

**As Seen on TV:
Programming Cinema and Entertainment
in Italy in the Long 1980s**

by

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This work is dedicated to

Papà e Mamma

and

Elizabeth e Frankie

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Abstract

Between 1974 and 1976 the Italian Constitutional Court allowed the development of private television channels in Italy. The progressive emergence of the financial holding company Fininvest's television channels and the ensuing stiff competition with the state broadcaster RAI from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, a period I define as "the long 1980s," was a decisive moment not only for the television market, but also for Italy's cultural and economic history. The ruling by Italy's highest court opened up new and unprecedented opportunities for private enterprises, and within a few years profoundly affected Italians' relationship to the television medium, film viewership, and cultural consumption. The domain of the competition for film programming became an important element in the battle for the acquisition of audiences between RAI and Fininvest's channels.

In my dissertation, I focus on the interdependent relationships between cinema and television in Italy during the long 1980s, from the emergence of private local networks and their transformation to national networks, and the ensuing vertiginous rise in film programming, to the introduction of pay-per-view. At the center of my work is a particular practice of programming, which amounted to what I refer to as *habit-forming flow*, since programmers successfully juxtaposed films and other programs, together with announcements, trailers, and commercials in order to inform the viewing and material

consumption habits of the audience. I contend it is the programming as a whole, and not just individual programs, that had a crucial role in shaping these habits and creating new narrative structures. In particular, during the long 1980s, the implementation of the television habit-forming flow informed, and, at the same time was influenced by, a period of profound political, social, and economic transformations. More individualist lifestyles were emerging throughout Italy also thanks to an innovative television programming and its objective to spread more personalized forms of viewing and material consumption.

The substantial rise in television film programming through the advent of private television, along with the creation of a habit-forming flow, brought about significant cultural changes in the long 1980s that inspired new consumption practices and narrative formats in Italy.

Introduction

Discovering the Long 1980s in Italy and Europe

Between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s, particularly unique events characterized and differentiated the Italian television market from that of the rest of Europe. Until the 1970s, Italian television consisted of only two public channels (Rete 1 and Rete 2) featuring limited airing time and a scarce number of programs. Private television channels emerged in the mid-1970s, and began to compete against the national public network RAI for audiences' attention. The Italian Constitutional Court assured private channels' presence in Italy when it granted them the right to broadcast on a local level in 1976. It also exhorted the Italian Parliament to define geographic and advertising restrictions, and demanded for the implementation of an authorization to operate private channels.

However, the Italian Parliament did not properly discipline private broadcasting, as it was originally unconcerned about the formation of monopolies or oligopolies that could undermine RAI's leadership and significantly unsettle the television market as a whole. Moreover, Parliament later favored the soon-to-be media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi's rise to television power by refusing to clearly define the term "ambito locale" (local area), as the Constitutional Court instructed. Simultaneously, new economic interests pushed for a major liberalization of the television market, as they were

eager to invest in private channels to capitalize on unlimited advertising space.¹ For all these reasons, prominent editorial groups such as Rusconi Editore and Mondadori, and media mogul Silvio Berlusconi, extensively invested in and swiftly gained control of most of the private television realm.

As a consequence, the Italian television broadcasting system remained almost completely ungoverned during the mid-1970s and throughout the 1980s. Parliament did pass a specific law in 1985 in order to enable Fininvest, Berlusconi's financial holding company to which Rete 4, Canale 5, and Italia 1 belonged, to broadcast nationally. The bill was promoted by the government headed by Socialist leader and Berlusconi's friend Bettino Craxi. The law did not impose any real limit on Fininvest, nor did it list sanctions in case of possible violations. Therefore, the bill failed to regulate private broadcasting in general.² The situation only apparently improved in 1990 with the passing of the so-called *Mammì law*. It was the first comprehensive law to regulate public and private radio and television communications. However, it chiefly confirmed the existing situation, legalizing the duopoly between RAI and Fininvest, thus allowing Berlusconi to conserve his three television channels.

While private television channels freely developed without restrictive legislation in Italy between the 1970s and 1980s, the same was not true for other major European countries. The governments of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Spain passed several detailed laws that accompanied and disciplined the gradual formation of private television channels. All these countries, unlike Italy, established a set of norms before

¹ David Forgacs, *L'industrializzazione della cultura italiana (1980-2000)* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2000), 273.

² Gabriele Balbi and Benedetta Prario, "The history of Fininvest/Mediaset's media strategy: 30 years of politics, the market, technology and Italian society," *Media Culture Society* 32 (2010): 393.

private channels began to broadcast and not afterwards. Moreover, they implemented a strict regulatory system to prevent the emergence of monopolies or oligopolies in the television realm, such as the need of a government-issued authorization to broadcast. These European countries also unbiasedly disciplined television advertising, whereas the Italian government protected Fininvest's commercial interests through advantageous and flexible limitations.³ It is evident how the Italian television broadcasting system presented quite singular features with respect to other European nations, and therefore demanding further study of the historical and legislative circumstances present during its formulation.

Despite different television broadcasting systems between Italy and the rest of Europe, Fininvest attempted to expand its success abroad by investing in the creation of television channels in France with La Cinq (1986), Germany with Telefunf (1988), and Spain with Telecinco (1990). These channels presented similar programming content to their Italian "sister" Canale 5: quiz and game shows, variety shows, films, and television series. The liberalization of television broadcasting across Europe during the 1980s had attracted Berlusconi's attention, as he hoped to use the new channels to vastly grow his company. In fact, he was seeking to build a horizontal integration, achievable "when (a company) expands in its traditional sector developing new projects or taking over other companies in the sector."⁴ In particular, Berlusconi's initial dream was to create a European satellite television network capable of reaching 250 million people daily and

³ For more information on the British, French, German, and Spanish, as well as others, broadcast media regulations see Leen d'Haenens and Frieda Saeys, eds., *Western Broadcasting at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2001). Francesca Anania, *Davanti allo schermo: storia del pubblico televisivo* (Rome: Carocci, 1997), 81-87.

⁴ Balbi and Prario, "The history of Fininvest/Mediaset's media strategy," 398.



Figure 1 La Cinq’s (left) Telefun’s (center), and Telecinco’s (right) logos.
 © 1986, 1988, 1990 by Fininvest.

effectively competing for advertising revenues against the U.S. As Berlusconi himself contended:

un unico programma capace di raggiungere tutte le case europee e un numero enorme di spettatori. Duecentocinquanta milioni di persone che nello stesso istante e ciascuno nella sua propria lingua potranno assistere allo stesso spettacolo. Sarà un grande momento di comunione non solo emotiva ma anche culturale. Con il satellite faremo una televisione in cui tutta l’Europa saprà riconoscere – attraverso il gusto e il sentire che le sono propri – comuni radici di civiltà.⁵

However, the lack of strong political backing in those countries, especially France and Germany, prevented the company from realizing the same success it had in Italy and

⁵ “A single network capable of reaching all the European households and a vast number of spectators. Two hundred and fifty million people at the same time and each one will be able to watch the same show in his/her own language. It will be a great moment of not only emotional but also cultural communion. Through the satellite we will create a television network which all of Europe will recognize – through similar tastes and feelings - common roots of civilization.” The translation is mine. Pierluigi Ronchetti, “La mia TV per l’Europa. Parla Silvio Berlusconi,” *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 49 (1985): 35. See also Carlo Brusati “Berlusconi sbarca a Parigi,” *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 48 (1985): 32-33.

from launching a European television network.⁶ In 1992, only six and four years respectively after their creation, La Cinq and Telefunf closed down. Only Telecinco survived, and exists to this date. Telecinco's success can be partially attributed to a more stable political backing to avoid antitrust legislation from the Spanish and Socialist Prime Minister Felipe González, who had been convinced by Craxi to favor Berlusconi's rise in Spain. The channel's triumph with the Spanish audience was also a main factor: "Telecinco quickly became the most watched station in Spain, which, after some forty years of sexual and political repression under right-wing political dictator Francisco Franco, was ready to relax and have fun."⁷ Nevertheless, Berlusconi's media empire in Spain was still less prominent than the one he controlled in Italy.

France and Germany presented different political and cultural contexts, which hindered Berlusconi's accomplishments. Despite Craxi's proximity to France's Socialist President François Mitterand, or the ability of Berlusconi himself to build proficuous business relationships with other media entrepreneurs such as Herbert Kloiber and Leo Kirsch in Germany, Fininvest was incapable of replicating the same successes it achieved in Italy, therefore aiding in rendering the Italian television landscape between the mid-1970s and the early 1990s exceptionally unique.

The singularity of Italian television in this period lay not only in Fininvest's accomplishments in television broadcasting. It also depended on Fininvest's ability to reap the benefits of film programming's vast success with the Italian audience through the creation of a vertical integration — combining production, distribution, and

⁶ Alexander Stille, *The Sack of Rome: How a Beautiful European Country with a Fabled History and a Storied Culture Was Taken Over by a Man Named Silvio Berlusconi* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 104-109.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

exhibition. Indeed, Berlusconi's media empire in this period comprised three national television channels, and during the 1980s, two companies, Reteitalia and Medusa Film, which specialized in film production and distribution. The latter also controlled part of the home entertainment market and managed movie theaters (belonging to the circuit Cinema 5) all over Italy.⁸ Additionally, in 1994 Berlusconi united both a large media dominance and political power when he became Italy's Prime Minister. Fininvest's expansion allowed Silvio Berlusconi, its largest shareholder, to gain exclusive control of the vertical integration. His leadership, along with the political support he received and his becoming prime minister makes the Italian situation particularly unique. No other European country at that time, or through present day, has presented one person with such a vast power: a media mogul and political head of government.

In the rest of Europe, and specifically in France, Germany, and Spain, but also in North America, there was not a single individual who owned multiple television channels, devised a vertical integration, and then became prime minister. In this way, by being the Prime Minister, and hence controlling the majority of the Italian Parliament, he also had the power to intervene in the administration of the State-owned RAI, therefore expanding *de facto* his media empire. All of these singularities were part of and contributed to significantly inform not only the Italian media landscape but also Italy's everyday life.

This dissertation, through a semiotic, historical, and sociological method, aims at analyzing the peculiar Italian television market and its connections with and effects on the social, economic, and political realms between the mid-1970s and the beginning of

⁸ Fania Petrocchi, *Il cinema della televisione italiana: la produzione cinematografica di Rai e Fininvest (1976/1994)* (Rome: RAI-ERI, 1996), 38.

the 1990s. I define this period as *the long 1980s*, since the 1980s seem to start in the mid-1970s, with the boom of private television channels and the gradual emergence of more individualized and consumerist lifestyles. The period appears to end at the beginning of the 1990s. In fact, the formation of the first Italian pay television platform Telepiù in 1991 and the financial, economic, and political crisis of 1992 and 1993 followed by Silvio Berlusconi's rise to power in 1994, terminated this epoch and ushered Italy into a new era.

Central to my understanding and study of the television market in this time period is the concept of flow. Through an analysis of RAI and Fininvest's channels during the long 1980s, I argue that the television networks introduced and further refined a strategic programming tactic I refer to as *habit-forming flow*, a concept I expand on based on cultural critic Raymond Williams's notion of flow. Williams first proposed the idea of flow in *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (1974) to describe the ways in which television was made up of intersecting programming segments with the objective of keeping viewers through the transition of one segment to another. As a general term, I define programming as the thoughtful, strategic arrangement of individual elements in the television scheduling in order to achieve a specific goal. Throughout my dissertation, I build on my concept of programming and its role in the creation of a television flow using both semiotic and economic points of view to support my argument. I begin by examining the role a specific element played in shaping the television habit-forming flow, and expand my argument to look at the flow in its entirety, as a conscious programming of elements to create a cohesive scheduling. Finally, I expand my notion of flow to include its cultural and economic ramifications for audiences and Italian society

as a whole during this period. In doing so, I illustrate how the conception and implementation of the flow, together with the cultural, economic, and political contexts unique to Italy during time in which it was implemented, significantly impacted the country's cultural and social life.

Chapter Outline

Throughout the chapters of this project, I trace the development of private television channels and their expansion into large, national networks and the implementation of a purposeful television programming schedule and its impact on the lives of Italians. As I do so, I examine the historical, cultural, and political contexts surrounding each development in order to best understand the ways in which they shaped and were influenced by Italy's television broadcasting phenomenon. Finally, I enter into critical discourses with media scholars, cultural critics, and historians in order to demonstrate the necessity for my research and position myself within the academic debates.

The critical vector and leading thread of this project is the idea of programming. In the first chapter, programming is the use and placement of films in the weekly schedule for the purpose of maximizing viewership and advertising revenues. In the second chapter, television programming corresponds to the overall coherent organization of programs, announcements, promotional messages, and commercials. In the third chapter, programming amounts to a consumerist strategy whose goal is to develop specific consumption behaviors in viewers/consumers. In fact, television channels during the long 1980s appeared to replicate the coherent organizational logic of the booming supermarkets to influence the spectators' consumption habits. These definitions solidify

the connections at center of my work between television programming and Italy's social and cultural life in the long 1980s.

My first chapter begins with an analysis of television film programming during the long 1980s. I begin by discussing past and current debates about television film programming by various media scholars, and place myself within those debates in order to identify my contribution to the discussion. My approach rests on the vector of television film programming which I use to analyze the long 1980s from a historical, semiotic, and legislative point of view.

I outline the development of film programming and its importance to the success of private channels and the emergence of large, national networks such as Fininvest. The 1976 ruling by the Italian Constitutional Court created new opportunities for private television networks, and as a result, new viewing opportunities for Italians. Film broadcasting became an important element used as both private and public networks sought to acquire and then keep audiences. Television networks purchased large numbers of films and began screening them throughout the day or in strategically planned film cycles designed to maximize viewership. The widespread presence and success of film on television also influenced other elements of television programming, as films also became a model for many commercials.

However, films were only a part of a comprehensive programming tactic, a construct I refer to as *habit-forming flow*. In my second chapter, I discuss how the television habit-forming flow was key in shaping audiences' viewing and material consumption practices. Programmers successfully implemented a programming strategy that juxtaposed programs, together with announcements, promotional messages, and

commercials in order to form a cohesive programming that, as a whole, shaped viewers' consumption habits.

I use the notion of flow first coined by Williams to describe television as consisting of intersecting programming segments aiming at keeping the audience from program to program, or from one segment of a program to another as a starting point for the development of my concept of habit-forming flow. I also engage with other theoretical and critical works of various media scholars. In doing so, I position myself within the debate around the idea of television flow, but also identify the necessity of habit-forming flow in order to explain the phenomenon of television broadcasting in Italy during the long 1980s.

My third and final chapter examines how the habit-forming flow both shaped and was informed by social, cultural, and economic developments occurring in Italy between the 1970s and 1980s. The long 1980s were marked by a period of waning socio-political movements focused on implementing an extensive reform of the Italian society as a whole and a rise in individualistic, self-gratifying lifestyles. The favorable economic situation at the time encouraged the shift towards self-indulgence and increased personal spending. In this chapter, I explain how the television flow influenced Italians' consumption practices as viewers began replicating the glamorous lifestyles displayed on television.

Moreover, I argue that the habit-forming flow of the long 1980s was part of a broader phenomenon, that of modern consumption. As evidence of this, I highlight how the boom of supermarkets in Italy occurred in conjunction with television channels' adoption of a programming flow. Television programmers mirrored the organizational

logic of supermarkets in order to influence and increase spectators' consumption habits. Audiences, in turn, flocked to the supermarkets (and other retail stores) to purchase items seen on television.

