all my strength for years and I'm rewarded with the fury of some prosecutors in Milan; a fury that has no equal in history. They want to completely destroy my image of a man, an entrepreneur and a politician. (...) At the end of a hard working lifetime as a professional politician as well as an entrepreneur, I am treated worse than a criminal."\(^{272}\)

This article is about a 300 words open letter Berlusconi send to *Il Giornale*. *La Repubblica* did not print the full letter, as *Il Giornale* did, but they did give Berlusconi the opportunity to ‘go personal’. The phrases “With all my strength for years”, “My image of a man” but also “At the end of a hard working lifetime” and “I am treated worse than a criminal”, all point to Berlusconi’s private emotions. They thus belong to his private sphere as defined by John Corner. These emotions, in essence, should have nothing to do with his functioning as a public figure. The allegations made against him in the Mills case have nothing to do with his private life and belong to the sphere of political institutions and processes. So the fact that he uses private sphere discourse on a matter which essentially belongs to the sphere of political institutions and processes makes it very plausible that Berlusconi, like a celebrity politician would do, indeed uses his private life to overcome public misadventures.

The above quote in *La Repubblica* is from an approximately 800-word article in which Berlusconi gets three 60-word quotes, all similar to the above and at least partly about his private life. Of course, the article first interprets his undertone as “lamenting”, but Berlusconi get almost 200 words to talk about his private life none the less.

*Corriere della Sera* also devoted attention to the letter (it belonged to the 21 per cent of their articles that talked about Berlusconi’s private life) but in that article none of the above quotes were printed entirely. The article, which was on page 13, was 520 words and discussed both the official accusation in the Mills case, as well as Berlusconi’s answer in the open letter to *Il Giornale*. The other papers devoted separate articles to the two news facts.

The request for a five-year sentence in the Mills case is "absolute defamation" of a system devised to put him to “shame on the international stage,” to injure not only "my image as a man”, but also “my family”.\(^{273}\)

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272 See appendix VI Table VI.2 number 7 for the original Italian quote

273 See appendix IV Table IV.2 number 5 for the original Italian quote
As can be read, this quote is at least partly about Berlusconi’s private life ("my image as a man" and "my family"), but the quote was also largely cut into pieces and paraphrased. Therefore, the effect is entirely different. Berlusconi’s most extreme words are constantly questioned by placing them in between quotation marks. The rest of his sentences are almost literally paraphrased, but paraphrased none the less. This, by the way, is a way of writing that Corriere della Sera often uses in articles concerning Berlusconi. By highlighting the most extreme parts of Berlusconi’s sentences, which are often the crux of his argument, using double quotation marks, the paper indicates that those words should be read with an ironic undertone. The quotation marks basically say that especially these highlighted parts of Berlusconi’s views are not the views of the paper.\(^{274}\)

Il Giornale, as I’ve said before, printed Berlusconi’s entire 300-word letter. This means that in this paper (concerning this particular news event) Berlusconi gets the best podium for his tendency to ‘go personal’. The following quote, for example, was only printed in Il Giornale but is also the most direct example of discourse in Berlusconi’s private sphere in the entire letter.

The understanding I have from situation, in combination with the affinity from my family and those who love and know me, gives me the strength to continue the battle for the full recognition of my complete innocence.\(^{275}\)

The fact that this personal quote wasn’t printed in La Repubblica nor in Corriere della Sera again shows that even though an article is placed is the C1 category it doesn’t automatically devote the same attention to Berlusconi’s private life as other articles in the same category. So the fact that La Repubblica has higher percentages in C1 than Il Giornale, doesn’t automatically equal a better result for Berlusconi’s cause. It is, in fact, quite the opposite. The eventual results are completely different.

Out of the three, Corriere della Sera is the only paper that shows a Meta perspective and explicitly writes about Berlusconi’s usage of his private life for political gain. It is thus the only paper that openly disapproves of it and tries to ignore it as much as possible. In the following article is explained why (in 21 per cent of the articles) the paper sometimes pays attention to it nonetheless.

The allegations are serious (but the presumption of innocence is the cornerstone of our legal culture) and not only affect the private life of a person, but serve to establish credibility, consistency, honesty, common sense and responsibility to a leader.\(^{276}\)

Besides the fact that ‘going personal’ forms an important part of the Prime Minister’s defense, especially in the Mills case (which makes it newsworthy already), this article explains that since Berlusconi is an important public figure, accusations in the Ruby-gate scandal are indeed private, but also important to print since Berlusconi is seen as an international symbol

\(^{274}\) Martha J. Kolln, Rhetorical Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects (New York 2006)

\(^{275}\) See appendix II Table II.2 number 5 for the original Italian quote

\(^{276}\) See appendix III Table III.2 number 11 for the original Italian quote
for Italy. If he is perceived as dishonest and inconsistent, that has severe effects on Italy’s credibility in the rest of the world.

In a column from Corriere della Sera written by Luigi Ferrarella, who also writes most of the news pieces about Berlusconi, the paper’s view against Berlusconi’s (miss)use of the private sphere is again very clear. By calling him “citizen” Berlusconi up to four times using quotation brackets Ferrarella makes sure the reader knows he disapproves of the PM’s tendency to use discourse from his private life while, at that moment, being a public figure.

One would assume that La Repubblica shares a similar view since the paper is outspokenly anti-Berlusconi. The numbers however shows that the paper fails to ignore Berlusconi’s tendency to ‘go personal’, especially in comparison to Corriere della Sera. Of course, the discourse about Berlusconi’s private life in La Repubblica is mostly framed in an anti-Berlusconi matter (see the next paragraph, 5.3), but the fact that the paper writes about Berlusconi’s private life twice as much as Corriere della Sera may indicate that the paper has a more tabloid approach that the neutral paper.

It has to be said though, that the private nature of the Ruby-gate also led to some confusing reports in Il Giornale. As can be read in the above quote from Berlusconi’s open letter to Il Giornale about the Mills case, he explicitly ‘goes personal’ by talking about his personal hard work and his family. During the Ruby-gate reports, however, he is often quoted saying all the accusations about his private life are a disgrace.

In a front page article in Il Giornale, for instance, Berlusconi sums up the facts surrounding Ruby-gate and then says: “Tutto il resto è semplice intrusion, per di più violenta, nella vita private di persone maggiorenni.” (Everything else that is written is an intrusion, in a really violent manner, in the private lives of adults).

The article continues by discussing the consequences of this intrusion in Berlusconi’s private life, taking the discourse back into the place it, according to this quote, shouldn’t be: the private sphere. The same can be read in the following quote.

"We pursue crime and we do not care about the private lives of people." A statement that, these days, can safely be explained as: the whole world has made fun of the now universal term bunga-bunga, everywhere in the world people now think about what happens in the bed of Il Cavaliere. Everybody has followed him step by step, during dinner, after dinner, in his bedroom.

This article, which was printed in a prominent page 3 place, is a perfect example of the Il Giornale coverage during Ruby-gate. It has a strong focus on his private life and the political consequences are mostly ignored. The “attacks” (which is a strong frame already) are portrayed as being personal and having nothing to do with the fact that Berlusconi was (or was not) abusing his power. Even the fact that prostitution (let alone underage prostitution) is

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277 The fact that Ferrarella writes a separate opinion based article about the thin line between the private sphere and the public sphere also shows the paper’s tendency to keep the two spheres separated whenever possible.
278 See appendix III Table III.2 number 41 for the original Italian quote
279 See appendix I Table I.2 number 9 for the original Italian quote
280 See appendix I Table I.2 number 18 for the original Italian quote
illegal, isn’t fully discussed. Whatever happens between Berlusconi’s bed sheets, the paper seems to say, whether it is legal or not, is a private matter, and thus remains Berlusconi’s business.

It is ironic that Berlusconi uses his private life to spin the news about the Mills-case, but at the same time accuses the opposition of misusing that private life in the Ruby-gate allegations. In the next quote, for instance, which comes from a page 6 article in Il Giornale, the journalist explicitly laments the use of private matters by the opposition. First, he states that all great statesmen (Vittorio Emmanuele, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King) had to deal with some sort of sex scandal, so that the only real problem is the opposition’s abuse of the private sphere.

But the problem remains that the relationship between the public sphere and the private sphere is turned upside down. Once, not so long ago, the values, beliefs and cultural background of a politician were considered part of the public sphere while sex, orientation, the intimate life were part of the private sphere. 281

The same line of reasoning, namely that the opposition uses Berlusconi’s actions in the private sphere against him, is used in the following quote from an article that was printed on page 2 of Il Giornale:

You hear nothing about terrorism or the mafia: Boccassini & Co. only think about the private lives of Il Cavaliere and his friends. 282

During the Mills-case, Berlusconi himself directed the discourse, with success, into his private life by, for instance, sending an open letter to Il Giornale that became news in all three papers. During Ruby-gate, his defense consisted of attacking the opposition because they ‘misused his private life’. The papers consequently quoted Berlusconi saying that the ‘attack’, was hurtful to his career, as well as his private life, cleverly directing the discourse back to the private sphere.

So, in conclusion, it can be stated that during both Ruby-gate and the Mills case Berlusconi – like a true celebrity politician – tried to use his private life as a resource in the repair of his political identity following misadventures. These attempts to engage ‘human’ rather than ‘political’ during Ruby-gate and the Mills case were not only endorsed by his own media, but also by the oppositional newspaper La Repubblica. He knew how to be in the center of attention because, as I argued, thanks to his marketing background he is very well trained in optimizing the discourse about him using vocal, iconic and kinetic techniques. This research showed that in a very large part of the articles written about Berlusconi – whether they were positive or negative towards his point of view – Berlusconi’s private life was discussed instead of the consequences of the allegations on a more institutional level. This means that Berlusconi’s use of his private life in political situations was not only adequate (a final verdict in Ruby-gate has yet to come at the time of writing, and for the Mills-case, Berlusconi hasn’t spent one day in prison) but it was above all mediated very successfully.

281 See appendix I Table I.2 number 30 for the original Italian quote
282 See appendix I Table I.2 number 34 for the original Italian quote
5.3 Interactive news-making

According to media historians Hallin and Mancini owning an Italian newspaper plays a key role in the ability to influence the political process. As noted earlier, the Italian media are used for political instrumentalization rather than being neutral or impartial and because of Italy’s (press) history citizens have grown accustomed to this practice. They accept it because for them it is normal. In the case of Berlusconi this political instrumentalization happens through the mediation of his own persona. He is marketed using the same techniques Berlusconi used selling vacuum cleaners, houses and whatnot. Voters are therefore presented with a type of celebrity politician that is anti-establishment and thus able to solve all their problems. As outlined in chapter three, there are three broad types of mediation that are being used to mediate a politician’s persona; three types of mediation that report about the action of politicians in public life.

When news about the politician is managed by the politician himself or his or her staff, it is called political publicity. When politicians and the news media work together in the construction of the politician’s image in the press, the process is called interactive news-making. One speaks of journalistic revelation when the politician has no direct control of his coverage in that particular medium.

The third and final researched premise was that in times of a scandal the Berlusconi-owned newspapers would probably be a product of interactive news-making or, less likely, political publicity while the oppositional newspaper would probably be a product of journalistic revelation (from Berlusconi’s point of view). On a practical, researchable level that led to the presumption that Il Giornale probably highlights different opinions and facts than La Repubblica about the same news events. The former is supposed to shed a politically beneficial light on the news events (category C1 in table 5.3) while the latter would, presumably, try to show negative facts and consequences about those same newsevents (category C3 in table 5.3). If both sides of the spectrum were written down in the article, or none of the arguments were mentioned, the article belonged in the neutral C2 category. It was expected that most articles from the neutral paper Corriere della Sera belonged to this category.

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283 Hallin and Mancini, Comparing media systems, 114
Table 5.3 Number of articles that shine a beneficial light on Berlusconi’s cause (percentages in brackets)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>C1: Berlusconi is highlighted in a positive manner (%)</th>
<th>C2: Berlusconi is neither highlighted in a negative nor in a positive manner (%)</th>
<th>C3: Berlusconi is highlighted in a negative manner (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Il Giornale – Ruby-gate</td>
<td>27 (63)</td>
<td>16 (37)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Il Giornale – Mills case</td>
<td>9 (90)</td>
<td>1 (10)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Il Giornale</strong></td>
<td><strong>36 (68)</strong></td>
<td><strong>17 (32)</strong></td>
<td><strong>0 (0)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corriere – Ruby-gate</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>26 (54)</td>
<td>19 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corriere – Mills case</td>
<td>2 (25)</td>
<td>4 (50)</td>
<td>2 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Corriere</strong></td>
<td><strong>5 (9)</strong></td>
<td><strong>30 (53.5)</strong></td>
<td><strong>21 (37.5)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repubblica – Ruby-gate</td>
<td>5 (12)</td>
<td>21 (51)</td>
<td>15 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repubblica – Mills case</td>
<td>3 (33)</td>
<td>2 (22)</td>
<td>4 (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Repubblica</strong></td>
<td><strong>8 (16)</strong></td>
<td><strong>23 (46)</strong></td>
<td><strong>19 (38)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be read from Table 5.3, especially Il Giornale shows the expected numbers. 68 per cent of all the articles (90 per cent in the Mills case coverage) mainly highlight positive effects of Berlusconi’s policy, while none of the articles about the two cases only highlight the negative effects of the same policy. Not even letters from readers or opinion based columns. That means it is highly plausible that Il Giornale is a product of interactive news-making, maybe even political publicity (again: zero per cent of the articles were anti-Berlusconi). As for La Repubblica and Corriere della Sera: they again show the same outcomes as during the other two premises. Even though Corriere della Sera has the most articles in C2 (53.5 per cent), it has almost the same amount of articles as La Repubblica in the anti-Berlusconi category C3 (37.5 versus 38 per cent), and even less articles in the pro-Berlusconi category C1 (9 versus 16 per cent). That means that, based on these figures, Corriere della Sera is not only less neutral than expected, but also more anti-Berlusconi than the left-wing paper La Repubblica. It also means that, as expected, it is very unlikely that these two papers are a product of interactive news-making from Berlusconi’s point of view. Too many negative articles about Berlusconi are printed in both the papers.

Before I continue with this paragraph, I want to restate some important limitations concerning this premise. Out of the three premises, this one was the most difficult one to research because terms as “politically beneficial” or “negative facts and consequences”, are of course flexible and open to interpretation. Therefore the outcome remains slightly speculative. The examples used, do however show that there was often no discussion possible. If Berlusconi’s policy was defined as a “pile of crap”, as was done in one of the articles, it is extremely unlikely that that article was a product of interactive news-making from Berlusconi’s point of view. It was thus labeled as journalistic revelation; Berlusconi clearly wasn’t involved with this article since this typification is bad for his image. If, on the other hand, all the criminal allegations made against Berlusconi were typified as efforts “only to bring down the government”, it was
labeled as a product of interactive news-making. There is most likely a certain control or influence.

If there was any doubt to which category an article belonged, it was always placed in the neutral C2 category. But as I explain in the text below, some of those C2 articles are still very pro- or anti-Berlusconi. I therefore dare to say that the figures from table 5.3 are not only a good indicator for the level of interactive news-making and journalistic revelation within these three papers, but that they are slightly conservative at the same time.

That being said, it is again striking that the supposed neutral paper Corriere della Sera appears to be more anti-Berlusconi than La Repubblica. Even though the latter has half a percent more in C3, Corriere della Sera has significantly less pro-Berlusconi articles that belong in C1. Even most articles that were placed in the neutral C2 category strongly lean to an anti-Berlusconi sentiment. As noted in section 5.2, Corriere della Sera has the tendency to paraphrase Berlusconi’s words and put the most extreme parts of his quotes in between quotation marks. In the following article, which was placed in C2, both sides of the spectrum are being discussed and everybody’s voice is being heard. But due to the quotation marks the paper makes it clear that it doesn’t agree with Berlusconi’s typifications of “progressive” judge and the “fictional” retraction of Mills statement. So even though this news article was placed in C2, it is still rather anti-Berlusconi.

"Who fears judgment?”, asks Professor Insolera, a "progressive" judge who is among the experts that the defence of Il Cavaliere has consulted (...) he [a Berlusconi lawyer, jvp] disagrees with the dramatic (“fictional”) retraction of Mills’ statement on 600 thousand dollars traced to Berlusconi.

Some articles from Corriere della Sera were more outspokenly anti-Berlusconi. The following quote belongs to a news piece which was placed in C3. It is about the shortened statute of limitations that, according to Corriere della Sera turns Italy into a paradise for white-collar crime.

It is basically a sort of amendment for "poor bastards" that uses the short statute of limitation for people that have no criminal record primarily to benefit white-collar criminals. (...) It is “intent and gross negligence”, while adding that civil liability is now ruined and that “this inexcusable negligence is a clear violation of the law”.  

This article isn’t an opinionated column or an open letter, but a journalistic analysis that is supposed to be less biased, even from an Italian normative point of view, than it actually is. In that light, the above quote is exemplary because throughout my entire research Corriere della Sera kept showing its anti-Berlusconi preferences in normal news pieces. A good example of that are the sometimes bullying articles. The following article, for instance, was a news piece

284 See appendix IV Table IV.2 number 2 for the original Italian quote
285 See appendix III Table III.2 number 1 for the original Italian quote
Andreas Muller, made the song "Bunga Bunga Silvio" using the melody of Waka Waka by Shakira. The hit is already used as a catchphrase and is climbing the German charts.\textsuperscript{286}

It goes without saying that this ‘news’ wasn’t printed in \textit{Il Giornale} and \textit{La Repubblica}. And even though this quote was an excess, it does indicates that the paper’s preference is not pro-Berlusconi. My research showed that 6 per cent of the \textit{Corriere della Sera} articles could be labeled as ‘bullying’. But there were other types of articles as well. As can be seen in table 5.3, in 9 per cent of the examined articles in \textit{Corriere della Sera} a pro-Berlusconi sound was heard. That pro-Berlusconi sound should be placed against the 0 per cent of the \textit{Il Giornale} articles that were anti-Berlusconi. That means that \textit{Corriere della Sera} is far better balanced than \textit{Il Giornale}. In relation to \textit{La Repubblica} however, \textit{Corriere della Sera}, proves to be less neutral than expected.

It is striking that \textit{La Repubblica}'s choice of subjects is better balanced than the other two papers, but that of course doesn’t mean \textit{La Repubblica} isn’t a left-wing paper. Based on their political columns it is very clear on what side of the political spectrum they stand.

Whoever is able to manipulate the news and controls the money is the master, the dictator, the absolute leader, surrounded by a huge and solid clientele base. Untouchable. Or you enlist or you are excluded. The clientele votes. (....) They call it democracy but in reality it is on big pile of crap.\textsuperscript{287}

This article was not surprisingly placed in the C3 category and shows the left-wing preferences of the paper. The pro-Berlusconi articles \textit{La Repubblica} printed, the articles placed in C1, were never political columns. They were either letters from readers, or interviews with members of Berlusconi’s party. So the fact that \textit{La Repubblica} proves to be more neutral than \textit{Corriere della Sera}, says more about the latter than about the former. As I said before: even the articles placed in the C2 category were often very pro- or anti-Berlusconi. Out of the three papers examined, however, the C2 articles from \textit{La Repubblica} were best balanced. In the following quote, which is sometimes pretty outspoken, the paper lets Berlusconi finish his sentences and doesn’t interpret them immediately. The reader gets to decide whoever is right.

Giuseppe d'Avanzo from \textit{La Repubblica} attacks by asking why Berlusconi only made statements in the press, but not in court. "Look, Mr. Stalin - the prime minister replies – from what newspaper are you again?" "La Repubblica" is the answer. And the Prime Minister: "Ah, of course, thank you" (....) "You are everything that’s wrong" Berlusconi says to the magistrate, who invites the leader of the PDL to "restrain" himself. "You should

\textsuperscript{286} See appendix III Table III.2 number 39 for the original Italian quote
\textsuperscript{287} See appendix V Table V.2 number 7 for the original Italian quote
restrain yourself with those jokes you call allegations," answers Berlusconi. "These allegations are my job. They are no jokes," De Pasquale replies (....) "It is Berlusconi who on a daily basis tries to demolish the judges, not the other way around," comments the UDC leader Pier Ferdinando Casini, after calling Berlusconi "a broken record that bores the Italians." 288

As I said before: the fact that Berlusconi is allowed to finish his sentences, in contrary to most Corriere della Sera articles, doesn’t automatically mean La Repubblica is constantly balanced. The above quote has the same ending as the article it belongs to; an ending that is rather anti-Berlusconi. That was often the case. But according to Italian normative standards as described by Hallin and Mancini, and in comparison to the other two papers, La Repubblica has proved to be more balanced than expected.

A good example of that is the choice of people being interviewed. The question-answer format isn’t something I’ve seen a lot in the three Italian papers, but La Repubblica was the only one that had done it with oppositional politicians (See, for example, appendix V Table V.2 number 11) as well with members of Berlusconi’s party. The following quote, for instance, is part of an interview with one of Berlusconi’s party members that was placed in C1.

"The Democratic Party only wants to bring down Berlusconi" 289

Of course, the questions asked during this interview were critical, but that was also the case during the political interviews with oppositional politicians. La Repubblica is the only paper where both sides of the political spectrum get an at least comparable voice. In Il Giornale on the other hand, the numbers from Table 5.3 speak for themselves. 68 per cent of the articles from this paper were very pro-Berlusconi while none of the articles, not even open letters from readers, were anti-Berlusconi. This makes it very plausible that Il Giornale is a product of interactive news-making (the zero per cent even suggest to political publicity).

A good indication of that statement is the sometimes totally different angle of approach the paper uses to cover certain news facts. The following quote, for instance, is from an article about a rather technical legal news event where Mills retracted his formal testimony against Berlusconi. Both Corriere della Sera and La Repubblica covered it, and tried to explain to their readers why Mills retracted his testimony and researched the possible reasons. This article, however, avoids most technical details and focusses, or better: speculates, about the possible motives the prosecutor has to condemn Berlusconi. It concludes that those motives are political, that the entire lawsuit makes no sense because of the short statute of limitations (a verdict will never be on time) and that the only good thing to do now is to stop this trial right away. No question marks are placed at the withdrawal of Mills’ statement. It goes without saying that this angle of approach is more beneficial for Berlusconi’s cause than an article about the technical details of the retraction and the logical questions it raises.

288 See appendix V Table V.2 number 38 for the original Italian quote
289 See appendix V Table V.2 number 8
Berlusconi accused the court of already having decided to condemn him and not having done anything to conceal this conviction (...) In any case, the defender claimed, continuing this trial no longer makes any sense.290

This article was a news piece; no opinionated column or open letter. During my research I noted that the Italian newspapers often fail to make a clear division between hard news and opinions and that Il Giornale stand on top when it comes to this. As noted earlier, Corriere della Sera tried to make a distinction between columns and news articles, even though they were written by the same journalist; Luigi Ferrarella. Il Giornale not even tries to make that distinction. This is best seen in the headlines the paper uses. The headline from the above article, for instance, was «L’accusa è prescritta» Ma I giudici corrono per condannare il Cav ("This charge will expire" but the judges rush to condemn Il Cav anyway) could have easily belong to an open letter from a reader. It belongs to a newspiece, however. Apparently Il Giornale want their readers to believe that the strange motives of the judges are the most important news; more important than Mills’ retraction. On top of the page, next to the page number, this section of the paper was labeled assalto giudiziario (judicial attack), which of course frames the news events in a strong way as well. The news is that Berlusconi is attacked by the judges. Not that the PM is suspect in a large corruption case where the number one suspect, all of a sudden a mysteriously retracted his statement saying he received money from Berlusconi.

In other headlines about the Mills case something similar was seen.

La giustizia purtroppo non è uguale per tutti (Justice unfortunately is not equal for all)291

Il Cavaliere infangato da una giustizia ideologica (Il Cavaliere is slandered by an ideological justice system)292

The first headline is not a quote but a (bold) statement made by the paper. The same goes for the second headline, which also uses Berlusconi’s nickname, creating a familiar bond between Berlusconi and the Il Giornale readers. The headlines from the Ruby-gate show the same image.

Il caso Ruby manda la sinistra in paranoia (The Ruby case turns the left-wing paranoid)293

Ecco la prova: sono amanti, non prostitute (Here is the proof: those women are lovers, no prostitutes)294

Silvio mai indagato nei Balcani (Silvio was never investigated in the Balkans)295

290 See appendix II Table II.2 number 3
291 See appendix I Table I.2 number 9
292 See appendix I Table I.2 number 10
293 See appendix II Table II.2 number 36
294 See appendix II Table II.2 number 20
295 See appendix II Table II.2 number 6
Again, the first headline is not a quote, but a mere statement. The second headline is even more daring: it presents a very doubtful point of view as “proof”. A point of view that is, not surprisingly, very beneficial for Berlusconi’s cause. The third headline is again an example of the tendency to create a familiar tie between the reader and the subject by using Berlusconi’s first name Silvio in a headline. In none of the two other papers examined these kinds of headlines were used.