In order to construct and illustrate my arguments, my dissertation also examines a large body of printed and visual texts from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s that so far have received scant academic attention due to the fact that scholars have not comprehensively studied film and television programming and their repercussions on Italy's social and cultural life in the long 1980s. To understand and detail television film programming – and the whole programming – my corpus of primary sources include RAI and Fininvest's daily schedules published in the weekly listings magazine *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*. The purchase of 350 issues from 1982 until 1991 of this magazine allowed me to formulate my idea of habit-forming flow and to trace its development and implementation on Italian television in the long 1980s. While scholars have examined individual or small grouping of issues of *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*, no effort has previously been made to collect and analyze such a large quantity of issues spanning an entire decade. My use of these primary texts is both innovative and invaluable in developing my case for the existence of a habit-forming flow.

I completed my research on television programming by accessing the online archives of the magazine *Scelta TV* and the daily newspaper *La Stampa*, and through the acquisition of VHS recordings of films broadcast on television in the long 1980s that private individuals produced for the purpose of creating their own film library. These videotapes proved to be highly valuable as they contained commercials, announcements, and promotional messages, essential to illustrate how the habit-forming flow

characterized Italian television programming. Moreover, I employ statistical data from the long 1980s gathered primarily from Italian statistical institutions such as ISTAT (the Italian National Institute of Statistics) and Eurisko-Sinottica to demonstrate the connections between Italian television flow and Italians' purchasing habits.

Through the consideration of these materials, as well as other scholarly works, this project demonstrates how the arrival of private television channels, their successful programming of films and the creation and implementation of the habit-forming flow marked a key period in Italy's cultural, political, and economic history. These events not only drastically changed the television broadcasting landscape, they also profoundly influenced Italy's cultural and social life. Most interestingly, the long 1980s were shaped by circumstances completely individual and unique to Italy.

Chapter 1

Films on Television: Broadcasting Cinema, Programming Success

The Italian Constitutional Court with Judgment no. 226/1974 allowed the development of local private cable television channels.¹ Two years later, the same Court updated this decision by determining that Italy's state television RAI could not maintain a national monopoly over local television broadcasting.² The progressive emergence of the financial holding company Fininvest's television channels and the ensuing stiff competition with the state broadcaster RAI from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, a period I define as "the long 1980s," was a decisive moment not only for the television market, but also for Italy's cultural and economic history. The ruling by Italy's highest court opened up new and unprecedented opportunities for private enterprises and, in a few years, profoundly affected Italians' relationship to the television medium, film viewership, and cultural consumption. The domain of film broadcasting became an important element in the battle for the acquisition of audiences between RAI and Fininvest's channels.

In this chapter, I focus on Italian television film programming, which I define as the specific choice, use, and placement of films in the weekly schedule for the purpose of

¹ Judgment no. 226 of 10 July 1974, published in *Gazzetta Ufficiale [hereafter GU]* no. 187, July 17, 1974.

² Judgment no. 202 of 28 July 1976, published in *GU* no. 205, August 4, 1976.

maximizing viewership and advertising revenues. My analysis moves from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, from the emergence of private local networks and their transformation to national networks, and the ensuing vertiginous rise in film broadcasting, to the introduction of pay television.

I first devote ample space to contrasting the past and current debates on films on television to detect their methodological proclivities and shortcomings. I do so in order to position my contribution within this debate. My approach rests on the vector of television film programming which I use to analyze the long 1980s from a historical, semiotic, and legislative point of view. Specifically, I divide my analysis into four time periods. The first period begins in 1974, and spans the boom of film programming with the emergence of cable channels and especially the late-1970s emergence of private over-the air channels. The second period starts in 1979 when film and television production and distribution company Reteitalia procured a vast film package from film producer Titanus opening a new era for film programming. The third phase begins in 1984 when the television networks Italia 1 and Rete 4 become part of Fininvest, and ends in 1990 with the passing of the so-called “Mammì law” which biasedly disciplined the television market. The fourth and last period begins in 1991, with the formation of the pay television platform Telepiù, and addresses the technological evolution of film broadcasting in the subsequent decades. I conclude the chapter by discussing the wider repercussions of television film programming on the character of 1980s commercials.

Where Art Thou? The Debates on Television Film Programming in Italy

Scholars have generally overlooked the importance of the film programming on Italian television occurring between the second half of the 1970s and the beginning of the

1990s, ignoring how the long 1980s spearheaded crucial modifications in film viewing and programming. Instead, they have mainly focused on traditional topics, including television's film production by prominent film directors; technological and stylistic comparisons between cinema and television; the possibility of economic and industrial convergences between the two media; and the demonization of the broadcasting of films due to their absorption in the television flow.

After the advent of private channels, the new relationship between cinema and television was in the long 1980s a prominent topic amongst scholars. The *Sindacato Nazionale Critici Cinematografici Italiani* promoted a conference in 1978 focusing on the large presence of films on Italian television.³ Some speakers, namely screenplay writer Renato Ghiotto and film historian Fernaldo Di Giammateo, utilized ideological and aesthetic reasons to criticize television film programming. They claimed it deprived films of their original context, that of a dark and silent room filled with people united to celebrate a ritual, to be instead modified in speed and image quality by a less fascinating smaller screen. Other speakers, such as Claudio G. Fava, film critic and RAI's film programmer during the long 1980s, applauded the broadcasting of films on television as conducive to spread cinephilia amongst audiences.

A year later, in June 1979, the Italian Socialist Party, very sensitive to debates on mass media communication and its influence on the political and cultural realms, organized a conference entitled "Quella parte di cinema chiamata televisione: verso l'integrazione del sistema audiovisivo." A 1981 volume of the same title edited by Claudio Martelli, head of his party's cultural and media section at the time, recorded the

³ *Sindacato nazionale critici cinematografici italiani, I film in TV: cinema tradito?* (Saint-Vincent: Sindacato nazionale critici cinematografici, 1978).

proceedings.⁴ Many Italian and foreign cinema and television directors such as Luigi Comencini, media scholars, and film critics such as Franco Monteleone and Tullio Kezich participated. The conference called for the integration of cinema and television, through the interchange of professional, technological, and economic resources. It also advocated the promulgation of effective laws in Italy and in all Europe to protect and boost film production and attendance. However, the debates left the topic of television film programming almost unexplored or in some cases demonized. For instance, Franco Bruno, president of Agis (Associazione Generale Italiana dello Spettacolo), emphasized how television film broadcasting was the main cause of the declining success of filmgoing during the late 1970s: “se il supporto di queste trasmissioni che piovono dall’etere direttamente nelle case, gratis o quasi, è costituito da una massa di film, è chiaro, è evidente, è lampante che di film viene nausea.”⁵ Bruno’s aversion to films on television inhibited his ability to investigate the phenomenon of film programming.

In the following years, various scholarly contributions continued to analyze the relationship between cinema and television without truly addressing television film programming. For example, RAI programmers and executives such as Giuseppe Cereda, Franco Iseppi, and Francesco Pinto, stressed how Italian television was merely becoming a consumerist market of American films and television series, without analyzing their role in the schedule.⁶ Instead, they analyzed RAI’s film production by film directors.

⁴ Claudio Martelli ed., *Quella parte di cinema chiamata televisione: Verso l'integrazione del sistema audiovisivo* (Milan: Guanda, 1981).

⁵ “If television programming is mainly comprised of a large quantity of films that reached the people directly and free of charge at their homes, it is clear, it is evident, it is obvious that the audience become nauseated by films.” The translation is mine. Franco Bruno, “L’overdose di cinema in TV,” in *Quella parte di cinema chiamata televisione*, 67.

⁶ Giuseppe Richeri, *Il video negli anni '80. Comunicazioni di massa in Italia: politica, tecnologie, pubblicità* (Bari: De Donato, 1981).

Between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s, film journals *Cineforum* (1961-) and *Segnocinema* (1981-) and RAI's book series VQPT (Verifica Quantitativa Programmi Trasmessi, 1978-), devoted ample attention to the relationship between cinema and television. *Cineforum* focused primarily on television film production rather than the programming of films. Film critics such as Gualtiero Pironi, Gianluigi Bozza, and Umberto Rossi criticized film production's excessively commercial nature used to attract vast portions of audience. They also cited how cinema as a whole – not only that produced by television – succumbed to the ideological, technological, economic, and imaginative power of television.⁷ Moreover, film critics discussed the topic of television film programming largely negatively in the same journal. For example, film critics Giorgio Cremonini and Marzia Milanese criticized what they considered the random and massive programming of films on television.⁸ Similarly, from its conception in 1981 to the early 1990s, *Segnocinema* also adopted a negative approach towards the topic of films on television. Media scholar Marcello Walter Bruno and film historian Aldo Bernardini both shared a negative outlook on films broadcast on television. They argued that television flow absorbed and distorted a film's original format and reception, especially through the insertion of commercials.⁹

Consisting of approximately 200 volumes, mostly anthologies, published by RAI-ERI, the book series VQPT discusses the relationship between cinema and television,

⁷ Gualtiero Pironi, "La nuova narratività televisiva e i film," *Cineforum* 227 (September 1983): 55-58. Gianluigi Bozza, "The Day After: come la Tv sta cambiando il cinema," *Cineforum* 238 (October 1984): 3-7. Umberto Rossi, "Come la TV cambia il cinema in Italia," *Cineforum* 269 (November 1987): 3-8.

⁸ Giorgio Cremonini, "C'era una volta il cinema in TV," *Cineforum* 229 (November 1983): 11. Marzia Milanese, "Il cinema della tv: un incontro a vuoto," *Cineforum* 271 (January 1988): 6-8.

⁹ Marcello Walter Bruno, "Giochi proibiti," *Segnocinema* 44 (July 1990): 3-7. Aldo Bernardini "La differenza c'è (e si vede)," *Segnocinema* 39 (September 1989): 16-17.

particularly television's film production. When analyzing film programming, mass sociologist Nora Rizza observed how "l'inserimento dei film in un ciclo favorisce un effetto di serializzazione, e quindi di maggior riconoscibilità e di induzione di attese e abitudini di consumo." Moreover, "l'abbinamento del film a un programma di informazione o dibattito" constructs a cohesive night of programs.¹⁰ Rizza rightly described the employment of cycles and the combination of films with special information programs to establish viewing habits and built a coherent succession of programs. Still, she does not expand on the different types of cycles Italian television organized during the long 1980s and the fact that the film acted as a pretext used to attract the audience and then lead it into the following program. It is then noticeable how throughout the long 1980s, scholars generally held a certain idealized view of cinema while either not paying attention to or dismissing altogether television film programming.

In the 1990s and 2000s, scholars continued to privilege other aspects of the relationship between cinema and television. Gianfranco Bettetini, Vito Zagarrìo, and former RAI executive Franco Monteleone, through a mainly auteuristic approach to the historical relationship between cinema and television, devoted ample attention to RAI and Fininvest's film and miniseries production.¹¹ However, this is only a secondary factor

¹⁰ "The insertion of a film in a cycle promotes a serialization effect, and thus a greater recognition and induction of expectations and consumption habits." Moreover, "the combination of a film with a special information program or debate" constructs a cohesive evening of programs.

The translation is mine. Nora Rizza, *Costruire palinsesti: modalità, logiche e stili della programmazione televisiva tra pubblico e privato* (Rome: RAI-ERI, 1989), 87-88.

¹¹ See Gianfranco Bettetini, "Dal cinema alla televisione, e oltre," in *Un secolo di cinema italiano: atti del convegno "Cent'anni di cinema italiano," Accademia delle Scienze, Torino, 3-5 giugno 1999*, ed. Piero Brunetta (Milan: Il Castoro, 2000): 151-165. Franco Monteleone, *Storia della radio e della televisione: società, politica, strategie, programmi* (Venice: Marsilio, 1992). Vito Zagarrìo, *L'anello mancante: storia e teoria del rapporto cinema-televisione* (Turin: Lindau, 2004).

in the analysis of television film programming during the long 1980s due to its low quantity, and most significantly, the prominence of American commercial films.

More recently, in 2012 film scholar Christian Uva and historian Paolo Mattera edited a collection on 1980s Italian cinema, television, and society. When analyzing the rapport between cinema and television, the volume's focus was mainly on television film production rather than programming. In 2014, Italian film, television, and literature scholar Giancarlo Lombardi in his "Rethinking Italian Television Studies," praised the digitization of RAI's archives and called for "the rediscovery of what should indeed be considered as the 'golden age' of Italian television," that is the 1960s and 1970s, when RAI was producing a plethora of serial dramas.¹² Once again, the realm of production is at the forefront, whereas the major distribution changes of the 1980s, namely programming, are left unexplored. At the same time, scholars have begun to focus on the relationship between cinema and the new digital technologies. In fact, they have concentrated on new technologies' impact on the production, broadcasting, and experience of films, disregarding the legacy of the long 1980s on film viewing and programming. Film scholars Maurizio Ambrosini, Giovanna Maina, and Elena Marcheschi demonstrated the emergence of new tendencies in a 2009 volume devoted to films on cell phones.¹³

After outlining the intellectual history surrounding the relationship of cinema and television, it is essential for my analysis to understand why academics have not delved into the programming of films on Italian television during the long 1980s. Scholars have

¹² Giancarlo Lombardi, "Rethinking Italian Television Studies," *The Italianist* 34, no. 2 (June 2014): 262.

¹³ Ambrosini, Maurizio, Giovanna Maina, and Elena Marcheschi, eds., *I film in tasca. Videofonino, cinema e televisione*. (Pisa: Felci Editore, 2009).

broadly maintained an idealized view of movie theaters, deeming them the perfect location to enjoy a film in its integrity. As a result they have focused on television film production, a nobler practice as it involved renowned directors and was complementary to cinema. At the same time, they demonized the programming of films due to their interruption by commercials, their degradation to mere programs, and television's faster speed of projection and altering graphic resolution.

Political reasons and technological advancements have also prevented a truly in-depth investigation of 1980s Italian television and culture. Political motives have favored instead an uninterrupted revival of the glorified 1960s and 1970s, decades of political engagement and television's "golden age," as opposed to the abuse of films in the hedonistic 1980s, exemplified by the palimpsest of Silvio Berlusconi's television channels. Another reason for the lack of scholarship on television film programming lies in the rapid emergence and appeal of new media technologies starting in the 1990s with the emergence of pay television platforms, followed by the Internet boom, the coming of digital terrestrial television and its thematic channels, and more recently, by smartphones. This technological revolution has radically changed the Italian media landscape, and has captured many scholars' attention. The new opportunities to produce and broadcast films and the viewers' broader freedom to choose what to watch have monopolized several scholarly works. Consequently, the long 1980s and the novelties they brought to television film programming and viewing and their relevant contribution to the development of the abovementioned innovations remain unexplored.

The dearth of scholarship about films on television demands for a more thorough analysis. For this reason, I bring to the forefront the phenomenon of television film

programming to study its characterization during the long 1980s. I divide this chapter into four time frames with the goal of delving into the topic of television programming of films. Throughout the chapter, I seek to understand the history of their utilization, address the prominence of American commercial films, investigate the use of film cycles to extend television viewership, and stress how films aided in the development of innovative forms of film watching and broadcasting. I also examine films' contribution to the creation of new enticing types of advertisements.

A New Genesis (1974-1979): The Formation of Private Channels and the Boom of Film Broadcasting

The years 1974-1979 saw the formation of private television channels, whose gestation is of paramount importance to trace a history of television film programming in Italy. In fact, up until their coming in the mid-1970s, films were sporadic events in RAI's schedules. After outlining the legislative and political premises around the formation of private channels, I analyze the consequences of their emergence on film programming.