But the positive mediation of Berlusconi also happens in the articles themselves. As I said before, the line between comments and news stories is rather thin in Italy, especially in Il Giornale. The following quote is from a short news piece printed on page 8.

This is a process based upon “the determination of a prosecutor who did nothing to hide his political bias against me.” This was, in short, “a defamation of the court that is, also international level, without any resemblance” (....) at least according to the so-called “impartial” judges.296

No oppositional party was quoted in this article, nor were the “so called impartial judges” or the “biased prosecutor” asked for any comments. In the reports about Ruby-gate, a similar image was seen, albeit that the underlying tone was sometimes even fiercer. One article spoke about a “press campaign without precedent”, about “lies” and about “a scenario fabricated to blacken”.297

The history is much simpler. The real crap is not that what we have read so far, but the fact that it was all said and done just to make the government fall.298

It is hardly imaginable that an article is more pro-Berlusconi than the one quoted above. Even though it was presented as an opinionated column, it was printed on the frontpage while the rest of the paper doesn’t offer the other side of the story. The following quotes show the same tendency: it focuses on the harm that is being done to Berlusconi. What he is actually being accused of is almost completely ignored.

In a normal country [Ruby, jvdp] would now be under investigation, just as any normal citizen who does not respect the rules. But ours is not a normal country, so nothing will happen. (...) It is absurd that the Prime Minister has to face a trial for just one phone call. (...) When the referees are rooting for one team in particular, in this case they are rooting for the prosecutors, the game is rigged. (...) In order to accomplish this, however, an independent judge is needed. But unfortunately that doesn’t exist in our country. Because, as you all know, dogs don’t eat dogs; especially not if they both wear a toga.299

I already noted that Il Giornale chose different news angles to report about both scandals examined. This is best seen in reports about Ruby-gate. After the 6th of April 2011, the date

296 See appendix II Table II.2 number 8 for the original Italian quote
297 See appendix I Table I.2 number 9 for the original Italian quote
298 Ibidem
299 See appendix I Table I.2 number 13 for the original Italian quote
that the trial against Berlusconi officially started, *Il Giornale* reported even less about the actual allegations than it did before. Completely in line with Berlusconi’s defence, the paper almost exclusively reported about the media hype surrounding the trial.

The left knows no such thing as boredom. Somebody from the left can speak two, three, or even a thousand times of a topic such as Ruby without ever getting bored. (...) I wonder if Michele Santoro knows that there are other problems in Italy. Or does he really believe that everything depends on Ruby-gate?  

The fact that *Il Giornale* completely followed Berlusconi’s line of defence (he also stated that the main reasons of the trials facing him are to bring him down) makes me conclude that the Berlusconi owned paper is at least a product of interactive news-making and possibly even of political publicity. My research also showed that Berlusconi does not have a severe influence over the content of the other two papers, who are both more negative towards *Il Cavaliere* than positive. Berlusconi’s paper, in other words, mediates his persona in a very positive manner because he is (at least partly) involved in its content. The other two papers examined however, are (from Berlusconi’s point of view) a product of journalistic revelation. Through the process of political instrumentalization the Italian press shows the balance of power in the rest of the country. And the Italian press, so it seems, is divided in a pro- and anti-Berlusconi side; just as the country seems to be for more than twenty years now.

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300 See appendix I Table 1.2 number 36 for the original Italian quote
Conclusion: A Berlusconian Story

A year and a half after the cruise ship the Costa Concordia sank near the banks of Isola del Giglio, the lawsuit against Captain Francesco Schettino finally started. It was the week of the showmen from ‘old Italy’ because in the same week that other captain, Silvio Berlusconi, also faced his umpteenth trial. The outcome did not even matter that much. Because even though Il Cavaliere was convicted, he immediately stated he would do everything to overcome this injustice against him and especially against his country. It was frontpage news in almost every country and it all happened more then twenty years after Berlusconi first ran for office. He still was in the center of attention. Journalists from the entire world were present to write and film stories about this one question that all of their readers and viewers kept on asking themselves: how?

How is it possible that after so many sex-, fraud and mafia scandals and after so many years of bad policy, Berlusconi is still able to raise crowds that are cheering for his immediate release? How does he do it?

This thesis was my personal attempt to answer that one question. As explained frequently, I assumed that it was his media-power that did the trick. Berlusconi was the first European media-mogul but also the first successful European populist politician. I assumed that there existed a linkage between those two facts. In order to verify that hypothesis, I formulated three premises that I tested throughout this study. All three premises are based on a variety of theories that are extensively explained in the first three chapters of this study.

I

The first premise examined was that Berlusconi and Italy are the hand and the glove. He has, from a clientelist point of view, the tendency to align his own fortune to that of Italy. It was expected that his own newspaper, Il Giornale, would pave his way. Due to a history of suppression, certain parts of the country suffer from a severe lack of social capital and a high level of distrust and amoral familiarism. Those are, not coincidentally, the parts of the country in which Berlusconi receives the most votes because those voters are historically more susceptible to vertically based patron-client relationships. That is a relationship in which the client pays the patron with loyalty and votes, and in return, the patron offers him (economical) protection. If a patron is weak, that has severe consequences for the protection of the clientele: hurting a patron, hurts his clientele.

For Berlusconi it is thus very important that the Italians living in those parts of the country – his potential electorate – indeed think that he is the right leader for them; that he and Italy belong together. Because if those Italians see Berlusconi as their patron, it means that hurting him with accusations in a time of crisis is the same as hurting the entire country. Or even more important: that it is the same as hurting them personally. So if Berlusconi wants to keep winning votes in those parts of Italy – or if he wants to overcome a crisis – it is vital that he has to keep reminding those potential voters of their patron-client relationship.

Based on my analysis one can state that from the three newspapers, Il Giornale indeed has the tendency to do so. In 75 per cent of the analyzed articles the paper gives room for suggestions that accusations and allegations against Berlusconi are bad for Italy, and in the
other 25 per cent of the articles they embrace that line of reasoning is a lesser form. “I do not suffer for me, but for the Italians”, he kept on saying in the three papers examined. Hurting me, he repeated to every journalist who wanted to hear it (especially those paid by him), is the same as hurting Italy.

So not only did this study show that the former prime minister tries to come across as the country’s patron, it also showed that during these two scandals Il Giornale perfectly enables him to mediate his persona according to that image.

II

The second premise examined was that Berlusconi embodies the shift of commercial techniques from the market towards politics. I thought that, based on marketing and show business principles, Berlusconi would attempt to ‘go personal’ to overcome (media) scandals such as the two examined. As the celebrity politician Berlusconi is, he would probably use discourse from his private life as a resource in the manufacture of his political identity as well as in its repair following misadventures. This can be seen as attempts to engage in ‘human’ rather than ‘political’ values. In the first chapter of this thesis I wrote about Berlusconi’s autobiography Una Storia Italia which he wrote prior to the (for him very successful) 2001 election. It is a perfect example of using the private life in the manufacture of a political identity. My presumption was that Berlusconi would use the same ‘technique’ to overcome misadventure. But this time not through a book sent to every Italian, but through the mass media. I thought that Il Giornale would more frequently mention Berlusconi’s private life, whilst the non-Berlusconi papers would try to avoid it.

The eventual outcome of this particular analysis was actually quite surprising. Where Il Giornale fully cooperates in Berlusconi’s tendency to go personal, the anti-Berlusconi paper La Repubblica does so as well (against all my expectations). Only Corriere della Sera was able to make a clear distinction between Berlusconi as public figure and a private person. So it thus can be stated that during both Ruby-gate and the Mills case Berlusconi – like a true celebrity politician – tried to use his private life as a resource in the repair of his political identity following misadventures and that attempts to engage ‘human’ rather than ‘political’ were not only endorsed by his own media, but also by the oppositional newspaper La Repubblica. He knew how to be in the center of attention because thanks to his marketing background he is very well trained in optimizing the discourse about himself using vocal, iconic and kinetic techniques. This research showed that in a very large part of the articles written about Berlusconi – whether they were positive or negative towards his point of view – Berlusconi’s private life was discussed instead of the consequences of the allegations on a more institutional level. This means that Berlusconi’s use of his private life in political situations was not only adequate, but it was above all mediated very successfully.

III

The third premise was the most difficult one to research. As noted earlier, in Italy the media are used for political instrumentalization rather than being neutral or impartial. Because of Italy’s (press) history citizens have grown accustomed to this practice. They accept it because
for them it is normal. In the case of Berlusconi this political instrumentalization happens through the mediation of his own persona. He markets himself using the same techniques he used selling vacuum cleaners and therefore voters are presented with a type of celebrity politician who is anti-establishment and thus able to solve all their problems.

There are three broad types of mediation that are being used to mediate a politician’s persona. When news about the politician is managed by the politician himself or his or her staff, it is called political publicity. When politicians and the news media work together in the construction of the politician’s image in the press, the process is called interactive news-making. One speaks of journalistic revelation when the politician has no direct control of his coverage in that particular medium.

I presumed that, especially in times of crisis, *Il Giornale* would probably be a product of interactive news-making or, less likely, political publicity while the oppositional newspapers would probably be a product of journalistic revelation (from Berlusconi’s point of view). The pro-Berlusconi paper would – in line with Berlusconi’s wishes – try to spin the news in a positive manner, while the other two papers would try to highlight negative facts and consequences about the same events. This research showed that *Il Giornale* is indeed very likely a product of interactive news-making and possibly even of political publicity. It also showed that Berlusconi does not have a severe influence over the content of the other two papers, who are both more negative towards *Il Cavaliere* than positive. I therefore conclude that through the process of political instrumentalization the Italian press shows the balance of power in the rest of the country. This research showed that, after twenty years in power, it is still divided between a pro- and an anti-Berlusconi camp.

***

This study shows that, in a time of crisis, Berlusconi uses his own paper to mediate his persona as being anti-establishment; as being a patron for the entire country. He does so using marketing- and celebrity politician principles such as the use of his private life to overcome public problems. Since this image is not only seen in the pro-Berlusconi paper *Il Giornale*, but also in the anti-Berlusconi papers, I conclude that Berlusconi’s mediation in the Italian press is done in a very successful manner. And since the mass-media play a very important role in Italian society, my final answer to the question whether or not Berlusconi’s control played a large part to his stay in power, is: yes, it certainly did.

The Italian history is so complex and diverse, that it wasn’t the ideal base for the formation of a common identity. Large parts of the country deal with vertically based clientelist ties and suffer from a high level of amoral familiarism that lead to a lot of distrust towards those in power. Berlusconi, however, found a way to gain access to the homes of those amoral familiarists. After all, most of his voters come from regions where the level of amoral familiarism is historically high. He was able to gain their trust – I now conclude – thanks to the media empire he created.

One of the reasons why Berlusconi’s first political party was named *Forza Italia* was because it was a popular chant amongst football supporters. This politicizing of non-political issues (sports, sex, love for the country) is typical for populists and Berlusconi proved to be very skilled in doing so. By using interactive news-making or political publicity in his media...
– as we now know he did – he tried to create an ‘us against them feeling’ where the aspects that united the group were mainly a-political and based on individual preferences. Everybody had at least something in common with Berlusconi. In could be the common love for women, A.C. Milan or a shared hatred for the left wing and the judicial system that made voters believe that he was one of them.

In a country that has no shared contemporary history, Berlusconi tried to create a new national identity that was formed by him through his own media but that was based on individual preferences. In his media, his voters were presented as a group of people who loved Italy, but they had less in common than they thought. Both citizens who were in favor of the separation of northern-Italy, as well as southern Italians voted for him. Both liberals and housewives with social security did. Actually, their new dependence on the mass media was one of the few things they all had in common and it was that same dependence that paved the way for the mass-advertisement that intensified their already existing individualism. That made them even more vulnerable to the marketing tricks Berlusconi used during his political campaign and in times of crisis. “Much has been written about Italian individualism, its expedients, its limitations, and its consequences”, says Beppe Severgnini in one of his books. “[Berlusconi] started out from there, first amassing his fortune and establishing himself as a self-made man, before building on Italy’s distrust of all things shared, the widespread antipathy for rules, and the inner satisfaction Italians take in finding a private solution to a public problem.”

By being the first to broadcast (synchronised) American television programs and movies, he not only helped solving the linguistic problem that existed (with television, all ages and classes got used to the standard Italian) but he also created a dependency that reminded his viewers of the patron-client relationships that they grew accustomed to: “we know he thinks about his own fame, family and interests first, but we hope he thinks about our sake as well, because we need him”. And by actually doing so – by broadcasting – Berlusconi helped creating that new, mass-media-based national identity which had influences from the old patron-client relationships, but combined it with a discourse that is typical for an American Dream success story; a story where individualism and personal successes precede. Berlusconi was able to use his media power to impose a value system that has gradually determined a substantial cultural hegemony over the country that is hard to resist.