At the beginning of the 1970s, unregulated private cable channels began to broadcast locally through coaxial cables connected to private residences. However, through a 1973 Decree of the President of the Italian Republic (D.p.R), the Government blocked their development to protect RAI's monopoly and required private cable channels to seek State authorization to transmit their signals.¹⁴ Telebiella, one of the first Italian cable channels, contested the measure by appealing to Article 21 of the Italian

¹⁴ Decree of the President of the Italian Republic no. 156 of 29 March 1973, "Approvazione del testo unico delle disposizioni legislative in materia postale, di bancoposta e di telecomunicazioni," published in *GU* no. 113, May 3, 1973 – Ordinary Supplement.

Constitution which guarantees that “tutti hanno diritto di manifestare liberamente il proprio pensiero con la parola, lo scritto e ogni altro mezzo di diffusione.”¹⁵

A year later, the Constitutional Court issued a Judgment defending the right to broadcast locally through cable, due to the low-cost and unlimited possibilities to create such channels.¹⁶ The Judgment protected RAI’s national monopoly on over-the-air broadcast, but cable television was finally legitimized on a local level.¹⁷ The Court’s ruling therefore officially allowed private investors to enter the local television market. Until 1975, their main goals were typically to provide alternative and plural information supplies, usually with a strong local connotation and free from State control, and popular and local entertainment chiefly through game shows.¹⁸

Therefore, films and their commercial exploitation were not yet a dominant scheduling strategy at this time. Improvisation and an adventurous spirit frequently led to the acquisition of films, which for the most part amounted to low quality and leftover stocks, such as *La leonessa di Castiglia* (*La leona de Castilla – The Lioness of Castille*, 1951), *Donne fuorilegge* (*Outlaw Women*, 1952), and *La portatrice di pane* (*The Bread Peddler*, 1950). In some cases, private citizens stole recent films from local cinemas and

¹⁵ “Everyone has the right to express his/her opinion freely in speech, in writing, and through all other means of communication.” The translation is mine. Italian Constitution art. XXI, § 1.

¹⁶ Judgment no. 226 of 10 July 1974, § 1 b.

¹⁷ On the juridical history behind the development of cable and private over-the-air television channels see Antonio Nova, “Le trasmissioni private nel vuoto legislativo,” *Comunicazioni sociali* 2-3 (1982): 114-121.

¹⁸ Andrea Sangiovanni, “Da libere a private. Sulla nascita della televisione commerciale in Italia,” *Comunicazioni sociali* 1 (2013): 68-78.

sold them to cable channels, such as Tele Carrara, which broadcast *La Stangata* (*The Sting*) right after its Italian release in 1974.¹⁹

Nevertheless, cable channels started to disappear in 1975 when Parliament passed a reform law meant to discipline the radio and television broadcasting system.²⁰ The bill heavily limited cable channels' constituency to geographical areas with no more than 150,000 inhabitants and a cap of 40,000 reachable users for a channel transmitting on an individual cable. These impositions hindered the development of commercial activities and raised operating costs.²¹ As a result, in 1975 various cable channels illegally switched to over-the-air broadcast to survive, while at same time new terrestrial private stations were emerging, free from any legal bond.²²

An important turning point came in 1976 with a key Constitutional Court's Judgment.²³ The growing presence of new subjects in an ever-changing television market and, as the Judgment highlighted, the abundance of locally usable frequencies and low implementation costs prompted the Court to give private channels the right to broadcast over-the-air on a local level.²⁴ The sentence triggered the emergence of hundreds of private channels founded by economic groups, political parties, publishing houses,

¹⁹ Giancarlo Dotto and Sandro Piccinini, *Il mucchio selvaggio: la strabiliante, epica, inverosimile ma vera storia della televisione locale in Italia* (Milan: Mondadori, 2006), 26-27.

²⁰ Law no. 103 of 14 April 1975, "Nuove norme in materia di diffusione radiofonica e televisiva," published in *GU* no. 102, April 17, 1975. Parliament passed this law as instructed by the Constitutional Court through Judgment no. 225 of 10 July 1974, published in *GU* no. 187, July 17, 1974.

²¹ *Ibid.*, art. 24.

²² Terrestrial television utilizes ground transmitters to convey radio signals to television antennas and television sets. These devices then transform the signals in images and sound.

²³ Judgment no. 202 of 28 July 1976.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, §§ 1, 4, 7.

newspapers, entrepreneurs, and adventurous young people willing to continue cable television's political and social legacy.

However, commercial interests were the primary focus of these new channels. In fact, the Judgment's vagueness in the determination of "ambito locale," and Parliament's purposeful delays in overseeing these new channels, allowed the possibility to reach an undetermined number of viewers through advertisements. The Court urged Parliament to take action in the definition of geographic and advertising limitations, and required the implementation of an authorization to operate channels. It also ordered that private channel's programming consist of primarily their own original productions. Yet, Parliament did not act, leaving the market to regulate itself.

Parliament was in fact initially indifferent towards the formation of private television broadcasting monopolies or oligopolies, and later left the expression "ambito locale" (local area) purposefully ambiguous to favor Berlusconi's television channels. In this way, Parliament did not define the geographic limits of the term "locale" as restricted to a city or region, and did not enforce all the other restrictions advocated by the Constitutional Court. Moreover, the Italian left, particularly the Communist Party, saw the opening of the market as positive for the democratization and decentralization of the television system. The Christian Democrats focused on securing the support of media entrepreneurs in order to regain some of its influence lost with the 1975 law that reformed RAI by dividing its channels along political lines in the name of pluralism. The Socialist Party was equally intent on gaining political advantage, and sided with Berlusconi. At the same time, new economic impulses demanded more advertising space,

for which private channels, free from any kind of limitations, were perfectly suited.²⁵ For all these reasons, large editorial groups such as Rusconi Editore and Mondadori, joined by the soon-to-be media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi, invested in and rapidly took control of most of the private television realm.

After the analysis of the legislative and political circumstances surrounding the advent of private channels, it is important to discuss the consequences of their emergence and development on television film programming. To do so we shall focus on the key infrastructure of this phenomenon: scheduling. Before the advent of private channels, between 1954 and 1976, Rete 1 and, from 1961, Rete 2 broadcast about 121 films each year.²⁶ This amounted to an average of about two films per week, one per each channel, usually broadcast on Monday and Wednesday night. The limit on the number of films was established by the agreements between RAI and the unions of film operators Anica and Agis as instructed by a 1965 law that aimed to regulate the cinematographic market.²⁷ In 1976 a new agreement raised the number of films to two for each public channel. The decision came in conjunction with private channels' growing reliance on an unregulated film programming, and the fear that Rete 1 and 2 would adopt a similar unbridled strategy after the 1975 reform law granted them a great deal of independence.

The 1976 arrangements between RAI, Anica, and Agis disciplined not only the quantity of films shown, but also their quality. In particular, one of the films needed to have a “carattere speciale” (special connotation), as in the case of repertoire and

²⁵ David Forgacs, *L'industrializzazione della cultura italiana (1980-2000)* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2000), 273.

²⁶ Giuseppe Cereda and Giacomo Lopez, “Il cinema prodotto dalla tv e per la tv,” in *Storia del cinema italiano: Vol. XIII – 1977/1985*, ed. Vito Zaggarro (Rome: CSC; Venice: Marsilio, 2005), 43.

²⁷ Law no. 1213 of 4 November 1965, “Nuovo ordinamento dei provvedimenti a favore della cinematografia,” art. 55, published in *GU* no. 282, November 12, 1965.

retrospective films, or low box office revenues of less than 200 million lire (roughly \$240,000 USD at the time). The other film depended exclusively on the public channels' choice. Rete 1 and Rete 2 usually selected American popular films. Furthermore, in exchange for a higher number of films, Anica and Agis imposed RAI to avoid screening films on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, in order to preserve filmgoing.²⁸ Still, with the exception of the agreements reached in 1976 and the bill no. 10/1985, television film programming remained almost completely undisciplined between 1965 and the ruling of the Mammi law in 1990. Because of increased competition from private channels, in the early 1980s RAI took advantage of this unregulated market to breach the agreements with cinema operators and progressively program more films.

The 1965 law only regulated the relationship between RAI and the unions of film operators. The arrangements did not apply to private channels, thus they continued to operate without any limit. Initially, amidst this legislative deregulation, the ungoverned private television channels, massively yet randomly, broadcast mainly old and often low quality Italian popular films, no longer screened in movie theaters. The films, often interrupted by commercials, included 1950s and 1960s mythological peplum films, non-mainstream spaghetti westerns, adventure and war films, 1930s and 1940s comedies, and some American westerns from the 1930s and 1940s.²⁹ The films were often easily available through small and improvised distributors such as Vittorio Balini, a former lifeguard with a passion for cinema and business. In the 1970s he bought many old films

²⁸ Gianfranco Bettetini, *Tra cinema e televisione: materiali sul rapporto tra due mezzi di comunicazione di massa* (Florence: Sansoni, 1981), 73. Bettetini, "Dal cinema alla televisione, e oltre," in *Un secolo di cinema italiano*, 154.

²⁹ Pino Farinotti, *I maghi del canale* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1985), 62. Vito Zagarrìo, "Introduzione. Da «Matrix» a «Metix»," in *Cine Ma TV: film, televisione, video nel nuovo millennio*, ed. Vito Zagarrìo (Turin: Lindau, 2005), 19.

from bankruptcy courts and sold them to private channels. In the 1980s he worked mostly on behalf of Fininvest and dealt with major American distribution and production companies.³⁰

Due to the legislative freedom they enjoyed, private channels could broadcast films without paying any copyright fees. At times, they even videotaped RAI's films - prompting the public network at the end of the 1970s to insert its symbol on the screen to avoid this practice - or operated without any restrictions regarding rated movies.³¹ The vast and undisciplined employment of films helped private channels gain popularity with the audience.³² Since RAI had never shown many of these movies before, they represented a novelty and a challenge to RAI's monopoly. Television viewers appreciated having a richer offering of films no matter their age, quality, and the numerous technical and logistical problems.³³

In fact, smaller private channels had problems not only broadcasting their signal, which resulted in defective receptions, but also respecting film screening times and communicating their titles to newspapers and magazines – although the last practice aimed chiefly to avoid copyright issues. Sometimes a channel programmed the same film multiple days a week, abruptly interrupted it without any specific reason, or utilized

³⁰ Farinotti, *I maghi del canale*, 63. Dotto and Piccinini, *Il mucchio selvaggio*, 129.

³¹ Aldo Grasso, "Il marchio Rai," *Il Patalogo uno: annuario dello spettacolo*, eds. Giovanni Buttafava and Franco Quadri (Milan: Ubulibri, 1979), 550.

³² Private channels showed around 10,000 films between 1976 and 1981. See Francesco Pinto, Guido Barlozzetti, and Claver Salizzato. *La Televisione Presenta: La Produzione Cinematografica della Rai, 1965-1975* (Venice: Marsilio, 1988), 25.

³³ Barbara Ronchi-Della Rocca, "Le TV locali in Italia: proviamo a fare il punto sulla situazione," *Comunicazione di massa* 1 (1980): 153-154.

 45 TELEREGIONE	
14.00	DEDICATO A VOI, programma musicale
18.30	FILM (repl.)
20.30	TELEGIORNALE
21.15	SPECIALE MUSICALE
21.45	FILM
23.15	TELEGIORNALE
23.50	FILM (repl.)

Figure 2 Teleregione's schedule on Tuesday, November 22, 1977 (Rome).
Teleregione failed to communicate film titles to magazines and often repeated
the same films throughout the day.

© 1977 by Scelta TV.

shoddy copies with mediocre sound and image quality.³⁴ Despite such issues, film programming helped private channels capture Italians' attention at a low price. The spectators were intrigued by new, yet at times amateurish, viewing options, now available outside RAI's no longer exclusive domain.

Quinta Rete (Rome) and Telemilano 58 (Milan) were two channels capable of constructing much of their success through and enhancing film programming. The former was founded in 1976, by publisher Edilio Rusconi, who also later established Antenna Nord in Lombardy, Piedmont, and Emilia-Romagna. All these channels would later become the core of the national network Italia 1. Rusconi's initial intention was to use his television channels as a tool to boost the sales of his gossip magazines, such as *Gente* and

³⁴ Mariolina Bongiovanni Bertini et al., "L'etere inquieto (Una settimana alle private)," in *Il Patalogo due: annuario 1980 dello spettacolo. Cinema e televisione*, ed. Franco Quadri (Milan: Ubulibri, 1980), 203-212.

Eva Express. He considered his publishing activity much safer, due to the ambiguity of the television legislation and the consequent risk of squandering its patrimony.³⁵

In terms of film programming, Quinta Rete was one of the first private channels in 1977 to program films at 8:30 pm instead of 9:30 pm, hence courageously attacking RAI during prime time. Films at 8:30 pm were often replayed at 11 pm to capture RAI's migrating audience. Furthermore, there was usually a film around 2 pm to catch RAI's audience, abandoned by the public network during its afternoon program interruption.³⁶ Quinta Rete's films consisted primarily of 1940s American western films, such as *Duello infernale* (*Stampede*, 1949), 1940s and 1950s Italian comedies (*Ore 9 lezione di chimica*, 1941), 1960s non-mainstream spaghetti westerns (*Le due facce del dollaro*, 1967), Italian adventure subproductions (*Gungala la vergine della giungla*, 1967), and mythological peplum films (*Ercole contro i tiranni di Babilonia*, 1964).

However, film programming changed during 1978, when film critic Pino Farinotti began working for Rusconi as a film programmer. He directed film purchases and organized weekly cycles according to genres, such as one dedicated to thrillers every Tuesday. Farinotti also devised a weekly appointment with more elaborate and auteur films every Monday. The objective was to create an alternative to Rete 1's popular film.³⁷ These new practices represented one of the first examples of film programming enhancement on private channels. In fact, films also became important tools to create specific viewing habits and thus instill audience loyalty through the custom of regularly watching a channel, its programs, and its commercials.

³⁵ Paolo Madron, *Le gesta del cavaliere* (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 1994), 141.

³⁶ The 2 pm film was at times a re-run from the previous day.

³⁷ Farinotti, *I maghi del canale*, 81-83.



Figure 3 Quinta Rete's (left) and Telemilano 58's (right) logos.
 © 1976 by Quinta Rete, © 1978 by Telemilano 58 1978.

Telemilano 58 also improved film programming. Silvio Berlusconi launched the channel (Canale 5's ancestor) in 1978, after he bought Telemilanocavo and turned it into an over-the-air channel in 1976. Telemilano 58's film programming was quite similar to Quinta Rete before it started to introduce cycles, although with the presence of a film not only around 2 pm but also at 4.30 pm, and at 9.30 pm. The channel also featured a cinema rubric entitled *Polvere di stelle* with film critics Carlo Dansi and Pierluigi Ronchetti. It was a dynamic and variegated informational program about cinema, one of the first of its kind. Portions of the program were dedicated to the latest news from Hollywood, dances, a quiz, and auditions for aspiring and improvised actors.³⁸ The program constitutes an important instance of how private channels began to take advantage of films on television's popularity and expand viewership to other offerings.

³⁸ Alessia Assasselli, "Le produzioni del 1978-80," *Link. Idee per la televisione* 17 (2014): 109.

In the same years, RAI responded by progressively modifying film programming. After the 1976 agreements and until the beginning of the 1980s, Rete 1 usually showed two films per week: on Monday at 8:40 pm and often on Fridays around 9:30 pm. Rete 2 increased the number of films to two but used to broadcast them on Tuesdays or Wednesdays at 9:30 pm and Saturdays usually at 10 pm. The reason for programming only one film on prime time largely depended on the higher importance RAI gave its own original productions, such as serial dramas, quiz, and variety shows.³⁹

At the same time, RAI's attitude changed due to the success film programming received on private channels, and thanks to the influence of a new television personality, the critic Claudio G. Fava. Fava had become Rete 1's film programmer in 1976. He understood audiences particularly enjoyed cycles centered on a general theme or genre and a Hollywood star, such as Rete 1's 1978 *Gregory Peck – Le avventure di un americano tranquillo* (Gregory Peck – The Adventures of a Quiet American), as they promised to tell appealing stories of great individuals and their remarkable deeds.⁴⁰ Furthermore, until the mid-1970s guest film critics introduced RAI's occasional film cycles; from 1976 onward Fava himself started to present Rete 1's. He appeared in front of the camera discussing the film's plot and the context surrounding the making of the film, the directors' objectives, and the significance of individual works in world or national film history. The shift from guest to internal presenters was symbolic of film's evolution into an intrinsic element of the schedule.