His own persona played an important part in that new value system. Berlusconi was often presented as the personification of success but also as the patron. He was the one who enabled the new, media-based Italian lifestyle. And by broadcasting American success stories, his clientele also saw him as their example. He is Italian in his behaviour, but American in his success. He presented himself as one to look up to. So for young Italians he became their mirror. And for a people as vain as the Italians, mirrors are important.

It was the history of suppression that enabled Berlusconi to use television and his newspaper to become the patron of several families and by highlighting his anti-establishment character he could profit from the long existing political distrust due to a lack of social capital. He matched the expectations of his voters and transformed them after doing so. This is why Berlusconi and the Italy of his voters are the hand and the glove at the same time. He could

301 Severgnini, La pancia degli Italiani, 9
have never become who he became if Italy had known a different history, and Italy would have never become what it is today without Berlusconi. He is the leader Italy deserves; at least a large part of Italy.

Ask any blond foreign girl that ever visited the country and she will say that some Italian men indeed outshine in predictable courtesy and constant excitement. “If our leader looks a young girl”, they seem to think, “then our own behaviour is excusable.” Berlusconi is – bluntly – the excuse those Italians need. Thanks to *Il Giornale* and presumably also thanks to his television stations, an image is created that says: ‘Don’t worry! In a country where one fifth of the economy is black, we don’t need a leader who hands in all his receipts.’ The paper persuades its readers that true Italian citizens don’t want to read on a daily basis what their PM – their patron – is doing wrong. Severgnini: “We put up with councillors who have links with constructors; examiners who are colleagues of their examinees; tenured faculty related to tenure-seeking staff; doctors whose expenses are paid by Big Pharma; public works officials who give contracts to business partners; public school teachers who give private lessons to their students; and journalists who own press agencies. Why get worked up about a politician who owns the media that should be keeping tabs on him? So, no change. We tolerate him and he justifies us.”

Berlusconi’s biography is called *Una Storia Italiana* were the word *Storia* means story but also history. The newly created Italian history is thus partly his personal history; a history of overcoming difficulties and triumphing in the end. The Italians who read his paper and watch his television channels are made to believe that his autobiography is also Italy’s new autobiography. Both are based on individual success and are modelled by the visual culture of television. They are made to believe that the Italian contemporary history is, in fact, a Berlusconian story.

That is why they fight for him in front their courthouses. They think they are fighting for themselves.

302 Ibidem, 42
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</table>
Table I.2: Relevant quotes from the articles in table I.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quote</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ma che il processo possa davvero andare fino in fondo è ancora tutto da vedere: perché sulla vicenda pesa il conflitto di attribuzioni che la Camera potrebbe sollevare, chiedendo alla Corte Costituzionale di dichiarare che la concussione contestata al premier è materia da tribunale dei ministri.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Per la sicurezza e il futuro dell’Italia è indispensabile sapere se Ruby è la nipote di Mubarak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>e il numero delle feste incriminate sarebbe superiore a quanto sin qui accertato. Il processo di Milano è alle porte.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>In calendario c’è il conflitto di attribuzione per il caso Ruby. Berlusconi, comunque, non mostra alcuna preoccupazione rispetto al tentativo, firmato soprattutto da Pier Ferdinando Casini, di mettere in circolo la tentazione delle urne «per uscire dall’impasse del momento». Il premier si dice anzi convinto… Un segnale chiaro: il premier è pronto a spendersi in prima persona.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Procura alla quale si ripresentava, con Ruby, l’occasione per riaprire il discorso sulla tenuta Etica del Cavaliere…. Il filmato della durata di un secondo che riprende un atto sessuale «risultando impossibile identificare I soggetti interessati» e quello di cinque secondi che sempre riprendendo l’atto sessuale precedente, mostra il volto di una tale De Vivo Concetta «e di un uomo non meglio identificato»…. Manca dunque, nel fascicolo, la pistola fumante, la prova che nel orso del bungo bungo l’imputatosi sia unito in congresso carnale con una minorenne, chiave di volta dell’accusa…. Però, intanto, il «processo» andrà Avanti sulle prime pagine dei giornali e nel talk show televisivi dando luogo al ben oliato sputtanamento, pardon, mediaticogiudiziario.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Processate e condannate da una campagna stampa senza precedent… E qui c’è la prima bugia… qualcuno o qualcuna che accusa Berlusconi di violenza, molestia, abuso, né per il reato di prostituzione né per quello di concussione…. Uno scenario costruito ad arte per infangare…. Ruby ha addirittura raccontato di essersi prostituita a Milano con il calciatore Cristiano Ronaldo quando questi stava giocando dall’altra parte del mondo…. La storia è assai più semplice…. Tutto il resto è semplice intrusion, per di più violenta, nella vita privata di persone maggiorenni … La vera porcata non è quello che abbiamo letto fino ad ora, ma quella fatta da chi ha volute tutto questo solo per fare cadere il governo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Una mobilitazione continua che ha una spiegazione molto semplice: campagna elettorale. Non per quelle elezioni politiche anticipate che ieri Bersani invocava, ma alle quali non crede nessuno:… quando lo scontro è più forte, e che l’antiberlusconismo funge sempre da tonico per rosicchiare un po’ di consensi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>le accuse non stanno in piedi… il caso di Karima è tutt’altro che un’eccezione…Il conflitto di attribuzioni. È la spade di Damocle che pende sul processo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>In altre parole, Ruby racconta balle…. «Da qualche giorno Ruby non fa altro che passare sotto ’ufficio di Fabrizio Corona, nella speranza che un incontro fugace con lui sia fotografato dal paparazzo di turno».</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nel caso in questione tutto ciò non è accaduto. Il da Boccassini e compagni se ne sono fregati della legge… In un Paese normale oggi sarebbero sotto inchiesta, come capita a qualsiasi cittadino che non rispetta le regole. Ma il nostro non è un Paese normale, quindi nulla accadrà, … È assurdo che il presidente del Consiglio debba finire sotto processo per una telefonata al Massimo in opportune (quella alla questura di Milano) con un fascicolo d’accusa di ventimila pagine e 130 testimoni, e un pm debba farla franca per un reato assai più grave non solo contro Berlusconi ma contro tutta la Camera dei deputati, la cui in violabilità è sancita dalla Costituzione …. Quando gli arbitri tifano per una squadra, nella fatti specie quella dei pm, la partita è truccata… Per fare questo ci vorrebbe però un giudice indipendente dalla procurie, che oggi non esiste, perché come noto cane non mangia cane, soprattutto se entrambi portano la toga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Ti chiede allora se è stato beccato sul fatto, perché è brutto vedere un vecchio fare sesso con una ragazzina, e tu dici di no, nessuno li ha visti, negano ambedue, non ci sono prove…. Lui incalza: ma questa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

303 The “…” symbol indicates that in this specific article, nothing was highlighted because the content was irrelevant (according to me) for my specific research questions. The “….” symbol indicates the start of a new quotation.
vicenda ha danneggiato l’Italia nel mondo? E tu dici di sì, è stato un danno all’immagine e alla credibilità dell’Italia e del suo governo. Ma poi ti chiede se è stato lui a esibire al mondo questa brutta storiella; tu, non devi rispondere, l’ha resa pubblica chi ha intercettato, impegnando tanta gente e tanti soldi per spiarlo, e chi poi l’ha sputtanato ogni giorno sui giornali e in tv….Einsiste: ma che c’entra noi giudici, il parlamento e I partiti, non è una faccenda per preti, famigliari e psicologi?

15. Il Cavaliere ai suoi: «Una crociata politica pur di abbattermi»… «una crociata politica» che «nulla ha a che vedere con la giustizia»…. «sono loro i veri criminali» che «pur di colpirmi sono disposti a fare qualunque cosa». Perché, dice Ghedini, alla fine i magistrati «faranno come sempre quello che vogliono».

16. -

17. -

18. «Noi perseguiamo reati e non ci interessiamo della vita privata delle persone». Una dichiarazione che oggi può tranquillamente essere incoronata: tutto il mondo ha sviscerato il tema universal del bunga-bunga, tutta l’opinione pubblica internazionale ha rovistato con I pm fra le lenzuola del Cavaliere e l’ha seguito, passo passo, a cena, nel dopocena e incamera da letto…. «fa male alla credibilità di tutto il sistema, quindi anche alla politica italiana.»

19. Nel processo Ruby, in particolare, ho molto apprezzato il divieto di far entrare in aula telecamere e fotografi: l’aspetto spettacolare è negativo»…. Fino ad allora non sarebbe onesto pronunciarsi».

20. Ruby ha negate di avere avuto rapporti sessuali col premier, e non dobbiamo verificare se è vero o falso quello che riguarda la sfera intima delle persone: nessuno si chiede con chi si intrattienga, … A questo siamo giunti, 20 mila pagine di parole e sfoghi di amiche di Silvio Berlusconi trasformate in prostitute solo per avere umanamente goduto della liberalità di un uomo…. Il Pd più realistamente in una proposta di legge di tutela dei minori presentata nel 1998, aveva indicato un limite più stretto, fra I 14 e I 16 anni. I costumi sessuali del nostro tempo e anche le tradizioni del mondo arabo indicano che la maturità sessuale è oggi assai più precoce e che le ragazze decidono di sé senza essere indotte da alcuno.

21. contro I trucchi parlamentari sul caso Ruby, le «leggi vergogna», il conflitto di attribuzione, il premier che «non si fa processare».

22. -

23. -

24. l’unico e vero obiettivo dell’inchiesta era già da allora Silvio Berlusconi, le intercettazioni vennero realizzate con l’obiettivo specifico di incastrare il presidente del Consiglio, e il ritardo di Quattro mesi (almeno) con cui il nome di Berlusconi è stato iscritto nel registro degli indagati è una violazione bella e buona.

25. Una storia che giornalisti camente ieri era il nulla mescolato col niente. Nulla da raccontare se non l’auto alimentazione del circomediatico, il convincimento che essere tutti li in chel momento crea anche la notizia che non c’è…. Perché non c’è da raccontare quello che accade avvero, ma quello che loro sperano accada.

26. Non riesco a capire come queste trascrizioni possano essere legittimamente depositate nel fascicolo.

27. L’unico motivo di malumore gli viene dall’ennesima pubblicazione di intercettazioni riguardanti la sua sfera privata. Una consuetudine a cui, raccontano, il premier non si è certo abituato e che continua a colpirlo, non solo per gli elementi intimi di quelle conversazioni ma per la violazione della privacy di altre persone, colpevoli soltanto di parlare al telefono con lui.

28. -

29. Il successo di Berlusconi infatti è nato contro la volontà dei poteri forti e dei salotti buoni, tra l’altro in anni ne iscali I loro potere era ben più forte di oggi.

30. Dopo la pubblicazione delle telefonate sul «Corriere» e le polemiche con la Procura di Milano, il Pg della Cassazione apre un’indagine… Di tutto quell che è accusato Berlusconi c’erano tanti precedenti nel regno delle imprese e delle istituzioni, dei poteri e della politica…. Ma il problema di ondo resta uno: è stato capovolta il rapporto tra sfera pubblica e sfera privata. Un tempo i valori, le fedi, le culture erano la sfera
pubblica, e il sesso, i suoi orientamenti, lavita intima, erano la sfera privata.

31. Premesso che l’inserimento delle telefonate di Berlusconi nel fascicolo del caso Ruby costituisce una gravissima violazione di legge

32. -

33. -

34. Macché terrorismo o mafia: ormai Boccassini & Co. pensano solo alla vita privata delle amiche del Cav Ma dopo mesi di indagini senza trovare prove, alle toghe non resta che dipingere Ruby e le altre come prostitute: con domande hard e accuse inventate

35. «Fallita l’operazione sputtanamento con l’affaire Ruby - dice Giorgio Stracquadanio- si passa ora all’operazione dell’egittimazione esicerca di mandare in fibrillazione la maggioranza».

36. Per la sinistra la noia non esiste. Di un argomento come Ruby, se ne parla due, tre,mille volte e non si annoiano mai…. Mi chiedo se Santoro sa che esistono altri problem in Italia, o crede che tutto dipenda da quello?

37. -

38. -

39. Non conosco le carte del processo,ma mi pare che abbiano ben poco di politico, così come le morbose vicende sessuali generate dal caso Ruby.

40. «Sono qui nello stato d’animo di chi non capisce bene perché, Come president del Consiglio dovrei essere ad occuparmi degli interessi del paese invece che a rispondere ad accuse assolutamente inventate e demenziali».