Fava also commissioned the dubbing of various unreleased films, such as Jean-Pierre Melville's *Le silence de la mer* (*Il silenzio del mare – The Silence of the Sea*,

³⁹ Cristiano Palozzi, and Antonella Sica, *Claudio G. Fava – Clandestino in galleria* (Genoa: Le Mani, 2003), 31.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

1949), *Les enfants terrible* (*I ragazzi terribili*, 1950), and *Bob le flambeur* (*Bob il giocatore – Bob le flambeur* 1956), consequently reviving the audience's (especially cinéphiles') interest in cinema.⁴¹ RAI's film programming approach, while prominently educational, began to show the first signs of the more intense commercialization of the 1980s, led by private channels, when new kinds of cycles and recent American box-office hits became pivotal for success. Indeed, RAI's attitude became more observant of the Italian audience's tastes through the programming of more captivating cycles.

Broadcasting the American Dream (1979-1984): American Films and the Role of Film Cycles

Between the end of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, some private channels modified their nature and improved the overall quality of their film programming by exploiting legislative loopholes. In 1982 Berlusconi's lawyer Aldo Bonomo coined the notion of "structural interconnected broadcasting" by which he claimed Canale 5 was not directly broadcasting throughout Italy as it merely provided pre-recorded tapes with its programs and national commercials to various local stations.⁴² Indeed, the lack of any sort of authorization and set of rules to open and oversee the property and organization of private channels, and the unclear connotation of "local broadcasting," allowed the most adventurous and affluent media entrepreneurs to transform their stations into national syndications and networks. These channels acquired massive film packages from major Italian and especially American distribution and production companies. In many cases, the abundance of quality films and the need to

⁴¹ Ibid., 38.

⁴² Madron, *Le gesta del cavaliere*, 87.

instill viewing and material consumption habits in the audience prompted these channels to organize several film cycles, influencing RAI's film programming tactics as a result.

The first major acquisition of a film package occurred on June 11, 1979, when Silvio Berlusconi's production and distribution company Reteitalia bought 350 films from Titanus, one of the most prominent Italian film production companies, for 2 billion lire (around \$2.4 million USD). The package primarily consisted of 1950s and 1960s Raffaello Matarazzo and Camillo Mastrocinque melodramas, *commedie all'italiana* with famous actors such as Vittorio Gassman, Alberto Sordi, and Ugo Tognazzi, and *musicarelli*, such as those starring Gianni Morandi, unreleased on television. Italian cinema was a significant factor in the growth of Telemilano 58 and the national network Canale 5 at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s. Carlo Freccero, Telemilano and Canale 5's head of programming from 1979 until 1983, claims "si trattava di un evento importante perché in televisione c'erano già i film americani, mentre mancavano quelli italiani."⁴³ In reality, it was Italian 1950s and 1960s popular cinema that was lacking, since auteur films found space in RAI's schedules.

The Titanus package was also important for its evocative nature and advertising purposes. Berlusconi argued that the 1950s and 1960s represented Italy's *belle époque*, thus the nostalgic value of the films could have a great impact on adult audiences who grew up when Italy was preparing to and going through an extraordinary economic growth.⁴⁴ The 1950s and 1960s context was opposed to the economic and social instability of the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s. The mature audience could

⁴³ "It was a very important event because Italian television already broadcast American films, while Italian films were lacking." The translation is mine. Carlo Freccero, "Il cinema che ha fatto la Tv," in *Cine Ma TV*, 160.

⁴⁴ Gabriele Mastellarini, *Assalto alla stampa: controllare i media per governare l'opinione pubblica* (Bari: Edizioni Dedalo, 2004), 166.

hence reminisce about the good old times while at the same time enjoy commercial messages inserted during the films. The advertisements' goal was to appeal to adults, the most important kind of consumer. The commercial breaks during the films, especially once Telemilano 58 became Canale 5 at the end of 1980, did not come from local businesses, as other channels. Instead, national and international companies attracted by the network's ample visibility and the chance to distribute their products more extensively, bought the advertisement slots. Therefore, amateurish local ads did not belittle the channel and the film; rather, more elaborated messages describing widely available and often popular goods enhanced the film experience and the image of the channel. One of the best and first examples of Canale 5's commercial exploitation of cinema was the 1981 film cycle *Pomeriggio con sentimento* (Sentimental Afternoon), which featured 1950s and 1960s Italian, as well as American, romantic comedies and melodramas. This afternoon program targeted housewives, a major consumer category, and presented them with pertinent advertisements aimed at informing their purchases. Rete 4 and Italia 1 later replicated the strategy, by programming romantic comedies, particularly American ones, in the morning and early afternoon.

However, there was also a legal reason as to why Reteitalia purchased the Titanus package. In order to buy the rights to foreign films, it was necessary to obtain an authorization from the Italian Minister of International Trade. In cases of acquisitions involving large sums of money, the Minister's approval usually came after many long financial examinations. Furthermore, the business contracts with foreign distribution companies became effective only after the Minister authorized the purchase. For these reasons, and since Berlusconi was seeking to rapidly build a national network, Reteitalia

first acquired many Italian films. Indeed, the procedures to obtain Italian works were much faster. In 1980, Berlusconi founded Rete Italia Ltd in England, in order to optimize the purchase of American films and their importation to Italy “richiedendo visti ministeriali per valori unitari più modesti e perciò di più facile ottenimento.”⁴⁵ In this way, it was possible to expedite State bureaucracy and the acquisition of large quantities of American films.

Berlusconi was not alone in purchasing film packages. In 1980 publishers Mondadori, which owned the television syndication GPE-Telemond, and Rusconi paid 3 billion lire (approximately \$3.5 million USD) for 300 quality, family-oriented Paramount films from Vittorio Balini.⁴⁶ The two publishers collaborated in the purchase due to the quality of the films and the advantageous possibility to accompany them with national advertisements, gathered by Mondadori’s advertising agency GPE (Gestione Pubblicità Editoriale).⁴⁷ These films were often unreleased on television, and, for the same commercial objectives as Telemilano 58, were chiefly from the 1950s and 1960s, but starred major Hollywood actors as Kirk Douglas, Jerry Lewis, and Liz Taylor.

In order to maximize advertising, and to create solid viewing habits, Farinotti collaborated to organize the films (“I bellissimi di Hollywood” – Hollywood’s Finest Films) throughout the week into homogenous cycles, typically based on genres, such as thrillers on Tuesdays, adventures on Saturdays, and comedies on Sundays.⁴⁸ While many GPE-Telemond partners programmed these films at 9:30 pm to avoid a direct competition

⁴⁵ “Requiring ministerial permissions for more modest unit values and therefore easier to obtain.” The translation is mine. Mario Molteni, “Alle radici dell’impresa. Nascita, sviluppo ed esplosione di Telemilano,” *Link. Idee per la televisione* 17 (2014): 31-32.

⁴⁶ GPE-Telemond became the national network Rete 4 in 1982.

⁴⁷ Farinotti, *I maghi del canale*, 94.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 94-96.

with RAI, Rusconi's channels scheduled them at 8:30 pm. Their goal was to take advantage of good audience ratings and the family-oriented connotation of the Paramount compendium to attract the general audience and expose it to the commercial messages. The purchase of commercially groundbreaking packages contributed to the beginning of a stiff competition for the audience based on quality films. Their value and their insertion into cycles guaranteed the audience's regular exposure to commercials and thus aided in attracting more advertising investments.

The Paramount package marked the start of an increased prominence of American films on Italian television. Their fast-paced, action-packed nature made them perfectly suited for the rapid and glamorized style of 1980s Italian television, where commercials and programs quickly alternated. Most importantly, Italian television employed American films to influence the audience's imaginary and further enhance the commercial messages. Carlo Freccero detects this practice, mainly with the American television series. He argues that "con il suo immaginario hollywoodiano, con la sua evocazione di ricchezza, sogni e evasione" it is the perfect container for advertisements, as it utilized similar, embellished atmospheres.⁴⁹ American films presented the same characteristics, and were particularly suited for the insertion of commercials.

Through American films (and television series), the Italian audience became familiar with the American way of life and its products, an awareness necessary to create the perfect consumer. Italian television introduced its spectators to and familiarized them with the consumerist, individualist, and socially ambitious American society. American films, in fact, often featured specific characters and their glamorized life full of great

⁴⁹ "Through its Hollywood atmosphere, its evocation of wealth, dreams, and escape." The translation is mine. Carlo Freccero, *Televisione* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2013), 54.

deeds, adventures, and romance during which they sought personal, economic, and/or social fulfillment. Hence, these films were not simply the perfect container for advertisements; they also functioned as commercial facilitators due to their ability to seduce the audience with stylized stories. Therefore, American films were not solely employed for their fast pace.

Indeed, the programming of American films on television was on the rise when Berlusconi's Canale 5 in 1980, Mondadori's Rete 4 and Rusconi's Italia 1 in 1982 officially became national networks, absorbing alongside RAI most of the television audience. In particular, Berlusconi's Reteitalia, signed various output deals – consisting of the acquisition of a distributor's entire film library during a specified period of time – with important American distribution companies during the early 1980s. In 1983 and 1984 RAI answered by purchasing packages of approximately 100 films from MGM and Disney. RAI was not particularly interested in output deals because they also contained less famous or prestigious films, which could taint the image of the public network.⁵⁰ Additionally, RAI's more rigid scheduling priorities hindered their profitable placement during the week. These deals saturated most of the American acquisition market and, together with Rete 4 and Italia 1's later failures and absorption in Fininvest due to their scheduling disorganization and overspending, contributed in 1984 to limit the market to two main competitors: RAI and Fininvest.

By the first half of the 1980s, and in the following years, Italian television introduced various US films into cycles. The objective of these cycles was to create loyalty within the audience and build viewing and material consumption habits through

⁵⁰ Giuseppe Cereda, "Quando mamma RAI allevava gli autori," *Link. Idee per la televisione* 3 (2004): 28.

the insertion of commercials. From the early 1980s, “broad cycles” developed beside RAI’s categorically meaningful film cycles, dedicated to directors, actors, and scriptwriters. By broad, I intend emotionally-based and seriality-inducing cycles, as opposed to RAI’s more traditional and categorically meaningful ones. The former aimed to regularly attract the audience by appealing to and summoning more or less specific emotions. The latter sought to create seriality simply through the establishment of particular viewing habits and expectations instead of relying on explicit emotions or classic categories. Their goal was to utilize cinema’s popularity with the audience to generate more and new opportunities to reinforce or better foster loyalty to a channel in the era of television competition.

Canale 5’s *I Filmissimi* (Superfilms), which began in the early 1980s and continued until the 2000s, is an example of a particular emotionally-based cycle. In fact, even though it does not openly cite any kind of emotion, the use of the superlative in the title is quite telling of the cycle’s intentions. *I Filmissimi* denoted first-run on television and largely American blockbusters, such as *Rambo (First Blood, 1982)* and *Flashdance (1983)*. The cycle, usually aired on Mondays or Wednesdays during prime time, sought to capture the audience by stressing the films’ extraordinariness. Canale 5 hoped to attract the audience through newly-released-on-television films starring famous actors or renowned directors and their ability to interpret or direct glamorized stories with deep emotional impact on spectators.

Other cycles, namely the seriality-inducing ones, intended to create seriality by establishing viewing habits and expectations with the audience without the aid of emotions or traditional categories. For instance, Raiuno’s *Lunedì Film* (Monday Film)



Figure 4 *Film Dossier's* promotional poster in *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 47 (1982), 103.
 © 1982 by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*.

screened a Monday evening appointment with popular and American films, such as the numerous installments of the *Rocky* saga. As the title conveys, Raiuno decided to reinforce the weekly appointment with cinema through a specific cycle founded on an enduring viewing habit and expectation.

Similarly, the beginning of the 1980s saw the development of seriality-inducing cycles that were often presented by journalists, instead of film critics, who introduced the film and then the following debate. Raiuno's prime-time *Film Dossier* with Enzo Biagi, which aired every Thursday from November 1982 to February 1983, constitutes a significant example. The fact that Biagi was not a film critic, but one of RAI's iconic figures capable of "narrare in modo vero e affascinante," and that the debates revolved

around broad themes loosely connected to the film, testified to Raiuno's intention to target the general public as much as possible.⁵¹ For instance, with *Il braccio violento della legge* (*The French Connection*, 1971), the theme of the debate was drugs, whereas with *Indovina chi viene a cena* (*Guess who's coming to dinner*, 1967) the focus was on racism. The films were usually national or international award-winning or nominees, and were used to attract the audience's attention and then lead it in through a debate. The objective was to build a unified night of programming and serialize the Thursday appointment with cinema.⁵² Many sociologists, doctors, politicians, and journalists took part in the discussions, but no film personalities participated since the discussion of the film was absent. *Film Dossier*, thanks to the presence of an informational program, represented an ideological alibi that RAI started to use to gradually increase the amount of films broadcast.⁵³

Conversely, there were what I define "leading-in cycles," since films were corollary elements employed to lead in the audience through the schedule to ensure continuous watching. Canale 5 illustrates the best example of this when it began to connect romantic comedies and dramas to the American television series *Dallas*. Since each episode of the series only lasted for the first hour of prime time, Freccero programmed these films, very similar in tone and topic to *Dallas*, at 9.30 pm to lead in the audience through a cohesive schedule.⁵⁴ Losing a great portion of the audience in the middle of prime time could constitute a great loss in advertising revenues for a

⁵¹ "Narrating in a truthful and fascinating way." The translation is mine. Paolo Martini, *Tv sorrisi e milioni: l'avventurosa storia dei divi e della televisione italiana* (Milan: Grandi Edizioni Italiane, 1985), 77.

⁵² Nora Rizza, ed., *Immagini di televisione: strategie di orientamento del consumo televisivo* (Rome: RAI-ERI, 1986), 34-35.

⁵³ Martini, *Tv Sorrisi e milioni*, 81-82.

⁵⁴ Rizza, *Immagini di televisione*, 35.

commercial television. To avoid this catastrophe, Canale 5 programmed cycles dedicated to Marilyn Monroe, Alain Delon, and Marlon Brando between March and May 1982 on Tuesdays and Thursdays after *Dallas*.

The similarities in film programming and procurement between public and private networks of this turbulent era continued and intensified in the second half of the 1980s. In that period, the relevance of American films for RAI and Fininvest found silent legislative legitimation and protection.

Coming Closer (1984-1990): The Similarities in Film Programming and the Protection of American Films

In the second half of the 1980s, new television legislation aimed to legitimize the broadcasting of American films and validate the importance of film programming for advertising. The new legislation also protected Berlusconi's Fininvest by allowing it to continue to broadcast nationally without imposing any significant restrictions. Moreover, the acquisition of Rete 4 and Italia 1 inaugurated the duopoly era between RAI and Fininvest, who controlled roughly 85% of the audience. Other private channels, lacking the two main national networks' financial and political backing, mostly maintained a local scale. RAI and Fininvest also progressively showed more similarities in terms of film programming. Indeed, they imitated each other's particularities: the former, following Fininvest's successful strategy, purchased more recent American blockbusters, and the latter, borrowing from RAI's intellectual approach to cinema, devised cycles targeting cinéphiles. Both began planning more broad cycles.