41. -

42. -

43. -

Appendix II: Il Giornale Mills-case coverage

Table II.1: Headlines from Il Giornale articles covering the Mills-case

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>080212</td>
<td>I giudici non mollano Silvio: quarto processo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>080212</td>
<td>Da Mills al Ruby-gate, tutti i buchi neri dell’accusa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>100212</td>
<td>«L’accusa è prescritta» Ma I giudici corrono per condannare il Cav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>120212</td>
<td>Caso Mills, ultimo affronto del pm: «I figli teste di legno del Cavaliere»</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>160212</td>
<td>Berlusconi: Soffro ma spero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>160212</td>
<td>Lo sfogo di Silvio: è un’indecenza; Mi fanno passare per colpevole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>160212</td>
<td>De Pasquale non si rassegna e chiede 5 anni per il Cav</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>170212</td>
<td>Berlusconi: mi condanneranno ma non mollo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>200212</td>
<td>La giustizia purtroppo non è uguale per tutti</td>
</tr>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>200212</td>
<td>Il Cavaliere infangato da una giustizia ideologica</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II.2: Relevant quotes from the articles in table II.1

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>La Procura, un po’ spiazzatae senza troppa convinzione, esegue…. «Un altro belcolo per il Tribunale di Milano».</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Contro Berlusconi, sostengono Ghedini e Longo, c’è solo la confessione di Mills: che però ha già ritrattato, giurando di essersi inventato tutto per paura del fisco inglese</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Berlusconi, che accusa il tribunale di avere già deciso di condannarlo e di non avere fatto nulla per nascondere questo convincimento… In ogni caso, ha sostenuto il difensore, andare avanti non ha più senso.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Un processo che è già di fatto prescritto, il teorema di un pm che non ha trovato riscontri nei fatti, trucchi giuridici e ieri una richiesta di condanna a 5 anni… In una lettera che ieri il presidente ci ha consegnato c’è il dolore di un uomo che non si dà pace per l’ingiustizia che sta per subire. Un conto troppo salato, diciamo noi, per aver cercato di cambiare in meglio questo Paese…. Ho la coscienza di aver servito in questi anni con tutte le mie forze il mio Paese, e ne sono ripagato con un accanimento da parte di alcuni magistrati di Milano che non ha eguali nella storia… Al termine di una vita di lavoro indefesso sia nella mia professione di imprenditore e in seguito nell’impegno politico, sono trattato peggio di un delinquente, con accuse che non trovano corrispondenza nei fatti e che sono state smentite nel corso del processo dibattimentale… La coscienza che ho di questa situazione, e la vicinanza della mia famiglia e di quanti mi vogliono bene e mi conoscono, mi dà la forza di continuare la battaglia per il riconoscimento pieno della mia totale estraneità a quanto mi viene addebitato.

6. Già, perché secondo i calcoli più neutrali (non quelli di Ghedini né quelli di De Pasquale, dunque)… Anche per questo Berlusconi è nero, perché – ripete in privato – il tentativo è quello di «far comunque passare il messaggio che sono colpevole». La notizia farebbe comunque il giro del mondo e il titolo di giornali e tg e poco male se poi, fra qualche mese, si venisse a sapere che quella condanna in realtà non esiste…. Non soffro per me ma per gli italiani. Io sono strutturato per resistere ma se questi andassero contro un cittadino normale per lui sarebbe la fine… stanno inseguendo una sentenza politica Una corsa contro il tempo per incassare una condanna che, se arrivasse, non sarebbe efficace poiché si prescriverebbe. I magistrati di Milano puntono a consegnare una sentenza per un utilizzo politico».

7. Conclusione ovvia: Berlusconi è colpevole…. Berlusconi - come poi hanno fatto i Suoi difensori – intende sostenere che la presunta corruzione dell’avvocato Mills era semplicemente priva di movente, visto che dalle deposizioni dell’avvocato inglese gli erano venuti solo guai e condanne…. Arrivati a questo punto, al pm probabilmente basterebbe che i giudici dessero questo per accertato, attestando la validità del suo lavoro, anche se dovessero proscioglierlo per prescrizione…. Ma prima di rifugiarsi sotto questo ombrello, Ghedini e Longo cercheranno di convincere i giudici che Berlusconi con quei seicentomila dollari non c’entra niente.

8. Quel che davvero non piace al Cavaliere – a parte ovviamente un condanna che seppure «ingiusta» considera «scantata» come quella per il processo Mills… Traduzione: seppure pubblicamente Berlusconi dice che «si tratta di questioni distinte» è chiaro che è difficile andare avanti se il «clima diverso» è in una sola direzione…. Un processo «frutto della determinazione di un pm che non ha fatto nulla per nascondere un pregiudizio politico nei miei confronti». C’è stata, insomma, «una diffamazione giudiziaria anche a livello internazionale senza confronto»…. almeno secondo i calcoli cosidetti «imparziali»

9. Sono questi i magistrati su cui gli Italiani dovrebbero contare per avere giustizia?

10. Rischia d’essere trattato e infangato come il peggior criminale dal circuito mediatico giudiziario…. Stato contro Stato…. Si ha fiducia nella giustizia giusta, serena, imparziale e responsabile; non giustizialista, né omnipotente e nemmeno ideologica: giustizia che non abate il riformatore, il leader politico avversario, il self – made man celebre e fortunato.

Appendix III: Corriere della Sera Ruby-gate coverage

Table III.1: Headlines from Corriere della Sera articles covering Ruby-gate

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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Headline</th>
<th>Page</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>300311</td>
<td>Giustizia Caso Ruby: Fini potrebbe autorizzare il voto sul conflitto di attribuzione</td>
<td>p.16-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>300311</td>
<td>Da Clooney alla Gelmini Per Ruby 190 testimoni</td>
<td>p.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>310311</td>
<td>Premier irritato, rovinato il «piano rilancio»</td>
<td>p.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>310311</td>
<td>Prescrizione breve, salta il voto alla Camera</td>
<td>p.2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>010411</td>
<td>Scatta il «tutti contro tutti», risse e liti dietro l'angolo Nel mirino il leader di Fli</td>
<td>p.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>010411</td>
<td>Incidenti, salta il voto sulla prescrizione breve</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>020411</td>
<td>Magistratura e rischi di avanspettacolo</td>
<td>p.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>020411</td>
<td>Voto su Ruby, caccia ai deputati Verdini lavora a quota 328</td>
<td>p.11</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>040411</td>
<td>Caso Ruby, dopo mercoledì prossima udienza tra due mesi p.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>040411</td>
<td>Il premier: politica nell’angolo, i giudici sono un contropotere p.8-9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>040411</td>
<td>Il record (Amaro) dell’Invasione Mediatica p.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>050411</td>
<td>E Ferrara in tv mima il suicidio di Cagliari p.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>050411</td>
<td>Voto sul conflitto di attribuzione In aula anche il processo breve p.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>050411</td>
<td>Le conversazioni che non dovevano essere trascritte p.1</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>050411</td>
<td>Negli atti le telefonate del premier p.1</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>060411</td>
<td>Berlusconi sogna Ronaldo: «Ho dato carta bianca a Galliani» p.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>060411</td>
<td>Le tre piazze della protesta Bersani: Italia umiliata p.11</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>060411</td>
<td>«Tutelò il Paese Con Ruby nessuna relazione» p.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>060411</td>
<td>«Abusò del ruolo ed ebbe rapporti con una minorenne» p.9</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>060411</td>
<td>Transenne, tende e pittura Oggi comincia il processo p.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>060411</td>
<td>«Sono tranquilla Io e Berlusconi più uniti che mai»; Nicole Minetti p.8</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>060411</td>
<td>Telecamere da tutto il mondo alla scoperta della metropolis p.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>060411</td>
<td>I paletti del Quirinale: la riforma rispetti l’autonomia dei giudici p.6</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>060411</td>
<td>Berlusconi: brigatismo giudiziario, a Milano si fermion p.5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>060411</td>
<td>Marmellate e sigari: in Aula torna la calma p.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>060411</td>
<td>I due ex diniani schierati con il governo Altri arrivi dall’Mpa p.2</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>060411</td>
<td>Caso Ruby, passa per dodici voti il conflitto di attribuzione p.2-3</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>060411</td>
<td>L’Ingorgo Giudiziario p.1</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>070411</td>
<td>Conflitto d’attribuzione? Non è uno scandalo p.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>070411</td>
<td>Un cortocircuito che toglie spazio a ogni mediazione p.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>070411</td>
<td>Prescrizione breve, caos in Aula Maggioranza contro Fini: è di parte p.18-19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>070411</td>
<td>Sette minuti per capire che è tutto uguale a 17 anni fa p.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>070411</td>
<td>Via al processo, Ruby non sarà parte civile p.16</td>
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<td>34.</td>
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<td>Telecamere da tutto il mondo alla scoperta della metropolis p.5</td>
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<td>35.</td>
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<td>L’avvocato a Ruby: «Non ne esco male Problematica la posizione di zio Silvio» p.19</td>
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<td>40.</td>
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<td>Messe in piega, poesie, petizioni L’isola in fila per vedere «Iddu» p.8</td>
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<td>120411</td>
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<td>43.</td>
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<td>Berlusconi, show anti-pm p.1</td>
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<td>Ex prefetto arrestato: sesso in cambio di favori p.1</td>
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<td>Festep di Arcore, spuntano due nuove testimonie p.6</td>
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<td>48.</td>
<td>130411</td>
<td>Pdl, la «regia» affidata a Paniz «astro nascente» dei berlusconiani p.2-3</td>
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</table>

Table III.2: Relevant quotes from the articles in table III.1

1. Una sorta di emendamento «poveri cristi» che bilancia la prescrizione breve per gli incensurati mirata soprattutto ad avvantaggiare i colletti bianchi. …«dolo e colpa grave», pur aggiungendo in coda che la responsabilità civile scatti quando c’è «violazione evidente di legge per negligenza inescusabile».

2. Tra loro c’è Ruby, che è anche parte lesa. La sua è la testimonianza più attesa. La difesa la vuole perché ha sempre detto che Berlusconi non sapeva che lei era minorenne e di non aver mai avuto rapporti sessuali con lui. I pm l’hanno chiesta perché, nonostante le tante bugie, sono convinti che sia comunque necessario sentirla.

3. E una tattica che Berlusconi aveva già usato un mese fa, quando aveva convocato un Consiglio dei
ministri per varare il «piano di rilancio economico nazionale» mentre nelle stesse ore veniva rinviato a giudizio per il «caso Ruby». E per quel giorno il premier spera di non dover imprecare ancora.

4. «Alfano si era impegnato, proponendo la riforma costituzionale, a togliere di mezzo le leggi ad personam. Invece eccoci qua con la prescrizione breve. È una vergogna».

5. -

6. salta definitivamente per questa settimana e va in coda all'ordine del giorno della prossima: dopo il conflitto di attribuzione tra poteri sul caso Ruby (che si vota martedì), la legge comunitaria, il testo sui piccoli Comuni e un ddl finanziario.

7. Surreale mi pare, inoltre, la convocazione – fra i testimoni del «processo Ruby» – di George Clooney; che a una cena ad Arcore c'è andato solo una volta. Non me ne può fregare di meno che sia stato chiamato a testimoniare anche l'attore americano, ma mi chiedo che è stato convocato a fare…. L'auspicio che la nostra Giustizia sia giusta lascia, però, il passo, qui, a quello che essa, almeno, non diventi avanspettacolo.

8. -

9. Ed è di questi preziosi tempi (relativamente) morti che il premier punta ad avvantaggiarsi per estrarre dalla propria manica parlamentare gli ennesimi assi legislativi…. sarebbe perfetta per la strategia extragiudiziaria di Berlusconi

10. -

11. Perché ormai si chiama così, con buona pace della nostra reputazione internazionale.…. Ho detto e scritto che «bunga bunga» è il suono di decine di milioni di teste italiane che sbattono contro il muro, disperate. Niente da fare: non mi credono…. Le accuse sono gravi (ma la presunzione d'innocenza è caposaldo della nostra civiltà giuridica) e non riguardano solo la vita privata di una persona, ma servono a stabilire la credibilità, la coerenza, l'onestà, il buon senso e la responsabilità di un leader…. Ecco: cerchiamo, nei prossimi giorni, di non peggiorare la situazione…. Per consolarci pensiamo - e diciamo agli stranieri - che verranno giorni migliori.