In order to allow Fininvest to broadcast nationally, in 1985 Parliament passed a law promoted by the government headed by Socialist leader and Berlusconi's friend Bettino Craxi.⁵⁵ The new regulation determined that television channels should reserve only 25% of the total time allocated to the showing of films for national or European oeuvres. The percentage increased to 40% on July 1st 1986.⁵⁶ Remarkably this law did not assign a specific percentage to Italian films, but rather classified them with the European ones. The law also inconspicuously protected the prominence of American films since they could occupy most of the film programming. RAI, and especially Fininvest, benefited from this legislation since they were abundantly employing American works. Moreover, for private channels, the bill established a 20% hourly advertising limit on the actual broadcasting time, commercials excluded.⁵⁷ For film programming, the high limit validated the copious insertion of commercials, especially during prime time, making films an important tool to sell commodities.

However, the law lacked any kind of sanction, permitting Berlusconi to devote 90% of Fininvest's programming to American products.⁵⁸ The bill only legitimized commercial television, without imposing any real limit on Fininvest and failing to regulate private broadcasting in general.⁵⁹ In fact, the law's real objective was to give Fininvest permission to broadcast nationally, after three magistrates had imposed its blackout in Piedmont, Abruzzo, and Lazio, and the threat of more trouble was fast

⁵⁵ Law no. 10 of 4 February 1985, "Conversione in legge, con modificazioni, del decreto-legge 6 dicembre 1984, n. 807, recante disposizioni urgenti in materia di trasmissioni radiotelevisive," published in *GU* no. 30, February 5, 1985.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, art. 3, § 4.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, art. 3-*bis*.

⁵⁸ Ettore Nuara, "L'intervista: Franco Bruno," *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 15 (1987): 11.

⁵⁹ Gabriele Balbi and Benedetta Prario, "The history of Fininvest/Mediaset's media strategy: 30 years of politics, the market, technology and Italian society," *Media Culture Society* 32 (2010): 393.

approaching. Furthermore, although it passed as temporary legislation, it remained in effect because the Constitutional Court issued a judgment in 1988 declaring its continuous legitimacy until the approval of a new legislation.⁶⁰

Amidst this ill-defined law, RAI and Fininvest continued to program many American films, and often adopted increasingly analogous broad cycles. In 1987, in response to, and in imitation of, Fininvest's strong competition on the American turf, RAI purchased various recent and widely acclaimed American works, such as *Rambo II – La vendetta* (*Rambo: First Blood Part II*, 1985) and *Platoon* (1986) as part of a 200-film package bought from distributor Cecchi Gori.⁶¹ Raiuno frequently scheduled these films during *Lunedì Film*, making its weekly appointment more similar to Canale 5's *I Filmissimi* and its preference for current American cinema. In 1984, Rete 4 and Italia 1 created similar cycles to *I Filmissimi*, featuring American and Italian popular films. Rete 4's *Film superstar* appeared on Sundays; Italia 1's *Superfilm* instead aired on Fridays.

Additionally, both RAI and Fininvest invented more emotionally-based cycles to better target the audience by conjuring up and appealing to their emotions. Raitre's Thursday nights' *Uomini: trent'anni di fascino maschile* (Men: 30 Years of Masculine Charm) programmed in 1987 and starring charming actors such as Paul Newmann, and Robert Redford, and Italia 1's 1987 *Nati per vincere* (Born to Win) that every Tuesday night screened stories of predestined heroes as in *Terminator* (*The Terminator*, 1984), and *Karate Kid – Per vincere domani* (*The Karate Kid*, 1984) are two prime examples.

⁶⁰ Menduini, *Televisione e società italiana*, 89. Judgment no. 826 of 14 July 1988, published in *GU*, I Serie Speciale, no. 29, July 20, 1988.

⁶¹ Daniela Brancati and Laura Delli Colli, "Berlusconi compra tutto," in *Il Patalogo dieci: annuario 1987 dello spettacolo. Cinema + televisione + video*, ed. Franco Quadri (Milan: Ubulibri, 1987), 252.



Figure 5 *Superfilm*'s promotional poster in *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 49 (1985), 131.
© 1985 by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*.

In order to serialize the appointment with cinema without utilizing emotions or classic categories, Raiuno loosely followed the example of Canale 5 *Pomeriggio con sentimento*, and programmed *Pomeriggio al cinema* (Afternoon at the cinema) with mainly 1950s and 1960s Italian comedies (*Una di quelle – One of Those*, 1953; *Il diavolo – The Devil*, 1963) in September of 1986. That year, Canale 5 launched *XX Secolo* (20th Century) with journalist Guglielmo Zucconi. The cycle modeled the same formulas as *Film Dossier*, though programming more American films as *Incontri ravvicinati del terzo tipo* (*Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, 1977) and *Sindrome cinese* (*The China Syndrome*, 1979). In 1988 Italia 1, replicating Raiuno, introduced *Lunedì Film*, featuring

recent and chiefly American unreleased-on-television films, such as *Chorus Line* (*A Chorus Line*, 1986) and *Crazy for you* (*Vision Quest*, 1985).

Finally, RAI and Fininvest organized several film cycles starting in the late fringe (11:30 pm or 12 am) in an effort to enlarge their viewership outside of prime time and daily hours. The purpose was primarily to target cinéphiles through the establishment of auteur film cycles, aired late at night as more commercialized forms of entertainment, better able to attract a more general audience, filled up the day and prime time. For example, Italia 1 programmed *Cineteca di mezzanotte* (The Midnight Film Library) with auteur films by Ingmar Bergman and other renowned international and national directors every Monday in 1984 and 1985. Similarly, Canale 5 invented *Cinema d'autore* (Auteur Cinema), scheduled every Sunday around midnight. As for RAI, Raiuno organized *Sabato club* (The Saturday Club) in 1986, which, around 11:30 pm, presented auteur films by Woody Allen and Akira Kurosawa. In 1987, Raidue devised *Il club del martedì* (The Tuesday Club), often including films by Jean Renoir, Robert Altman, and Pier Paolo Pasolini. Through the creation of these cycles, RAI and Fininvest not only demonstrated an abundant use of film cycles, but also an increasing similarity in film programming.

The similarities in film programming between the public and private networks depended on the desire to win the battle for viewership by appealing to vaster audiences through the replication of each other's peculiarities: RAI's more intellectually engaged approach to cinema, and Fininvest's more entertainment and commercial-oriented style. The first strategy treated films as cultural events used to attract and possibly educate the audience, while the second one considered films primarily as commercial events utilized to capture the spectator and deliver him/her to the advertisers. Thus, RAI and

Fininvest set off a process consisting of the progressive conformation of the audience's tastes on analogous and standardized offerings in order to better predict and channel the spectators' choices and hence increase viewership and advertising revenues.

Many of the abovementioned cycles devoted several appointments to American cinema. Its presence on Italian television was first legally yet indirectly protected by the 1985 bill, and later by the more comprehensive 1990 law, also known as the *Mammi law* for the Minister of Mail and Telecommunications Oscar Mammi.⁶² It was the first organic law to govern public and private radio and television communications, and the first to regulate film broadcasting in detail.⁶³ It also transposed the European directive 89/552/EEC whose main objectives were to guarantee the free circulation of broadcasting services within the Community and the promotion of European television programs.⁶⁴

Beyond rectifying the existing situation on the Italian television realm, legalizing the duopoly, and granting Berlusconi the right to keep his three television channels, the Italian bill explicitly disciplined film programming. For instance, in transposing article 7 of the European Council's directive, it established a two-year delay from a film's commercial release date in one of the Member States of the Community before allowing its broadcasting.⁶⁵ The disposition was largely a rectification of an already informal, but agreed-upon custom embraced by both RAI and Fininvest.

⁶² Law no. 223 of 6 August 1990, "Disciplina del sistema radiotelevisivo pubblico e private" (*GU* no. 185, 08/09/1990 – Ordinary Supplement no. 53).

⁶³ Giacomo Mazzone, "L'Europa del cinema e della TV. Vecchie e nuove sfide di mercato e legislative," *Link. Idee per la televisione* 3 (2004): 117-118.

⁶⁴ Council Directive 89/552/EEC, of 3 October 1989, on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities (*Official Journal of European Communities*, no. 298, 10/17/1989).

⁶⁵ Law no. 223 of 6 August 1990, art. 15, § 14.

The Mammi law also addressed commercial breaks during films. According to the European directive, they could appear only once during a 90-minute film, plus an additional time if the film's duration was at least 110 minutes.⁶⁶ The Italian regulation authorized two additional insertions.⁶⁷ The limitations were to go into effect on January 1st 1993 for films acquired before June 30th 1990.⁶⁸ As Mammi himself stated “occorreva una moratoria per smaltire i film in magazzino con la pubblicità già inserita. Soltanto la Fininvest ne ha oltre seimila: oltre al danno economico per i proprietari, gli italiani avrebbero perso molte buone pellicole.”⁶⁹ The minister's words revealed his sensitivity to the economic benefits deriving from the inclusion of advertisements during films. Many Italian intellectuals and film personalities opposed the insertion of commercials during the 1980s, as they considered films independent works entitled to the protection of their integrity.⁷⁰

The European directive also prescribed a period of 20 minutes between commercial breaks, which the 1990 law did not recognize, giving television channels the opportunity to freely position their 3 or 4 advertisements slots.⁷¹ Moreover, the European directive set a 20% hourly advertising limit for all television channels, with the chance

⁶⁶ Council Directive 89/552/EEC, of 3 October 1989, art. 11, § 3.

⁶⁷ Law no. 223 of 6 August 1990, art. 8, § 3.

⁶⁸ Ibid., art. 15, § 16.

⁶⁹ “It was essential to allow a grace period to enable networks to broadcast those films already featuring commercials. Finevest alone had over 6,000 films with commercials: in addition to the economic loss for the networks, Italians would have lost many good films.” The translation is mine. Chantal Dubois, “L'intervista: Oscar Mammi,” *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 33 (1990): 5.

⁷⁰ Giuseppe Fiori, *Il venditore: storia di Silvio Berlusconi e della Fininvest* (Milan: Garzanti, 1995), 175.

⁷¹ Council Directive 89/552/EEC, of 3 October 1989, art. 11, § 4. The possibility to position advertisements without the 20-minute restriction did not concern RAI, since at the time it was showing commercials only at half-time.

for each Member State to apply stricter rules.⁷² The Italian bill was principally stricter only with RAI, establishing a 12% limit, whereas it recognized an 18% one for private channels, in order to favor Fininvest's advertising revenues. However, both could exceed the limit by 2% provided they made it up in the previous or following hour.⁷³ This part is quite significant for Fininvest, due to its higher reliance on advertising revenues, since it could reach 20% during one hour of a prime time film when more people watch television and advertising slots were more expensive.

In addition, the directive instructed broadcasters to progressively dedicate, "where practicable," the majority of their time to "European works," such as films and television series produced in one or more European countries. The directive excluded news, sport events, games, advertising, and teletext services."⁷⁴ However, the Mammi law restricted the connotation of time to mean only that spent showing films. In this way, there was no regulation on the amount of time networks dedicated to other programs such as television series. This was especially impactful for Fininvest, which showed many made-for-tv American programs. The Italian bill set the amount of time to devote to European works to at least 40% for the first three years and then increased it to 51%, the minimum necessary to create a majority. Furthermore, at least 50% of the time allocated every year to European oeuvres had to include Italian ones, with at least 20% dedicated to films released in the last five years.⁷⁵ The Mammi bill noticeably yet silently protected the prominence of American films, not only because of the restriction in the amount of time allotted to European works, but also because it divided the residual majority percentage

⁷² Ibid., arts. 3 § 1, 18 § 2, and 20.

⁷³ Law no. 223 of 6 August 1990, art. 6, §§ 6-7.

⁷⁴ Council Directive 89/552/EEC, of 3 October 1989, art. 4, § 1.

⁷⁵ Law no. 223 of 6 August 1990, art. 26, §§ 1, 3.

into smaller chunks. Indeed, Italian works could potentially reach only 25.5%, while the other 25.5% would be split amongst all other European oeuvres. American products could instead make up the remaining 49% of time.

The supremacy of American works also continued in the following years, because the European directive, pressured by big commercial networks such as Fininvest, used the expression “where practicable,” when speaking about the higher transmission time for European works.⁷⁶ Law no. 223/1990 did not mention such expression. Although, it explicitly referred to the 89/552/EEC directive when regulating the broadcasting of “opere europee.” Thus, the 1990 law gave the impression of setting mandatory limitations while in reality it was defending the enormous relevance of American films and their commercial exploitation. The promulgation of the Mammi law anticipated the start of a new phase when new and undisciplined forms of film broadcasting and viewership developed thanks to the extraordinary use Italian television made of films in the 1980s.

Back to the Future (1991-onward): Telepiù and New forms of Film Programming and Consumption

The final phase of the long 1980s saw the arrival of the first Italian pay television platform Telepiù, indirectly helped by the Mammi law, and the beginning of a new era for television film programming and viewership. From 1991, when Telepiù 1 began to encrypt its signal for subscribers and show first-run films, new technologies built on the popularity of films on free television during the long 1980s, and introduced new opportunities for film programming and consumption.

⁷⁶ Mazzone, “L’Europa del cinema e della TV,” *Link. Idee per la televisione* 3 (2004): 118.

The Mammi law informed the development of Telepiù not only because it did not regulate pay television, but also since it formally legalized the duopoly RAI-Fininvest. The legalization of the duopoly penalized small private channels, as they were now unable to fully develop. As a result, they started to put their frequencies on sale. Fininvest bought many of them to improve its reception, as well as to build the foundations of Telepiù. In August 1990 right before the Mammi law became effective, Telepiù appeared on Italian television screens without initially requiring a subscription. Soon after, the platform gave birth to Telepiù 1 (dedicated to cinema), Telepiù 2 (sport, namely soccer), and a few months later Telepiù 3 (cultural events).

Since the 1990 law prevented one network from owning more than three channels and over 10% of shares in other channels, Fininvest maintained only 10% of Telepiù.⁷⁷ The company sold the other 90% to various entrepreneurs including German media mogul Leo Kirch, who ended up with 45%.⁷⁸ It was a strategic and deceiving move. Fininvest still controlled the majority of Telepiù since Kirch was Berlusconi's partner "in various ventures, [the two] bought shares in one another's companies and appeared to juggle ownership so as to circumvent antitrust laws."⁷⁹ Between 1993 and 1994, corrupted officials of the Guardia di Finanza (Financial Guard) conducted a controversial investigation determining that Fininvest was not controlling Telepiù.⁸⁰ The legal

⁷⁷ Law no. 223 of 6 August 1990, art. 15, § 4, and art. 13, §§ 1, 3.

⁷⁸ Menduni, *Televisione e società italiana*, 133-135.

⁷⁹ Alexander Stille, *The Sack of Rome: How a Beautiful European Country with a Fabled History and a Storied Culture Was Taken Over by a Man Named Silvio Berlusconi* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 108.

⁸⁰ Paolo Biondani, "Il pool accusa: il Cavaliere autorizzò per Telepiù la consegna di denaro ai finanziari," *Corriere della Sera*, May 28, 1995, accessed January 11, 2015, http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/1995/maggio/28/pool_accusa_Cavaliere_autorizzo_per_co_0_9505285829.shtml.

vicissitudes demonstrate Fininvest's desire of owning the first Italian pay television platform since it hosted two popular television genres: cinema and soccer.