12. -

13. Pier Luigi Bersani parlerà alle 18 al Pantheon «contro i provvedimenti ad personam e per la dignità del Parlamento» (lontano dal palazzo per evitare interferenze con l'ingresso dei deputati) mentre il Popolo viola ha scelto di «assediare» la Camera dalle 14.30. Di sera, poi, a Santi Apostoli c'è la «notte bianca» della democrazia promossa anche da articolo 21 e Libertà e giustizia.

14. Per non farsi accusare di aver appositamente intercettato Fede (notoriamente amico del Cavaliere)…. dovendo invece essere avviate alla futura apposita udienza di distruzione delle telefonate non utilizzabili, come appunto quelle indirette dei parlamentari oppure quelle dove figurino avvocati nell'esercizio dei loro mandati difensivi.

15. La sua voce è rimasta registrata in tre telefonate che sono sopravvissute nei brogliacci agli omissis apposti dai pm a tutela dello status parlamentare del presidente del Consiglio.

16. Insonnia del giocatore (che prossimamente sarà a Milano perché nella lista dei 78 testimoni citati dalla difesa del premier in vista del processo sul caso Ruby) piace al Cavaliere, ma i costi dell'operazione non la rendono al momento realisticamente fattibile.

17. «Siamo diventati un popolo di egoisti. Il problema dell'Italia non è Berlusconi: lui prima o poi morirà. O no?»…. Bersani, elegante sul palco, dice che «politica e movimenti devono darsi la mano e l'opposizione deve essere unita: c'è un'Italia migliore!»…. Elenca i peccati di Berlusconi: il Parlamento che certifica Ruby nipote di Mubarak, il caso clandestini, il dopo terremoto, la giravolta su Gheddafi: «Ci umilia davanti al mondo».

18. Nel merito di questa imputazione, Berlusconi nega di aver mai avuto rapporti sessuali con Ruby, replica che le sue cene ad Arcore erano diverse da come i pm le ricostruiscono sulla base dei racconti intercettati tra le ragazze, assicurando di aver aiutato solo per generosità alcune ragazze.

19. Il precipitoso arrivo in Questura di Minetti come «delegata per la presidenza del Consiglio» era stato preannunciato quella notte al capo di gabinetto da una telefonata di Berlusconi, a detta del quale la ragazza gli era stata segnalata come «nipote» o comunque «parente del presidente egiziano Mubarak».

20. -

21. «Perché ho grande fiducia nella giustizia e sono sicura dell'esito positivo del processo che dimostrerà l'innocenza mia e del presidente Berlusconi.»
22. Centrodestra all'attacco Gianfranco Fini «Il fatto che ci siano nelle carte processuali quelle intercettazioni fa male al sistema Italia»… Il premier poi parla di una mano che gli fa male e scherza…. La vicenda Ruby «fa male alla credibilità di tutto il sistema, quindi anche alla politica italiana»…«Il fatto che siano utilizzate nelle carte processuali delle intercettazioni relative a utenze del presidente del Consiglio e che quindi come tali dovevano essere distrutte, non fa male alla politica, fa male al sistema Italia».

23. Napolitano auspica «un più sereno clima istituzionale», e Berlusconi accusa i magistrati di «brigatismo giudiziario». Il presidente sottolinea «la divisione dei poteri come parte essenziale dello Stato di diritto».

24. «Ci sono due processi Ruby contro il presidente e il più grave non è quello in cui si trova nelle veste di imputato»….«il cliente» Berlusconi sarebbe automaticamente condannato, prima di fatto, di fronte all'opinione pubblica, poi anche nella forma.

25. -

26. -

27. L'opposizione: pagina vergognosa… Pierluigi Castagnetti (Pd) ha aggiunto: «Berlusconi non ha agito nell'interesse dello Stato quando ha telefonato alla questura di Milano, per dire che era stata arrestata la nipote di Mubarak. Nelle serate di Arcore c'era di tutto ma non l'interesse dello Stato». E Dario Franceschini ha parlato di «nuova pagina vergognosa». Invece Antonio Leone (Pd) - che ha dato atto a Fini di aver permesso il voto - ha accusato l'opposizione di nutrire «sentimenti di odio» e i magistrati di «aver leso le prerogative della Camera».

28. -

29. serve l'arrostus. Ossia serve dimostrare che Berlusconi abbia agito per tutelare l'interesse dello Stato.

30. E il cortocircuito fra politica e magistratura non potrebbe essere espresso in maniera più plastica e sconcertante. In Parlamento il centrodestra si ostina a cercare soluzioni che favoriscano il presidente del Consiglio nel ruolo di imputato

31. Silvio Berlusconi è imputato di corruzione di testimone, attacca l'opposizione: «E' l'ennesimo atto ad personam», puntualizza Anna Finocchiaro (Pd). Replica di Francesco Casoli (Pdl): «Il Pd, che si scandalizza per questa norma garantista, si ricordi dei 132 testimoni citati dal pm Boccassini nel processo Ruby»…«Fini ha sbagliato a dare la parola per 5 minuti a tutti», ha detto il leader della Lega. Fini, in conferenza dei capigruppo ha poi spiegato: «Ove si dovessero ripetere situazioni analoghe, la presidenza ridurrà il tempo massimo degli interventi». Questo però non ha placato l'ira di Silvio Berlusconi: «Mai vista una presidenza così parziale»


33. (cosmesi che alla Camera penale milanese fa chiedere se così non si sia voluta «mettere la polvere sotto il tappeto», «nascondere alla vista di tutti una parte così significativa del corpo della Giustizia», «coprire le gabbie con un cerone di scena»)…. per lei avrebbe significato entrare in contrasto con quello che ha sempre dichiarato: e cioè di non essere mai stata oggetto di attenzioni sessuali da parte di Berlusconi e di non aver mai effettuato una scelta di prostituzione nella propria vita».

34. E infatti: per il caso Ruby, udienza flash e rinvio al 31 maggio. Ma i 110 inviati stranieri - cinesi, americani, australiani, giapponesi, finlandesi - si sono presentati lo stesso.

35. «Tu, Ruby, secondo me non ne esci male, è più problematica la posizione dello zio Silvio, col quale io spero di poter parlare al più presto per fare un attimino il punto della situazione (...). Per forza, bisogna informarlo (...), quello che è confluito nei verbali ci mette in difficoltà, ma non ci mette in pericolo. E poi, parlarmoci chiaro, lui è un uomo adulto e se le scegli queste cose»… Ruby: «È inevitabile perché una volta che (i pm, ndr) hanno l'evidenza non puoi negare davanti l'evidenza... c'avevano le foto con la Minetti, con la Carfagna, io non potevo negare niente (in realtà le foto non esistono, ndr). Poi le affermazioni della Michelle, della Pasquino, che tutte hanno parlato di me come papi-girl, capito? (...) Domani ti mando quella lì che l'abbiamo finita (una nota scritta che l'avvocato aveva sollecitato al fidanzato di Ruby, ndr) e tu parla con Lele, parla con lui direttamente, vede cosa potete fare. Perché veramente non so come uscirne»…. Giuliane: «Con lo zio Silvio. Per forza, bisogna informarlo, Ruby.
bisogna informarlo, almeno sapere che cosa succede, credo che anche lui si debba preparare a un certo punto, poi magari non succede, siamo tutti contenti, ma avere un contraccolpo mediatico da questa vicenda». Ruby: «Ma s'incazzerà vero?».

36. «Andate a lavorare, non perdete altro tempo qui».

37. -

38. -


41. Mondadori sono in camera di consiglio a decidere se l’azienda del «cittadino» Berlusconi deve o no pagare 750 milioni di euro per risarcire De Benedetti… il processo Ruby del «cittadino» Berlusconi sul Tribunale dei Ministri… incenerisca subito a maggio il processo Mills del «cittadino» Berlusconi e lo liberi dalle ambasce di dover convivere fino all’anno prossimo… in modo che il «cittadino» Berlusconi, nel processo sui diritti tv Mediaset dove oggi ascolterà discutere proprio della superfluità o meno della moltitudine di testimoni citati dalle difese.

42. Anche a Mora il prefetto riserva definizioni per niente eleganti (lo chiama «mezzo uomo»), ma soprattutto a Berlusconi: «Che schifo quell'uomo... è un uomo di m...»…. Stanno lì una mezz'ora e vanno via. Che hanno fatto in quella mezz'ora queste due ragazze con Silvio? Sono due p... queste. Si sente al di sopra della legge, al di sopra di tutto».

43. -

44. «Questi magistrati lavorano contro il Paese». Mancano pochi minuti all'una quando il presidente del Consiglio, Silvio Berlusconi, esce dal Tribunale, afferra il microfono, si rivolge ai suoi sostenitori che lo attendono da quattro ore in via Freguglia e attacca il suo show anti-pm. … Berlusconi parla di una «mattinata surreale». Di accuse «infondate e demenziali». Di processi «mediatici». Di «tempo perso». Attacca i magistrati. «Viene buttato fango sul presidente del Consiglio, sul suo governo e sul suo Paese - accusa il premier - nel momento in cui dovrebbe essere il più forte possibile per difenderlo sulla scena internazionale. I magistrati lavorano non per il Paese, contro il Paese…. Ma se affossa i magistrati, il premier salva i giudici, anzi il collegio giudicante del processo sui diritti tv: «Credo davvero che da questo collegio ci si possa attendere un giudizio sereno e obiettivo»…. Le reazioni allo show del premier non si fanno attendere…. Sulla stessa lunghezza d'onda il Pd con Emanuele Fiano: «Siamo di fronte a comportamenti del presidente del Consiglio che sono ai limiti dell'eversione: che il massimo rappresentante del potere esecutivo, si faccia organizzare un palco da comizio fuori del tribunale di Milano per gridare e strepitare contro la magistratura è inaccettabile»…. «Berlusconi è un disco rotto e le sue litanie non interessano più a nessuno. Gli italiani si sono stancati. Se qualcuno si diverte ancora, io non mi diverto più».

45. e comincia il suo show contro i pubblici ministeri… al fine di sottrarla a qualunque necessità e anche al rischio di prostituzione. Esultanza dei sostenitori. Irritazione dei magistrati.

46. -

47. «Uno degli elementi che mi hanno spinto a prendere questa decisione - esordisce Chiara davanti ai pm Forno e Sangermano - è la posizione che ha pubblicamente assunto il presidente Berlusconi, il quale in più occasioni ha definito “cene eleganti” le serate che per quanto mi risulta avevano tutt'altra natura, e per di più ha difeso alcune ragazze del suo "giro" che avevano avuto atteggiamenti sconvenienti, mentre non ha ritenuto di spendere una parola a favore nostra che ci eravamo comportate in tutt'altra modo»…. A un certo punto Berlusconi, visibilmente contento, disse “allora siete pronte per il bunga bunga?”, e tutte le ragazze in coro hanno urlato "Siiii!". Mentre il gruppo si sposta e sale su una scala, «Berlusconi dietro di noi ci poggiò le mani sui glutei», non un aiuto (dice Ambra) ma «un palpeggimento sul sedere, e reiterato». Arrivate nel centro benessere sempre più perplesse («Ma che dobbiamo fare, disse la mia amica, dobbiamo darla?»). Chiara vede «le ragazze ballare in maniera piuttosto volgare» con «vestiti da infermiera molto corti, da crocerossina», «i seni molto scoperti», «anche un frustino», e «avvicinandosi a Berlusconi lo tocchavano e si facevano toccare nelle parti intime», una «ballava mentre Berlusconi la
bacia sul seno»…. E l’sms «grazie per la fantastica serata!» dal telefonino di Chiara a Fede? «In realtà lo mandò Salemi, per assicurarmi la selezione a Miss Italia, quando ancora non gli avevamo raccontato la serata».

Appendix IV: *Corriere della Sera* Mills-case coverage

Table IV.1: Headlines from *Corriere della Sera* articles covering the Mills-case

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<th>No</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Headline</th>
<th>Page</th>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>080212</td>
<td>Unipol, Berlusconi a giudizio “Mai ascoltato quell nastro”</td>
<td>p.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>100212</td>
<td>Mills, lite sulla prescrizione “Il processo è al fotofinish”</td>
<td>p.14</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>120212</td>
<td>Il processo Mills? Finito</td>
<td>p.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>120212</td>
<td>Mills, la prescrizione ora è certa</td>
<td>p.10</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>160212</td>
<td>Il pm su Mills: Berlusconi va condannato a 5 anni</td>
<td>p.12-13</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>160212</td>
<td>Il Cavaliere: è diffamazione assoluta</td>
<td>p.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>170212</td>
<td>Inchiesta Mediatrade Il pm: Berlusconi a processo per frode</td>
<td>p.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>190212</td>
<td>Berlusconi, i dubbi sulla prescrizione; Processo Mills</td>
<td>p.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table IV.2: Relevant quotes from the articles in table IV.1

1. «Chi teme il giudizio?» Consulente di sinistra Fra gli esperti consultati dalla difesa del Cavaliere c'è il professor Insolera, giurista «progressista»… contraddire la plateale ritrattazione di Mills («una fiction») sui 600mila dollari ricondotti a Berlusconi.