The formal launch of Telepiù 1 in 1991 decidedly sanctioned the importance of films for television and officially legitimized them as television programs.⁸¹ It was the last step of a process that had begun with the arrival of private channels and the massive employment, commercial exploitation, and serialization of films. Moving forward, films would have an entire channel dedicated to them while continuing to be broadcast with commercials on regular television programming. Contrary to free television, Telepiù 1 showed films without the insertion of advertisements. Therefore, films mostly maintained their integrity and original rhythm, allowing the channel to recreate a similar experience to that of the movie theater.

The arrival of Telepiù 1 prompted RAI to show even more films to contrast the new competitor. In 1991, while Telepiù 1 broadcast nearly 3,000 films, RAI broadcast 2,000 films, a number that increased to 3,000 in 1993, when Telepiù 1 arrived at 4,532. In the meantime, Fininvest continued to air around 2,000 films per year.⁸² The exorbitant amount of films on free television channels, together with the high price of the decoder, and the parallel boom of new and cheaper forms of film viewership and ownership such as renting and buying VHS, hampered the growth of Telepiù 1. However, the development of Telepiù 1 initiated the individualization of television offerings and consumption, improved in the 2000s by SKY and digital terrestrial television with a plethora of more personalized options.

⁸¹ Telepiù 1 inaugurated the subscription-based era at midnight on June 1 1991, with the broadcasting of *Blade Runner* (1982).

⁸² Fania Petrocchi, *Il cinema della televisione italiana: la produzione cinematografica di Rai e Fininvest (1976/1994)* (Rome: RAI-ERI, 1996), 28.

In brief, the enormous success films had on free television channels fostered not only the emergence of Telepiù 1, but also contributed to the creation of new possibilities for film programming and consumption away from the movie theater. Indeed, new technologies such as the videotape recorder became popular towards the end of the 1980s and during the 1990s. The former allowed consumers to rent, buy, and also record a film on a VHS, thereby extracting it from television programming to watch and re-watch it at their leisure. Beginning in 2000 the DVD boomed in Italy, bringing an improvement to the image and sound quality, and the introduction of special content, such as interviews with actors and directors.⁸³ These features helped enhance the film experience. Between the end of the 1990s and the 2000s, the development of on-demand television, the Internet, and smartphones, beyond offering more individualized opportunities, multiplied the chances, and means, to watch a film. It is then evident how television film programming during the long 1980s left its mark in the following decades, liberating films from the exclusiveness of the movie theater.

The evolution and success of film programming from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s culminated with the creation of Telepiù 1 and the official establishment of films as television programs. At the same time, it also affected advertisements generating the formation of an interdependent relationship between films and commercials.

⁸³ Antonia Jacchia and Massimo Triulzi, “Natale scontato, decolla il sistema Dvd,” *Corriere della Sera*, December 16, 2001, accessed March 10, 2015, http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2001/dicembre/16/Natale_scontato_decolla_sistema_Dvd_co_0_0112169566.shtml.

From Films to Commercials and Back: the Development of an Interdependent Narrative Format

During the long 1980s, film programming also influenced the production of a new narrative format: the commercial. Thanks to their conspicuous presence during films and free from the conservative impositions of RAI's advertising show *Carosello* (1957-1977), several 1980s commercials began to more decisively employ cinematographic techniques and atmospheres. It was the beginning of a new phase where the relationship between cinema and commercials became more interdependent and prolific. Various film directors entered an innovative advertisement world, and advertising directors often borrowed cinematographic formulas, several of whom became film directors.

On January 1st 1977, RAI canceled *Carosello* after a twenty year run, as it was unfit to survive to an arising new form of advertising. In a commercially-dense television environment due to the development of private channels, effectively attracting the audience's attention and purchasing preferences became vital. Consequently, the emerging type of advertising was highly product-oriented and more increasingly based on the stimulation of spectators' emotions through glamorized stories and catchy jingles.

Conversely, *Carosello*'s sketches were more austere and therefore less suitable for the new situation. Indeed, they generally borrowed from theater with steady camera shots and slow paces, but also utilized more spectacular animated cartoons. Their structure was also highly regimented: RAI could only transmit each sketch once, its duration was set initially to 2:15 minutes, and the product could only appear in the last 30

seconds, completely detached from the story depicted in the sketch.⁸⁴ In a public network with a relevant pedagogical connotation, images of opulence and consumerism were not particularly widespread, nor welcome until the long 1980s. For this reason, *Carosello* operated within a standardized and orderly structure, far away from the extravagance of the 1980s commercials. However, *Carosello* became outdated with the advent of private channels and their reliance on unbridled entertainment, and a new kind of advertising. The new commercial model was shorter in length since it more directly focused on the product. Advertisements also became increasingly more spectacular, fast-paced, repetitive and ubiquitous.

Cinema was a decisive factor for the construction of more exciting and distinctive commercials owing to its quintessential ability to relate stories through the juxtaposition of images and sounds, and its stunning success with and power of attraction on the television audience. Various directors such as Fellini ventured into their production. Advertisers appreciated them for their unique styles necessary to give the products a refined aura. Fellini's 1985 *Alta società* commercial made for Barilla featured elaborate camera work harmoniously alternating an initial establishing shots with close-ups, long and medium shots, and the recounting of a story condensed into a limited time. It also represented locations typical of his films, as it partially replicated the elegant restaurant included in his 1983 film *E la nave va (And the Ship Sails On)*.

At the same time, Fellini was amongst those cinema directors who battled against the insertion of commercials during films. Although scholars such as Peter Bondanella claims "la presa di posizione di Fellini non era affatto venata di ipocrisia, non

⁸⁴ Piero Dorfles, *Carosello* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1998), 92, 108-115. On *Carosello* see also Laura Ballio and Adriano Zancchi, *Carosello story. La via italiana alla pubblicità* (Rome: RAI-ERI, 2009).

contestando gli spot in assoluto, ma la loro intromissione nel particolarissimo ritmo di un film,” and Fellini himself wrote that commercial interruptions during films “faranno dello spettatore un cretino impaziente, incapace di concentrazione, di riflessione, di collegamenti mentali, di previsioni, e anche di quel senso di musicalità, dell’armonia, dell’euritmia, che sempre accompagna qualcosa che viene raccontato,” the creation of a commercial clearly inspired by cinema legitimized the connection between the two and hence the possibility to insert advertisements during a film.⁸⁵

The influence of cinema continued to spread, reaching also advertising directors, some of who began working for cinema. The Barilla saga *Ritorni a casa* (Homecomings) started in 1985 saw also the presence of commercial directors such as Norman Griner. His 1986 commercial “*Il gattino*” (The Kitten) featured a cinematic story of a little girl who finds a cat on her way home after missing the bus while her mother is cooking Barilla pasta, and together with her father, is anxiously waiting for her.⁸⁶ It also employed different shots typical of cinema, such as long and medium ones. Similarly, in 1987 tuna company Palmera, with Enrico Sannia, utilized the classic atmospheres and the rapid juxtaposition of shots of an *Indiana Jones* film. Marcello Lago directed a commercial for Volkswagen Polo in 1986 that depicts doubles of film stars such as Humphrey Bogart,

⁸⁵ “Fellini’s stand was not tinged with hypocrisy, as he was not opposed to commercials altogether, rather he contested their intrusion in the extremely particular rhythm of a film.” The translation is mine. “[Commercial interruptions during films] will make the spectator an impatient cretin, incapable of concentrating, reflecting, creating mental connections, predicting, and also of that sense of musicality, harmony, eurythmy, that always accompany something being narrated.” The translation is mine. For the first quote see Peter Bondanella, “Fellini e la Grande Tentatrice. Breve storia: dai maccheronici Pop, alla Pasta Barilla al Banco di Roma,” in *Lo schermo manifesto: le misteriose pubblicità di Federico Fellini*, ed. Paolo Fabbri (Rimini: Guaraldi, 2002), 40. For the second quote see Federico Fellini, “Queste tv non sono degne di sopravvivere,” *L’Europeo*, December 7, 1985: 5.

⁸⁶ Roberta Altin and Paola Parmeggiani, *Nuove frontiere della rappresentazione digitale* (Milan: Lampi di stampa, 2007). 87.

Marilyn Monroe, and Clint Eastwood, next to doubles of other television and music personalities. The commercial not only mimics cinema per se, but its juxtaposing use by television programming, where films and other programs follow one another.⁸⁷

Furthermore, various advertising directors became film directors. One such example is Alessandro D'Alatri, who, in the 1980s, directed many commercials, such as the 1987 one for Kodak replicating situations typical of fantasy films like *Blade Runner*.⁸⁸ He, like Daniele Luchetti and Gabriele Muccino, later became a film director. These directors also brought elements characteristic of commercials into their films, such as rapid montage and abundance of close-ups, signifying the mutual interchanges between the two realms.

All of the above examples testify to the fervent interdependent relationship between cinema and commercials from the long 1980s onward, when film programming facilitated their collaboration. Film and commercial directors took advantage of the large quantity and popularity of films on television and exploited the multiple technical and content opportunities offered by cinema to create a fresh model for commercials. This new narrative format created an avenue in which film and advertising directors moved back and forth between the two media, further encouraging a collaborative relationship between films and commercials.

⁸⁷ For more information on Sannia's commercial see Marco Giusti and Stefania Incagnoli, "Spot per un anno," *Il Patalogo dieci*, 217. For more information on Lago's advertisement see Roberto Serafin and Pierangela Rossi Sala, "La Pubblicità," *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 14 (1986): 16.

⁸⁸ For additional information on D'Alatri's commercial see Marco Giusti and Stefania Incagnoli, "Spot per un anno," *Il Patalogo dieci*, 222.

The vertiginous rise in film programming during the long 1980s affected the whole spectrum of Italian television and played an important role in its development during this time period. Film broadcasting became an important element in the battle for viewer acquisition and retention due to films' success with audiences. Private over-the-air channels built much of their popularity through a massive yet initially random film programming. Even the public network RAI implemented new strategies to exploit the success of cinema and rival the fierce competition of the private. From the introduction of private channels in the mid-1970s to the inception of pay television at the beginning of the 1990s, the presence and influence of cinema on the television scope continued to grow. Thanks to legislative loopholes and stratagems, film programming maintained a prominent role for RAI and Fininvest. The two networks devised many cycles and cautiously positioned films through the schedules to gain viewers' and advertisers' preferences. They heavily utilized American films, not only because they were successful with audiences, but also served as the perfect container for advertisements. Moreover, the large number of films, in connection with the occurrence of advertisements during their transmission, fueled the onset of an intense collaboration between cinema and commercials.

Film programming therefore played a crucial role for Italian television and underwent significant changes in the long 1980s. These novelties undoubtedly affected fresh modes of film broadcasting and viewership in the following decades as RAI and Fininvest began competing for audiences. These networks consciously utilized and placed specific films throughout the weekly schedule to maximize viewership and advertising revenues. In the next chapter, I expand my investigation beyond film

programming to the whole television programming to illustrate how films were only part of an important programming structure. In doing so, I demonstrate the existence of a continuous and coherent habit-forming flow aimed at informing the viewing and material consumption habits of the audience. I later build on my argument to prove how the significant rise in television film programming, together with the implementation of a habit-forming flow, brought about important cultural changes in the long 1980s that inspired new consumption practices and narrative formats in Italy.

Chapter 2

Going with the Habit-Forming Flow of Italian Television

As outlined in the first chapter, throughout the long 1980s, Italian television carefully placed films in the weekly schedule with the objective of maximizing viewership and advertising revenues. However, films were only a part of a comprehensive programming tactic, emerged during the long 1980s, and aimed at influencing the viewers' viewing and material consumption practices. In this chapter, I explore the concept of television flow, from both a media studies and a narratological perspective, as a key strategy used to influence viewership through the programming, namely, the organization of programs, announcements, promotional messages, and commercials.

Before the mid-1970s, a public monopoly primarily interested in educating and informing the audience dominated Italian television. The public network RAI strictly regimented entertainment and commercials limiting the power of the lures of consumerism and hedonism on the audience. The emergence and success of private television channels and their emphasis on entertainment and advertisements radically transformed television programming. Public and private channels launched into a fierce competition, and as a result began to develop a new programming technique to capture and keep the audience tuned to a distinct television channel.

The practice of programming amounted to what I refer to as *habit-forming flow*, since programmers successfully juxtaposed programs, together with announcements, promotional messages, and commercials in order to inform the viewing and material consumption habits of the audience. I contend that it was the programming as a whole, and not just individual programs, that had a crucial role in shaping these habits.

Methodologically I rely on the notion of flow that cultural critic Raymond Williams first coined in *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (1974) to describe television as consisting of intersecting programming segments aiming at keeping the audience from program to program, or from one segment of a program to another. I also engage with the theoretical and critical works of various international media academics, who have dialogued with and have re-elaborated Williams' conceptualization of flow. I do so in order to position myself within the debates and formulate a historically specific notion of flow based on the study of Italian television during the long 1980s.

In order to demonstrate how the habit-forming flow characterized Italian television programming, I thoroughly examine RAI and Fininvest's schedules to verify how the juxtaposition of programs through the day and week changed during the long 1980s to become more cohesive. Moreover, throughout my analysis, I also use as evidence a serendipitous source: VHS tapes of films broadcast on RAI and Fininvest that private citizens recorded during the 1980s and early 1990s, which include both the film for which the recording was done but also all sorts of announcements, promotional messages, and especially commercials appearing before, during, and after the screening of a film.

The Flow Around the World: A Disputed Concept

When observing American and British television in the early 1970s, Williams argued that television consisted of a flow of intersecting programs, announcements, promotional messages, and commercial segments. As a result, he held, there were no pauses that marked the boundaries of individual programs. Furthermore, this strategy aimed at trying to maintain the audience from program to program, or from one segment of a program to another.¹

Since Williams' conceptualization of flow, throughout the 1980s and 1990s many media scholars such as John Ellis, Jane Feuer, John Fiske, Horace Newcomb and Paul Hirsch, John Caldwell, and Jostein Grispsrud have engaged with his theorization, generally focusing on individual or group of segments, rather than on the whole of television programming. More recently, William Uricchio and Vito Zagarrio have concentrated on technological aspects, namely the use of the remote control and VCR, to stress the superior power of the viewer over the broadcaster's sequencing logics. All these scholars have offered relevant refinements of Williams' notion of flow useful to formulate and reinforce the revised notion of habit-forming flow that I am proposing here, founded on an in-depth structural analysis of Italian television programming during the long 1980s. Apart from a few scholars such as Zagarrio, Italian media academics generally accepted Williams' ideas without critically engaging with it, and thus remaining at the margins of the international debate around television flow.

¹ Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (London: Fontana, 1974), 86-120.

One of the first media scholars to openly tackle Williams' theory of flow is John Ellis. In particular, he maintains that television is comprised of distinctive segments, which do not necessarily form a continuous flow:

Instead of the single, coherent text that is characteristic of entertainment cinema, broadcast TV offers relatively discrete segments: small sequential unities of images and sounds [...]. These segments are organized into groups which are either simply cumulative, like news broadcast items and advertisements, or have some kind of repetitive or sequential connection, like the groups of segments that make up the serial or series.²

In his argument, Ellis seems to advocate for a segmented and closed-off television programming. Still, when analyzing Italian television programming in the long 1980s, Ellis' programming segments appear to intersect with one another with the objective of instilling viewing and material consumption habits in the audience. For instance, RAI and Fininvest's channels tended to insert films into cycles with the intention of producing viewing expectations and also influence the consumption habits of the audiences through the insertion of commercials. Another common practice was the combination of a film with a special information program centered on the former's theme. Therefore, programs did not necessarily stand alone, and ought not to be deemed solely as isolated segments, but rather as habit-forming segments.

Building on Ellis' idea of segmentation, Jane Feuer holds that television "is designed to be watched intermittently, casually, and without full concentration."³ This intermittence essence of television appears inapplicable when studying Italian television

² John Ellis, *Visible Fictions: Cinema, Television, Video* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 112.

³ Jane Feuer, "The Concept of Live Television: Ontology as Ideology," in *Regarding Television*, ed. E. Ann Kaplan (Los Angeles: American Film Institute, 1983): 15.

programming. In fact, programmers determined the organization of the programming as a means to prevent the audience from switching channel or turning off the television set by juxtaposing programs potentially appealing to the same types of audience. For instance, during the 1980s Italia 1 usually connected the afternoon children's program *Bim Bum Bam* (1981-2002) with such television series as the American family drama *La casa nella prateria* (*Little House on the Prairie*, U.S., 1974-1983), capable of appealing to the former's audience and consequently fulfilling the objective of leading them in *through* the programming. Feuer's idea of discontinuity consequently leads her to affirm that "television is based upon program segments, advertising segments, trailer segments, etc." and that "television possesses segmentation without closure."⁴ Feuer hence recognizes the existence of a succession of different and disjointed groups of segments comprising television programming, although like Ellis, she does not consider all the segments she lists *as* connected. However, Italian channels linked announcements and promotional messages to the upcoming programs, which were in turn juxtaposed coherently. At the same time, commercials often borrowed narrative formulas from other television genres, as in the case of films, further signaling the coherence rather than the segmentation of television programming.

Similarly, John Fiske embraces the idea of segmentation to describe television programming. In particular, he argues "disruptive breaks between segments outweigh any attempts of continuity or consequence to unify the text."⁵ He considers television as constituted by separate segments that are not connected to one another. In fact, Fiske takes a stand against the idea of flow: "flow, [...], is perhaps an unfortunate metaphor:

⁴ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁵ John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London: Methuen, 1987), 103.

the movement of the television text is discontinuous, interrupted, and segmented. Its attempts at closure, at a unitary meaning, or a unified viewing subject, are constantly subjected to fracturing forces.”⁶ Fiske’s argument description is also inapplicable when observing Italian television channels in the long 1980s, as they mostly aimed at reducing as much as possible the “fracturing forces” that would facilitate the audience’s abandonment of a specific channel in favors of others.

This reduction did not occur with Rete 4 under Mondadori’s control between 1982 and 1984. The channel was not capable in leading in the afternoon soap operas’ female audience towards prime time programs, often featuring films by Woody Allen. The films appealed to an audience quite different from the soap operas’ viewers to facilitate the movement of the audience from the afternoon towards prime time. Furthermore, during this time, Rete 4 began to also massively broadcast films belonging to the 1970s *commedia sexy all’italiana* genre, especially those featuring the irreverent and off-color character Pierino. These films alternate with Enzo Biagi’s informative programs and more sophisticated American films, resulting in a highly incoherent schedule.⁷ The outcome of these choices was a programming fiasco and the subsequent acquisition of Rete 4 by Fininvest in 1984. Upon this procurement, Fininvest devised a more coherent programming for this channel, playing to its female viewership.

A similar case is that of Raitre, whose programming, at least until its reform in 1987, completely lacked any coherence and continuity, due to, for instance, the alternation between sport and cultural, elitist programs (such as classical music concerts and operas), and the massive presence of intervals: temporary pauses in the broadcasting

⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁷ Paolo Martini, “La tv dimezzata: il palinsesto delle reti private in Italia (1981-85),” *Comunicazione di massa* 1 (1985): 44.

of programs usually characterized by images of Italian cities' landscapes and monuments, whose objective was to fill airtime.⁸ The 1987 reform introduced new programs and improved the structure of the schedule, making it more coherent. For instance, on prime time on Thursdays in 1989, the political talk show *Samarcanda* (1987-1992) preceded the talk show *Ars Amanda* (1989), where the actress Amanda Lear interviewed political personalities and also other relevant cultural figures about their private lives, trying to appeal to *Samarcanda*'s well-educated as well as popular audience. Both of these instances illustrate how disruptive Fiske's "fracturing forces" could be, but also prove that Italian television was also capable of lessening them to create a more cohesive programming.

On a similar note, Horace Newcomb and Paul Hirsch insist on the idea of contradiction and suggest the notion of "viewing strip," that is a specific sequence of programs, to describe television programming:

The emphasis is on process rather than product, on discussion rather than indoctrination, on contradiction and confusion rather than coherence. [...] Within these flow strips we may find opposing ideas abutting one another. We may find opposing treatment of the same ideas. [...] The forum model, then, has led us into a new exploration of the definition of the television text.⁹

However, with regards to Italian television, the strips seem too limited, as they mainly refer to "evening's television," to determine whether there are contradictory opinions or

⁸ Nora Rizza, *Costruire palinsesti: modalità, logiche e stili della programmazione televisiva tra pubblico e privato* (Rome: RAI-ERI, 1989), 179.

⁹ Horace Newcomb, and Paul M. Hirsch, "Television as a Cultural Forum," in *Television: The Critical View*, 5th edition, ed. Horace Newcomb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 506-509.

ideas in the daily or weekly programming.¹⁰ In addition, television programming connotation, as previously shown, is clearly not contradictory and confusing, and the “forum model” they propose is certainly not the norm. In fact, based on Newcomb and Hirsch’s analysis, it seems that every night, programs debate and explore social and cultural issues from a variety of points of view. Moreover, on Italian television, promotional messages and announcements appearing during and between programs play a key role in limiting possible confusions and guiding the audience’s program selections and viewing habits.

Similarly, John Caldwell contributed to this debate by focusing only on specific programs. Indeed, he holds that “a great deal of television in the last fifteen years is significant precisely because it self-consciously rejects the monotonous implications of the flow.”¹¹ In order to support his argument, Caldwell speaks about “event-status programming”, such as the American miniseries *War and Remembrance* (U.S., 1988-1989), but also the “special movies of the week,” or “primetime soaps like *Dallas*” featuring event-status episodes, all characterized by massive investments and created to attract vast portions of audience.¹² In particular, he maintains that, in the case of *War and Remembrance*, its special status is achieved through the implementation of “excessive narrative and historical exhibitionism.”¹³ The former refers to a very stylized and over-the-top production whereas the latter presupposes an embellishment of history: “history can be made material—physically grabbed, shaken, and televisually assaulted, all in order

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 509.

¹¹ John Thornton Caldwell, *Televisuality: Style, Crisis, and Authority in American Television* (New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 19.

¹² *Ibid.*, 160. Rete 4 broadcast a few episodes of *War and Remembrance* (*Ricordi di guerra*) in 1990.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 164.

to energize television. Historicity, like narrative discourse, has become a ritual of formal permutation and embellishment.”¹⁴

According to Caldwell, these two tenets challenge “the large body of critical scholarship that developed analytical methods from Williams’ flow theory – a view that presupposes that the *television text is “boundless” and without borders.*” Moreover, he maintains that these event programs “make every effort possible, in fact, *to underscore and illuminate their textual borders.*”¹⁵ Based on Caldwell’s argument, the objective is then to attract the viewer’s attention through the definition of very distinctive borders with the rest of television’s offerings.

Nevertheless, as far as Italian television programming is concerned, event programs, such as the films included in the cycle *I Filmissimi*, usually contained commercials and were connected to other programs, especially through announcements and promotional messages. These elements opened up the textual borders and reminded the viewers of the scope of television’s offerings, consequently aiming at instilling viewing and material consumption habits in the audience. Event programs were not isolated moments with distinct borders, as channels utilized them to increase commercial revenues and promote future programs.

Amongst those television products with excessive narrative and definite borders, Caldwell mentions *Dallas* (U.S., 1978-1991), due to its characterization as a narrative full of intrigues, scandals, and seductions.¹⁶ In Italy during the 1980s, Canale 5 opened up *Dallas*’ borders to lead in the audience through the daily and weekly schedule by broadcasting commercials of American products (such as cornflakes and whiskey) and

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 163.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 169.

promotional messages of upcoming programs during the television series' airing, and by showing films that were similar in tone and topic to the series.¹⁷ Caldwell's focus on specific programs as independent entities from television programming is too limited to describe the complexities of Italian television in the long 1980s.

Jostein Gripsrud expands on Caldwell's idea by noticing how the audience itself seeks specific programs: "viewers [...] actively prefer certain programmes over others and also speak of watching particular programmes."¹⁸ This was undoubtedly also true for Italian television, but at the same time, the viewers were constantly reminded of other programs that might have interested them, through the insertion of announcements and promotional messages that unavoidably connected programs to the rest of television programming. In fact, Italian television could not solely rely on individual programs, as it needed to substitute and insert new programs, and to continuously inform the viewers about the wide scope of its offerings. It is undeniably important not to disregard the various segments that made up the programming. Nevertheless, it is just as essential to consider a television channel's context as a whole in order to understand how these segments functioned together, without focusing, as all these scholars suggest, on only individual segments or group of them, and strips.

Other scholars, such as William Uricchio and Vito Zagarrío, rely upon technology and the audience's role to examine television, considering programming and the use of

¹⁷ On the broadcasting and impact of *Dallas* in Italy see for instance Davide Bassi "Dallas, Italia. Cronaca di un successo (non troppo) annunciato," *Comunicazioni sociali* 1 (2013): 90-100. Waddick Doyle "Why Dallas was able to conquer Italy," in *Media Information Australia* 41, no. 43 (February 1987): 49-53. Alessandro Silj, and Manuel Alvarado, *A est di Dallas: telefilm USA ed europei a confronto* (Rome: RAI-ERI, 1988).

¹⁸ Jostein Gripsrud, "Television, Broadcasting, Flow: Key Metaphors in TV Theory," in *The Television Studies Book*, eds. David Lusted and Christine Geraghty (London: Arnold, 1998): 28.

the TV set as completely under the viewer's control. In particular, Uricchio considers the role played by the remote control device (RCD): "But explicitly acknowledged or not, the RCD was a "subversive technology," that demonstrated from its start that viewers had the ability to disrupt program flow and the economic flow so central to commercial television. At the same time, a new conception of viewer-dominated flow took hold."¹⁹ He thus maintains that "an important shift in the concept of flow away from programming strategies and instead to viewer determined experience" occurred.²⁰

Similarly, Vito Zagarrìo, claims that the RCD, "è quello il vero strumento del potere, lo scettro del comando di questo trentennio. Da lì viene la frammentazione ossessiva, il patchwork neobarocco, il mix ibrido che innesta un genere a un altro in modo non più sacrilego."²¹ However, the control of the viewer during the long 1980s seems to be only partial, as s/he still had to select amongst television programming offerings. Moreover, channels continuously devised new tactics to hold their audience without losing it to the competition (consider, for instance, how Fininvest linked films to *Dallas* in order to give coherence to the programming). Therefore, it is not possible to argue that the RCD brought a total "shift in agency from the network's programmer to

¹⁹ William Uricchio, "Television's Next Generation: Technology /Interface Culture / Flow," in *Television After TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*, eds. Lynn Spigel and Jan Olsson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005): 171.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 172.

²¹ "It (the RCD) is the true instrument of power, the scepter of command of these past thirty years. From the RCD come the obsessive fragmentation of programming, the neo-baroque patchwork, the hybrid mix combining a genre to another in a no longer sacrilegious manner." The translation is mine. Vito Zagarrìo, *L'anello mancante: storia e teoria del rapporto cinema-televisione* (Turin: Lindau, 2004), 91.

the individual,” as that would imply the audience wholly controlled television’s programming.²²

Nonetheless, it is true that the VCR “unshackles viewers from television programmers’ sequencing logics,” resulting in a subversive technology.²³ In the case of a film watched on VHS, the VCR represented a sort of counter-flow practice, as it enabled the viewers to partially recuperate the original film text and watch a film without the filter of the flow and the insertion of commercials. As a result, the VCR more than the remote control, provided a real change towards a more viewer-centered paradigm.

Italian media scholars, aside from a few academics such as Zaggarrio, have not thoroughly engaged with and reformulated Williams’ idea of flow, but they have generally accepted it and used it to describe Italian television in the 1980s or they have largely embraced further elaborations of flow.²⁴ One of the main reasons lies in their partial study of television programming. In 2015, media scholar Luca Barra published a volume on the history and techniques of programming in Italy from television’s inception to present day.²⁵ In his analysis of television broadcasting in the pre-digital era, Barra aligns with Ellis’ reconceptualization of flow, hence considering programming as comprised of separate segments, and advocating for the existence of blocks of similar

²² William Uricchio, “TV as Time Machine: Television’s changing heterochronic regimes and the production of history,” in *Relocating Television: Television in the Digital Context*, ed. Jostein Gripsrud (London: Routledge, 2010): 35.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ See, for instance Guido Barlozzetti ed., *Il palinsesto. Testi, apparati e generi della televisione* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1986). Aldo Grasso, and Massimo Scaglioni, *Che cos’è la televisione: il piccolo schermo fra cultura e società: i generi, l’industria, il pubblico* (Milan: Garzanti, 2003). Franco Monteleone, *Storia della radio e della televisione: società, politica, strategie, programmi* (Venice: Marsilio, 1992). Nora Rizza ed., *Immagini di televisione: strategie di orientamento del consumo televisivo* (Rome: RAI-ERI, 1986).

²⁵ Luca Barra, *Palinsesto. Storia e tecnica della programmazione televisiva* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2015).

programs without deeming them connected to the whole programming by an overarching strategy.²⁶

Some Italian television critics, such as Paolo Martini, instead ignored Williams' flow while at the same time outlining how programmers coherently juxtaposed programs in order to lead in the audience through the programming.²⁷ For example, he stressed how Italia 1 in 1983 created a homogenous evening programming capable of appealing to a similar audience by juxtaposing *Drive in* (1983-1988) to the TV series *Magnum, P.I.* (U.S., 1980-1988), followed by a film cycle dedicated to Humphrey Bogart.²⁸

However, Martini primarily focused on prime time. As a result, he could not develop an organic and complete view of television programming. Furthermore, he left out the impact of announcements, promotional messages, and commercials, all of paramount importance to create a coherent programming. Instead, through an extensive study of RAI and Fininvest's schedules, announcements, promotional messages and commercials, I aim at improving Martini's past efforts, as well as amending international media scholars' reconceptualizations of flow. My objective is to formulate and support a new refinement of Williams' original idea more suitable to describe Italian television programming in the long 1980s.

A New Formulation: The Habit-Forming Flow

Although the further elaborations on Williams' concept of flow highlight crucial aspects of television programming, they are inadequate to explain Italian television's

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 20-21, 34-35.

²⁷ Martini, "La tv dimezzata: il palinsesto delle reti private in Italia (1981-85)," and "Evoluzione dei modelli editoriali dei networks italiani," *Problemi dell'informazione* 4 (1986): 571-599.

²⁸ Martini, "La tv dimezzata: il palinsesto delle reti private in Italia (1981-85)," 43.

programming style. They focus on separate segments rather than considering them as a whole and on technological aspects not strictly connected to television programming. For these reasons, it is necessary to devise a new conceptualization of flow capable of more accurately describing television programming in the long 1980s. In particular, I argue that Italian television in this period presented a habit-forming flow, a programming concept I borrow from Williams' first conceptualization of flow and further elaborate. Furthermore, the discipline of narratology and more specifically Rick Altman's definition of "hyperbolic and metaphoric modulations" in the literary context helps demonstrate the existence of a habit-forming flow through the analysis of the coherent transitions amongst the various programming features, such as programs, announcements, promotional messages, and commercials.