2. Valuteremo con il nostro assistito se abbia ancora senso la permanenza dei suoi difensori in questo processo Niccolò Ghedini e Piero Longo Il pm: «Menti per proteggere il Cavaliere». …mentre nove loro colleghi del Pdl dettano comunicati di fuoco contro i «giudici non imparziali».

3. «Mills mentì per proteggere Berlusconi, le parole sono pietre nella sua lettera di confessione», ha detto il pm De Pasquale nella requisitoria che finirà mercoledì. … Tempo ormai scaduto

4. Non soffro per me, ma per gli italiani. …», è un sistema escogitato per metterlo alla berlina «sul piano internazionale», per leggere «la mia immagine di uomo di Stato, sia in Italia che all'estero»….«Io in tribunale non soffro per me, ma per gli italiani. Io sono strutturato per resistere, ma se questi andassero contro un cittadino normale, per lui sarebbe la fine…»…. «non c'è nessuna prova, non c'è niente di niente contro di me, c'è solo una campagna di diffamazione e niente altro!»….È uno sfogo che prosegue da mesi, se non da anni.

5. Mills non disse falsità o reticenze - ribatte Ghedini nelle prime 4 ore di arringa

6. Berlusconi, «ha manifestato una indebita palese anticipazione di giudizio sul momento consumativo del reato».

Appendix V: *La Repubblica* Ruby-gate coverage

Table V.1: Headlines from *La Repubblica* articles covering Ruby-gate

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>310311</td>
<td>Così la prescrizione breve salverà Berlusconi dal caso Mills</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>310311</td>
<td>La Procura Generale esclude anche la Rai &quot;Niente telecamere per il processo Ruby&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>010411</td>
<td>L’allarme del Quirinale &quot;Così non si va avanti&quot;</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>010411</td>
<td>“Un regalino e te ne mando tre” così funzionava il sistema-Mora</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>010411</td>
<td>“Altre ragazze alle feste di Arcore” Nuovi nomi dai tabulati telefonici</td>
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</table>
6. 020411 Giustizia, Alfano sulle barricade "Nelle piazze per far passare la riforma"
7. 030411 Un governo fantasmat a e un paese allo sfascio
8. 030411 Alfano: "Non ci fermeremo su nessuna legge il Pd vuole solo far cadere Berlusconi"
9. 030411 E dopo il conflitto di potere con i pm spunta l'improcedibilità per il premier
10. 030411 Berlusconi: "I giudici hanno troppo potere" Gelmini con Alfano: "Giusto andare in piazza"
11. 040411 Parla Bersani: "Alfano servile il Pd in piazza per la giustizia"
12. 040411 Karima pronta a costituirsi parte civile Prima udienza senza Berlusconi
13. 050411 "Tredici ragazze ad Arcore con Ruby" E spuntano 520mila euro dati alla Trevaini
14. 050411 Ruby, la Camera dice sì al conflitto e la maggioranza "conquista" i lib-dem
15. 050411 Berlusconi rilancia ''Voglio Cristiano Ronaldo''
16. 050411 Qua ndo la Melchiorre metteva in guardia "Siamo di fronte a un'emergenza democratica"
17. 050411 Il lungo giorno della Democrazia Bersani: "Stanno umiliando l'Italia"
18. 060411 Le bandiere della dignità
19. 060411 Ruby-gate, a Palazzo di giustizia I presidi pro e contro Berlusconi
20. 060411 Tanoni: "Il terzo polo? C'è caduto l'entusiasmo"
21. 060411 Berlusconi contumace, udienza lampo Bruti: "Intercettazioni in mano alla difesa"
22. 060411 512mila euro dati alla Trevaini
23. 060411 Berlusconi rilancia "Voglio Cristiano Ronaldo"
24. 060411 Berlusconi in aula al processo Mediaset e poi l'affondo sulla prescrizione breve
25. 060411 Le dieci bugie
26. 070411 "La legge è uguale per tutti, anche per i magistrati. Se non ora quando? Cosa aspettiamo a cambiare?"
27. 080411 Chi può manipolare le notizie e il danaro è il padrone, il raìs, il Capo assoluto, circondato da una clientela

Table V.2: Relevant quotes from the articles in table V.1

1. -
2. -
3. Il blitz della maggioranza per l'ennesima legge ad personam a favore del Cavaliere…. Stavolta il presidente della Repubblica vuole avvertire che un clima di questo tipo è dannoso per tutti. Richiama al "senso di responsabilità". Anche se nei tre incontri svoltisi nello studio Alla vetrata, i toni sono ben diversi nei confronti dei rappresentanti della maggioranza e dell'opposizione.
4. fino ai bunga bunga di Arcore. Dove Mora - stando ai verbali - contribuisce ad allietare le serate del premier - dal quale riceve 3mila euro - con un flusso notevole di ragazze.
5. Dai tabulati telefonici emergono una decina di partecipanti alle feste che si aggiungono alle 33 già individuate
6. "La legge è uguale per tutti, anche per i magistrati. Se non ora quando? Cosa aspettiamo a cambiare?"
7. Chi può manipolare le notizie e il danaro è il padrone, il rai, il Capo assoluto, circondato da una clientela
110

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8.</th>
<th>Intervista...il Pd vuole solo far cadere Berlusconi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Un segnale alla Consulta, che comunque secondo l'opposizione non avrà alcun valore sul percorso del processo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Silvio Berlusconi sceglie la convention di Rete Italia per tornare ad attaccare le toghe e promettere riforme strutturali &quot;per ridare potere alla politica&quot;. …&quot;Oggi in Italia - sostiene il Cavaliere - la politica è debole, a volte impotente. Noi siamo diventati dei capri espiatori, dei parafalunini della società. I poteri che contano sono quelli dell'economia, della finanza, quello pervasivo della giustizia, che in Italia è diventato un vero e proprio contropotere&quot;…. Nel mirino del presidente del Consiglio non c'è solo la magistratura. Ma anche &quot;i poteri delle Camere e della Corte costituzionale&quot;. Che, insieme alle toghe, sono &quot;corporazioni che si oppongono al cambiamento&quot;….. Chi invece eccita gli animi è l'opposizione &quot;che vuole accreditare un clima da guerra civile&quot;….ritiri immediatamente il suo invito agli italiani a scendere in piazza per sostenere le leggi ad personam del governo&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>&quot;Alfano è arrogante come Berlusconi e servile a Berlusconi&quot;…. Il governo ha prodotto la scossa all'economia finita in un comunicato stampa, la riforma epocale della giustizia invece siamo sempre intorno a Ruby, la posizione ambigua sulla Libia, Parmalat, Edison e tutta la moda che volano verso l'estero&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>La minore è proprio Ruby, non ancora diciottenne quando, secondo l'accusa, prese parte alle serate organizzate in casa del premier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>lei, la Ruby Rubacuori, che appena arrivata da Letojanni sbarca nella Milano by night, si avvolge ben presto in un allucinante stola di volpe, vanta i gioielli comprati dal premier e sventola ridendo tante banconote da 500 euro. Che notti, quelle notti.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>&quot;Mi dispiace farvi vivere queste situazioni, ma io non c'entro niente con queste accuse. Sono addolorato ma devo difendermi da attacchi assurdi&quot;….. Tanto i giudici fanno come sempre quello che vogliono&quot;…. Il processo Ruby fa male alla credibilità di tutto il sistema, quindi anche alla politica italiana, anche per alcuni aspetti che vanno sottolineati con onestà. Il fatto che siano utilizzate nelle carte processuali delle intercettazioni relative a utenze del presidente del Consiglio e che quindi come tali dovevano essere distrutte, non fa male alla politica, fa male al sistema italiano&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Per ora il nome di Cristiano Ronaldo è sulla lista dei testimoni citati dalla difesa di Silvio Berlusconi al processo Ruby che inizia domani a Milano. Ma, a dare retta ai desideri espressi in privato dal Cavaliere, tra poco il portoghese potrebbe entrare anche nell'elenco dei rinforzi del Milan. &quot;Il mio sogno è avere in squadra Cristiano Ronaldo&quot;,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>&quot;Il governo Berlusconi ostacola il funzionamento della giustizia&quot;;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Bersani: &quot;Stanno umiliando l'Italia&quot;…Siamo qui contro le leggi ad personam che il premier continua a far votare e che continua a usare per salvare se stesso dalla giustizia. Siamo qui per chiedere giustizia. Siamo qui perché la legge sia uguale per tutti. Siamo qui e ci sposteremo seguendo il percorso della leggi. Andremo al Senato, andremo al Quirinale. Saremo qui anche domani… Lui non andrà mai via tanto, Berlusconi non si arrenderà mai. Ma questa non è la Libia, e non è l'Egitto. Io sono stanca… Al microfono, si ricorda la &quot;lista della vergogna&quot;, &quot;i 37 provvedimenti ad personam approvati dal 1994 ad oggi&quot;, dalla legge Biondi al falso in bilancio, dal mandato di cattura europeo al condono fiscale del 2002….&quot;Quello che la maggioranza ha deciso oggi è che Ruby è la nipote di Mubarak! Berlusconi così ci mette in condizione di umiliazione e vergogna davanti al mondo. E è una vergogna&quot;!.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Abbastanza in ogni caso per dar fastidio a un progetto di sistematica umiliazione…. Per esser chiari, un regime non è quando si censurano i telegiornali o si fa ministro un'amante o si fanno approvare venti leggi ad personam o ci si circonda di delinquenti e mafiosi o si attenta un giorno si e l'altro pure alla Costituzione…. Questa è soltanto una democrazia (molto) corrotta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Berlusconi pretende di essere legibus solutus. Il Cavaliere è già al lavoro. Fin d'ora avvelena i pozzi dell'opinione pubblica con cadenza quotidiana e, come sempre, rifiuta ogni domanda e ogni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
contraddittorio, senza coraggio… Sistema il suo esercito mediatico per la manipolazione che, cancellati i fatti e soprattutto la violenza su una minore, dovrà trasformare il "caso Ruby" in uno spettacolino plausibile come il Grande Fratello e il responsabile delle torsioni di un corretto gioco democratico nella vittima di un complotto politico…. È il pericoloso incrocio in cui ci ha portato un premier incapace di controllare la sua vita, determinatissimo a non accettare alcuna responsabilità e giudizio. Ma se ieri, per evitare ogni responsabilità e giudizio, il presidente del Consiglio comprava i giudici (Mondadori) e corrompeva i testimoni (All Iberian)

22.


24. "Ovviamente del voto in Parlamento se ne discuterà in udienza, poi vedremo, i giudici faranno come sempre quello che vogliono", chiosa polemico Ghedini.

25. -

26. Lettera del premier ai giudici della IV sezione penale: "Impossibilitato ad essere presente per impegni istituzionali". L'avvocato di Karima: "Non ci costituiamo parte civile".

27. È un regime che immagina di aver già cancellato l'autonomia e l'indipendenza dei magistrati e incluso il potere giudiziario nel bouquet dei quattro poteri nelle mani di Berlusconi (esecutivo, legislativo, economico, mediatico)…. Accade che si scateni un putiferio perché l'Espresso e il Corriere della sera pubblicano alcune intercettazioni di Berlusconi. I più servili parlano di "reato": sono pagati dal Sultano, è il loro mestiere chiedere l'arresto di chi infastidisce il Padrone con un'indagine penale.

28. -


30. "di gente che spara cazzate su di me ce ne stanno tante e di smentire e pagare persone per mentire cioè, c'ho la capacità di farlo, anche perché come mi chiami Gesù, Gesù può fare tutto".

31. -

32. -

33. "Silvio pronto a pagare per far mentire i testi" … Quale? Si riferisce forse a quei 5 milioni di euro che la minorenne marocchina appunta sul suo diario? Nella trascrizione della telefonata, non c'è scritto. Ruby aggiunge solo che il presidente, subito dopo, le chiede "se è andata a prendere, mmm... le cose che ti ho lasciato da Spinelli (il contabile personale del Cavaliere, ndr)".

34. -

35. L'intervista non ha nessun valore processuale, certo, ma agli atti dell'inchiesta c'è una verità differente,… Tra l'altro Ruby stessa spiega che "io quando devo chiamare a lui, lui mi chiama a me, perché non posso chiamarlo. C'ha il suo numero privato e mi chiama lui".

36. -

37. E' il più gracile del processi a Silvio Berlusconi. L'accusa di falso in bilancio, modificato il reato "ad personam", si è dissolta.…E ci sarà il pubblico. Zero pass, invece, a fotografi e cameraman. Comunque, la parte di show rischia di essere schiacciante rispetto alla parte "concreta":

38. "le ho dato dei soldi per evitare che si prostituisse, le avevo dato la possibilità di entrare in un centro estetico con un'amica, che lei avrebbe potuto realizzare se portava un laser per la depilazione, per un importo che a me sembrava di 45mila euro. Invece lei ha dichiarato di 60mila e io ho dato l'incarico di darle questi soldi per sottrarla a qualunque necessità, per non costringerla a fare la prostituta e portarla anzi nella direzione contraria"…. il suo intervento - spiega - fu dettato dalla volontà di "evitare un incidente diplomatico". "Ho chiesto un'informazione, preoccupato per una situazione che poteva dar luogo a un incidente diplomatico. Successivamente mi è stato risposto che la ragazza non era egiziana, ed è caduto tutto…. Attacco a Giuseppe d'Avanzo di Repubblica, che gli chiede perché non abbia reso dichiarazioni ai giudici invece che alla stampa. "Senta, signor Stalin - replica il premier - lei di che giornale è"?; "Repubblica" è la risposta. E il premier: "Ecco, appunto, grazie"...."Lei è quello cattivo" dice Berlusconi al magistrato, che invita il leader del Pd a "contenersi". "Si contenga lei con le accuse", 111
Appendix VI: *La Repubblica* Mills-case coverage

**Table VI.1: Headlines from *La Repubblica* articles covering Mills-case**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Headline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>090212</td>
<td>Mills, difesa Berlusconi chiede prescrizione ma tribunal non decide, processo va Avanti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>110212</td>
<td>Mills, la difesa guadagna altro tempo; Pm: “Denaro da Berlusconi oltre ogni dubbio”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>120212</td>
<td>Mills, Berlusconi è colpevole lo ha già provato la Cassazione</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>150212</td>
<td>Il pm chiede 5 anni per Berlusconi; Parte civile: “Risarcisca Palazzo Chigi”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>160212</td>
<td>Il pm: condannate Berlusconi a 5 anni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>160212</td>
<td>Condannate Berlusconi a 5 anni su Mills carte false della difesa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>160212</td>
<td>Berlusconi: “Mi difenderò, basta fango” Mediatrade, chiesto processo per l’ex premier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>170212</td>
<td>E il Cavaliere chiede aiuto al Quirinale “Solo Napolitano può bloccara la mattanza”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>220212</td>
<td>Processo Mills, no alla ricusazione; sabato prossimo arriva la sentenza</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table VI.2: Relevant quotes from the articles in table VI.1**

1. "Ma che scherziamo? Mi sembra una follia, 1,7 milioni non è neanche quasi quanto gli ho dato da gestire. proprio non ci sta"…Per la difesa di Berlusconi "questo tribunale non può pronunciare sentenza, ma non è escluso che possa dare una risposta"

2. Le parole del pubblico ministero, intanto, hanno fatto insorgere i capigruppo Pdl di Camera e Senato: "Non volevamo usare parole grosse, ma vediamo che i pubblici ministeri di Milano del processo Mills usano parole insultanti. Il comportamento loro e del tribunale è quello tipico di un tribunale speciale. Il Csm ci dia un'occhiata", ha detto Fabrizio Cicchitto, presidente dei deputati Pdl. E subito dopo arriva la dichiarazione di Maurizio Gasparri, numero uno dei senatori del partito: "Ormai è sempre più evidente la vera ed unica motivazione del processo, colpire ad ogni costo Silvio Berlusconi". "Le accuse contro il presidente Berlusconi a Milano stanno deragliando sempre più dai binari della normale giustizia per entrare in quelle assai opinabili della persecuzione", ha detto Paolo Bonaïuti. L'avvocato, Niccolò Ghedini, non si è limitato ad attaccare il pubblico ministero. "Il problema non è il pm che è una parte, il problema è il tribunale che non è imparziale. In questo processo sono stati sentiti solo i testi dell'accusa".

3. C' è già una sentenza «che è una prova», e che permette di dichiarare «gli estremi di colpevolezza di Silvio
Berlusconi nel reato di corruzione giudiziaria». ... David Mills al ruolo di testimone corrotto (applicando la prescrizione), che grazie al suo comportamento, ai suoi silenzi, «ha schermato Berlusconi». ... «Le forzature e gli strappi che stanno avvenendo a Milano - le prime parole del capogruppo alla Camera Maurizio Cicchetto - sono una autentica offesa allo stato di diritto. E sarebbe opportuno che qualcuno almeno a livello di Csm desse a tutto quello che sta avvenendo una occhiata né distratta né omissiva». ... «Questo Tribunale si dimostra sempre più parziale».

4. "La difesa di Silvio Berlusconi è basata su carte false" o meglio su una "fittizia sequenza di carte fabbricate o falsificate" ... Per l'accusa si tratta quindi di "cortine fumogene" create ad arte per "schermare Berlusconi". ... Per la difesa di Silvio Berlusconi, Mills non solo non "ammorbidì" le sue testimonianze.

5. il Cavaliere sarebbe colpevole "oltre ogni ragionevole dubbio" di aver corrotto l'avvocato David Mills con 600mila dollari in cambio di una testimonianza reticente nei processi All Iberian e per tangenti alla Guardia di Finanza.

6. Cinque anni sono una pena congrua per chi è accusato di aver corrotto un testimone, essersi garantito la propria impunità, aver continuato indisturbato la propria carriera politica. ... Niccolò Ghedini ha smontato l'accusa, insistendo sul fatto che Mills, quando è stato chiamato a testimoniare a Milano, «non è stato un teste falso». ... «Io in tribunale non soffro per me ma per gli italiani - ha detto Berlusconi allo stadio Meazza per Milan-Arsenal-. Io sono strutturato per resistere ma se questi andassero contro un cittadino normale per lui sarebbe la fine». ... «A Milano - il commento del segretario Pdl Angelino Alfano - , stanno inseguendo una sentenza politica. Una corsa contro il tempo per incassare una condanna che, se arrivasse, sarebbe già prescritta». ... "La difesa di Silvio Berlusconi è basata su carte false" o meglio su una "fittizia sequenza di carte fabbricate o falsificate" ...

7. Sul caso Mills in una lettera al Giornale lamenta "l'accanimento di alcuni magistrati" contro la sua "immagine di uomo". ... "Ho la coscienza - scrive - di aver servito in questi anni con tutte le mie forze il mio paese e ne sono ripagato con un accanimento da parte di alcuni magistrati di Milano che non ha eguali nella storia. Si vuole distruggere fino in fondo la mia immagine di uomo, di imprenditore e di politico". 

8. A Milano Niccolò Ghedini e Piero Longo gli hanno riferito che si corre verso la condanna. "Ghedini è molto pessimista", ammette una fonte del cerchio stretto. ... "Quella di Milano è una sentenza politica, lo hanno capito tutti che il diritto non c'entra niente. Io suggerisco di ignorarla e andare avanti come se nulla fosse". ... Per Berlusconi tuttavia il colpo sarebbe troppo forte. Non soltanto vedrebbe sfregiata la sua immagine in Italia, ma anche all'estero la sua figura sarebbe ulteriormente compromessa: "Mi vogliono sputtanare - si lamenta con gli amici - con una notizia che farebbe il giro del mondo".

9. Poi sono attese la camera di consiglio e la decisione: sentenza di merito o proscioglimento per prescrizione. Prescrizione che per i legali dell'ex premier è già scattata, mentre per il pm e per l'avvocato di parte civile è ancora lontana.

Appendix VII: Coding schemes

Table VII.1: Number of articles that state that Berlusconi is good for Italy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Coding rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1: Berlusconi is good for Italy as a country</td>
<td>Arguments or quotes that show that accusations against Berlusconi are bad for Italy (or for Italian institutions, such as the judicial system)</td>
<td>From table I.2: 4, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 18, 25, 30, 40 From table II.2: 5, 6, 10 From table III.2: 29 From table IV.2: 5 From table V.2: 14 From table VI.2: 6, 7</td>
<td>One or more explicit arguments or quotes that support Berlusconi’s cause are used in the article, while arguments or quotes that support the...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both arguments or quotes that show that accusations against Berlusconi are bad for Italy as well as arguments or quotes that show that Berlusconi’s behavior is bad for Italy are present in the article. Or neither arguments are present.

From table I.2: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43
From table II.2: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10
From table III.2: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 33, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 48
From table IV.2: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
From table V.2: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41
From table VI.2: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9

Both sides of the spectrum are written down in the article. Or none of the arguments are mentioned.

Arguments or quotes that show that Berlusconi’s behavior is bad for Italy (or for Italian institutions, such as the judicial system)

From table I.2: -
From table II.2: -
From table III.2: 4, 11, 17, 22, 27, 31, 32, 34, 39, 44, 47
From table IV.2: -
From table V.2: 7, 11, 17, 18, 19, 21, 27, 37, 38
From table VI.2: 8

One or more explicit arguments or quotes that support the oppositional cause are used in the article, while arguments or quotes that support Berlusconi’s cause are absent.

Table VII.2: Number of articles in which Berlusconi goes personal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Coding rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 Private sphere</td>
<td>Quotes or other parts of the text that refer solely to Berlusconi’s private sphere.</td>
<td>From table I.2: 9, 14, 15, 18, 20, 24, 27, 30, 34, 39, 40</td>
<td>One or more explicit arguments or quotes that take place in Berlusconi’s private sphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From table II.2: 5, 6, 8, 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From table III.2: 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 35, 39, 42, 44, 47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From table IV.2: 5, 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From table V.2: 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 16, 21, 30, 33, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From table VI.2: 2, 3, 6, 7, 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 non-Private sphere</td>
<td>No quotes or other parts</td>
<td>From table I.2: 1, 2, 3, 4,</td>
<td>No quotes or other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VII.2: Number of articles in which Berlusconi goes personal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Coding rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 Private sphere</td>
<td>Quotes or other parts of the text that refer solely to Berlusconi’s private sphere.</td>
<td>From table I.2: 9, 14, 15, 18, 20, 24, 27, 30, 34, 39, 40</td>
<td>One or more explicit arguments or quotes that take place in Berlusconi’s private sphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From table II.2: 5, 6, 8, 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From table III.2: 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 35, 39, 42, 44, 47</td>
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<td>From table IV.2: 5, 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From table V.2: 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 16, 21, 30, 33, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>From table VI.2: 2, 3, 6, 7, 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 non-Private sphere</td>
<td>No quotes or other parts</td>
<td>From table I.2: 1, 2, 3, 4,</td>
<td>No quotes or other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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of the text refer to Berlusconi’s private sphere.

5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 43
From table II.2: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9
From table III.2: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 43, 45, 46, 48
From table IV.2: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8
From table V.2: 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 34, 36, 41
From table VI.2: 1, 4, 5, 9

Table VII.3: Number of articles that shine a beneficial light on Berlusconi’s cause

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Coding rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| C1 Political publicity or interactive news making | Arguments or quotes that explain Berlusconi’s policy in a positive way. | From table I.2: 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 34, 36, 39, 40, 43
From table II.2: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
From table III.2: 7, 21, 24
From table IV.2: 5, 6
From table V.2: 8, 11, 24, 30, 37
From table VI.2: 2, 3, 7 | One or more explicit arguments or quotes that highlight the positive character of Berlusconi’s policy are used in the article, while arguments or quotes that oppose Berlusconi’s cause are absent. |
| C2 Both political publicity or interactive news making, as well as journalistic revelation | Both arguments or quotes that show that accusations against Berlusconi are bad for Italy as well as arguments or quotes that show that Berlusconi’s behavior is bad for Italy are present in the article. Or neither arguments are present | From table I.2: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 16, 22, 23, 28, 32, 33, 35, 37, 38, 41, 42
From table II.2: 4
From table III.2: 2, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 38, 43, 46, 48
From table IV.2: 1, 2, 3, 7
From table V.2: 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 12, 15, 16, 20, 22, 23, | Both sides of the spectrum are written down in the article. Or none of the arguments are mentioned. |
| **C3 journalistic revelation** | Arguments or quotes that explain Berlusconi’s policy in a negative way. | From table I.2: 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 17, 18, 19, 29, 35, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 47  
From table IV.2: 4, 8  
From table V.2: 4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21, 27, 33, 35, 39, 40  
From table VI.2: 4, 5, 8, 9 | One or more explicit arguments or quotes that highlight the negative character of Berlusconi’s policy are used in the article, while arguments or quotes that support Berlusconi’s cause are absent. |