In my formulation of habit-forming flow, I identify promotional messages, announcements, and commercials as essential to the television flow, and also prove the importance of the juxtaposition of similar programs. Programs followed one another throughout the day and the week by similarity in the types of audience potentially interested, and often tone and/or topic in order to lead in the audience through the programming and keep it hooked on a specific channel. At the same time, announcements, promotional messages, and commercials, as programs, constituted possible solutions to the audience's viewing and material consumption practices. Therefore, the habit-forming flow functioned on all levels of television programming: in terms of both the broadcasting of programs and the promotional and commercial activities informing their transmission.

While Williams recognized the use of promotional messages, announcements, and commercials to create a programming flow, he did not expand on the sequence of programs. In particular, when he defined television's flow, he did not elaborate on the modalities regarding the juxtaposition of programs in the schedule and concentrated on the act of broadcasting programs, announcements, promotional messages, and commercials:

What is being offered is not, in older terms, a programme of discrete units with particular insertions, but a planned flow, in which the true series is not the published sequence of programme items but this sequence transformed by the inclusion of another kind of sequence, so that these sequences together compose the real flow, the real 'broadcasting.'²⁹

However, with regards to Italian television, the true series *also* hinged on the coherent and repetitive juxtaposition of programs throughout the week, as it was important to keep the audience tuned in and create the habit of watching a specific channel, with all its commercials, announcements, and promotional messages. Consequently, my formulation of habit-forming flow puts more emphasis than Williams' flow on the daily and weekly schedule. Although Williams mentioned "relative homogenisation" as an important feature in the juxtaposition of programs in the flow, he did not expand on it.³⁰ Instead, he focused chiefly on promotional messages, announcements, and commercials as key features of flow, stressing how their appearance is sudden and unanticipated. In his view, they therefore do not constitute interruptions, since they perpetrate the flow of images and sounds of television, and aim at channeling the viewers through the schedule.³¹

²⁹ Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, 90-91.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 100.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 92.

Nonetheless, advertisements constitute a continuation of the flow as they inform the viewer's material consumption practices and present the audience with pertinent products, an important point Williams neglected.

Announcements and promotional messages of upcoming programs are surely crucial in the attempt at informing viewing habits. However, Italian television channels also carefully planned their flow based on the audience's common everyday habits. When analyzing RAI and Fininvest channels' 1980s schedules, it is noticeable how they sought to replicate the rhythm of everyday life, offering certain programs based on the viewer's daily routine and his/her presence at home. For instance, by programming a soap opera such as *Capitol* (U.S., 1982-1987) in the early afternoon, in the mid-1980s Raidue was sure to reach many housewives, ready to rest after a morning of running errands and taking care of their homes.

The channels' objective was also to re-shape everyday life by instilling new habits in order to capture as many spectators as possible, thus maximizing the profit from commercials, and creating a targeted addiction to television watching. Both RAI and Fininvest's channels programmed strips of variety shows, cartoons, and television series during daytime and throughout the week. Their goal was to lead in the audience through the week and thus instilling the habit of watching certain programs every day. Simultaneously, the juxtaposition of similar programs during the day aimed at modifying and prolonging the audience's viewing habits, consequently affecting the spectators' usual routine. As an illustration of this practice, Italia 1 programmed cartoons at around 4 pm followed by television series such as the sitcom *I Robinson* (*The Cosby Show*, U.S., 1984-1992). In doing so, it attempted not only to reach children coming home from

school, but potentially also to lead them into a family and playful sitcom, and extend their television viewing time.

The example of Italia 1 also demonstrates how the coherent juxtaposition of programs based on similarity in the types of audience interested, but also often tone and/or topic, is essential in influencing viewing habits. Nevertheless, the most relevant examples of how channels accurately planned their flow in the long 1980s relate to two prime time shows: *Film Dossier* (Raiuno) and *Dallas* (Canale 5). Both Raiuno and Canale 5 aimed at extending prime time viewership with the goal of leading in the audience through the night. In 1982, *Film Dossier* utilized a film as an expedient to introduce the audience to a debate related to the film's themes and broadcast immediately after it. The same year, Canale 5 used *Dallas* to vertically expand its audience by showing films capable of attracting the same type of viewers due to their similarity in tone and topic with the television series. The private network wisely devised and programmed a cycle of romantic comedies and dramas dedicated to Marilyn Monroe and other Hollywood stars right after the prime time episode of *Dallas*. The films perfectly shared a prominent depiction of love affairs and glamourized, seductive affluent lifestyles with the American television series.

For these reasons, the habit-forming flow highly depended on the observation and modification of the spectators' everyday habits and the coherent and continuous juxtaposition of programs, and not only and chiefly on the insertion of promotional messages and announcements. The sequence of programs was especially vital in a country whose people spent significant time watching television after the arrival of private channels and the increasing in airtime and variety of programs. In fact, only

19.1% of Italians watched television up to two hours every day; the remaining 80.9% spent more than two hours.³² Considering that the majority of Italian television programs lasted less than two hours, their careful juxtaposition was essential in directing the audience viewing habits through a wide range of products.

Finally, Rick Altman's narratological concepts of "metaphoric and hyperbolic modulations" are apropos to explain how networks were able to perfect the narrative structure of their habit-forming flow. According to Altman, metaphoric and hyperbolic modulations are types of transitions connecting one storyline in a narrative to another.³³ In the case of television programming, metaphoric modulations depended on the juxtaposition of programs by similarity in the types of audience interested, and often tone and/or topic. Instead, hyperbolic modulations brings together apparently unconnected objects or experiences, as is the case with the insertion of advertisements, announcements and promotional messages only superficially unrelated to the program during which they appeared. In reality, they all constitute possible solutions to the audience's viewing and material consumption practices, further enhancing the television flow.

Altman deploys the concept of "following-units" to describe how metaphoric and hyperbolic modulations operate. He contends that all narratives consist of a succession of "following-units," that is, "a series of segments each made up of that portion of the text where a character (or group of characters) is followed continuously."³⁴ It is precisely the idea of following that connects Altman's definition of narrative to the habit-forming flow of television. In fact, the television programming text depended on the idea of following,

³² Marco Ferrari, "Ti va la TV? Gli Italiani e il piccolo schermo," *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 36 (1988): 47.

³³ Rick Altman, *A Theory of Narrative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 23-24.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

not so much characters and their deeds, but rather the multiple programs, announcements, promotional messages, and commercials. During the long 1980s, the juxtaposition of these elements on Italian television formed the habit-forming flow. The latter is hence not only a programming practice, but also a type of television narrative style.

In fact, “narrative meaning depends not on single character/action units, but on relationships among units.”³⁵ In the television scope, the “relationships among units” depended on the links between programs, announcements, promotional messages, and commercials, which determined how television functioned as a whole. The rapports among “following-units” primarily depend on “metaphoric and hyperbolic modulations,” which, in the television realm, gave structure to the programming in order to concretize the habit-forming flow, and thus channel the audience’s choices. As Altman contends, “metaphoric modulations” are contingent to “a quality shared by the characters followed in successive following-units.”³⁶ In the case of the television flow, programs were usually juxtaposed throughout the day and the week by similarity in the types of audience potentially interested, tone and/or topic. In particular, this kind of modulation is applicable when considering the succession of one program after the other without the insertion of commercials, announcements, and promotional messages. Raiuno’s evening and prime time schedule in 1986 offers an excellent example of a sequence whose harmonious rhythm hinged on its capacity to attract and keep an audience interested in successive programs with an informative tone: the news and entertainment program *Italia Sera* (Italy in the Evening, 1983-1986) at 6.30 pm, the short and popular pedagogical program *Almanacco del giorno dopo* (Tomorrow’s Almanac, 1976-1994) at 7.40 pm, the

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 294.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

news (*TGI*) at 8 pm, followed by Enzo Biagi's weekly prime time television news magazine *Spot. Uomini, storie, avventure* (Spot. Men, Stories, and Adventures, 1986) at 8.30 pm.

Conversely, Altman maintains that hyperbolic modulations link seemingly unrelated objects or experiences: "hyperbolic figures thrive on the unexpected, the apparently unconnected."³⁷ In the television flow, hyperbolic modulations were noticeable in the insertion of advertisements, announcements, and promotional messages. These elements were only apparently unconnected to the program before, during, or after which they appeared. In reality, they all represented possible solutions to the viewers' viewing and material consumption customs. Announcements, promotional messages, and programs, through the viewing consumption of images and sounds, provided solutions to the audience's need for entertainment, information, and education. Commercials aimed at offering solutions as well, but as media scholar Nick Browne highlights, to "the ongoing biological and social maintenance of the subject and the family unit" (food, drinks, soaps, toiletries, medicines, cars, etc.) and other everyday life activities (cleaning, playing, etc.) in the form of material consumption.³⁸ By providing solutions, they all sought to inform viewing and material consumption habits. Altman's modulations certainly provide a useful theoretical framework to analyze how Italian television channels implemented their habit-forming flow to influence viewership.

At the same time, Altman's concept of hyperbolic modulations, with regards to commercials and their inclusion in the television flow, appears to build on Williams'

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁸ Nick Browne, "The Political Economy of the Television (Super) Text", in *American Television: New Directions in History and Theory*, ed. Nick Browne (Longhorne: Harwood, 1994): 74.

analysis of advertisements. Indeed, he argued that “there is mutual transfer between their formulas and those of separate programs.”³⁹ According to a survey promoted by the Italian television listing magazine *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* in 1988, almost 23% of Italians did not notice when a commercial would first appear on the television screen during a program, signaling, as Williams held, the strong connection between programs and advertisements.⁴⁰ In fact, commercials often borrowed narrative, characters or technical elements from other television genres, since their goal was to speak a language understood by the audience in order to facilitate the acquisition of new material consumption habits, while also attempting to impress the spectator by creating fresh juxtapositions between goods and television programming. Moreover, the fact that advertisements might appear in different time slots and had to appeal to people that watch different kinds of programs further explains their borrowing from different television genres.

Italian television programming in the long 1980s provides plenty of examples of commercials inspired by various genres. As I demonstrated in the first chapter, commercials often adopted cinematographic features, prompting several film directors to experiment with advertisements. For example, the television interview typical of a news program characterized commercials such as the 1984 Dash laundry detergent advertisement where a man asks a woman about her preference for detergent and praises the qualities of the product. Similarly, the television series *Love Boat's* (U.S., 1977-1987) setting and its central theme of love between passengers and crew members seem to have shaped the 1986 commercial for the women's book series Harmony. The dancing and

³⁹ Williams. *Television; Technology and Cultural Form*, 120.

⁴⁰ Ferrari, “Ti va la TV? Gli Italiani e il piccolo schermo,” 45.

singing typical of variety shows typified many commercials such as the 1986 one for Baci Perugina chocolates. Sport, especially soccer, was also source of inspiration. The 1990 commercial for the anti-inflammatory throat medicine Iodosan features the voice of the famous Italian soccer commentator Nando Martellini and the reconstruction of a game. Finally, numerous advertisements for children's products often replicated animation features and centered on the depiction of cartoon merchandise, such as those dedicated to Kinder snacks.

The conspicuous connections between programs and commercials prove how the notion of hyperbolic modulations is perfectly suitable to describe their relationship. It is also noticeable how advertisements were not interruptions of television programming. Rather, they were insertions appearing before, during, and after the programs since they clearly contributed to create and sustain the habit-forming flow and its objective of influencing the audience's material consumption patterns. Moreover, commercials and programs usually targeted the same audience. For instance, during children's programs there were advertisements for toys, food, and beverages particularly suited for them. Commercials also addressed similar spectators during prime time films. Italia 1 programmed the American musical drama *Footloose* (1984) on June 19, 1989 in combination with many advertisements for young people, such as popsicles and other snacks, non-alcoholic beverages, candies, and Fininvest's master's programs. Raidue showed the Italian popular comedy *Caruso Pascoski (di padre polacco)* (1988) on November 6, 1990, and inserted many commercials for spirits before, during, and after the film. The advertisements for these goods were perfectly suited to target the popular audience of the film, and their occurrence was effective. The presence of spirits in Italian

households increased during the 1980s, and in 1990 reached approximately 65% of families.⁴¹

During the 1980s, both RAI and Fininvest paid careful attention to the connection between programs and commercials. Silvio Berlusconi compelled Publitalia's sales agents to memorize Fininvest's channels' schedules in order to single out the best time slots for clients to place their commercials.⁴² He also encouraged his agents to seek out potential advertisers. Berlusconi's practice was novel at the time, since until that point, RAI's advertising sales company Sipra did not seek out advertisers, but waited for companies to approach it to request a slot during the short and regimented show *Carosello*.⁴³ During the 1980s, prompted by RAI's increasing advertising and Publitalia's competition, Sipra's agents started to imitate Berlusconi's agency's strategies and carefully searched for and presented advertisers with Raiuno, Raidue, and Raitre's schedules.⁴⁴

Consequently, the links between programs and commercials, and also the channels' habit-forming flow, strengthened. Indeed, by carefully positioning programs in the schedule, channels could attract, lead in, and repeatedly present the audience with pertinent commercial messages. Programmers then worked to create a type of programming capable of attracting not only the viewers but also, especially for the private channels, the advertisers. From this analysis, it is clear how the definition of

⁴¹ Censis. *Consumi 1990. I comportamenti e le mentalità in Italia, Francia, Spagna* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1990), 232-233.

⁴² Stefano D'Anna, and Gigi Moncalvo, *Berlusconi in Concert* (London: Otzium, 1994), 94-95, 295.

⁴³ Paolo Madron, *Le gesta del cavaliere* (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 1994), 60-62.

⁴⁴ Massimo Pini, "Strategie della pubblicità radiotelevisiva," *Comunicazione di massa 2* (1981): 141-145. Paolo Martini, *TV sorrisi e milioni: l'avventurosa storia dei divi e della televisione italiana* (Milan: Grandi Edizioni Italiane, 1985), 160-162.

habit-forming flow is particularly suitable to describe the way channels structured their programming during the long 1980s. Still, Italian television channels adopted the habit-forming flow in different stages and following diverse programming procedures. From 1976, and following the 1975 reform law of the broadcasting system and the legalization of private channels, Italian television began the path towards a more cohesive type of programming. The renovating process stemmed from the 1975 law's introduction of a new internal competition between public channels, and the much fiercer battle for the audience spearheaded by private channels.

From Theory to Praxis: Scheduling the Habit-Forming Flow Through the Long 1980s

In order to describe how Italian television channels came to adopt and perfect a habit-forming flow, I divide the long 1980s in two historical segments. The first one begins in 1976 when RAI refreshed its programming after the passing of the 1975 reform law and private channels boomed after the Constitutional Court gave them the right to broadcast over-the-air, and ends in 1981. The second stretches from 1981, when Canale 5's groundbreaking programming style and the rising competition between public and private channels significantly impacted the schedules, until 1991 with the emergence of the pay television platform Telepiù and a new type of programming based on specific genres and themes.

a) Is Somebody in? Discovering the Habit-Forming Flow (1976-1981)

Between 1976 and 1981, television channels showed the first instances of habit-forming flow. In an ever-changing television market where competition was emerging, both public and private channels created new programming strategies to attract and prolong the audience viewing time, while simultaneously influencing their material consumption habits.

Until the beginning of the 1980s, Rete 1 and Rete 2's schedules presented interruptions during afternoon and night programming, an often random juxtaposition of programs, featured weekly appointments with specific genres on prime time (e.g. films on Rete 1 on Mondays), and included commercials in separate advertising shows. The reasons for fragmented schedules resided in RAI's monopoly over broadcasting and its educational rather than commercial objective. Indeed, RAI avoided imposing its presence on Italians' everyday life, limiting its airtime to the early afternoon and from late afternoon until approximately 11.30 pm.⁴⁵ An important turning point for RAI came with the 1975 reform law. The bill granted programming autonomy to Rete 1 and Rete 2, thus launching internal competition between the two public channels. Moreover, the development of private channels introduced new competitors in the television market. In response to these important events, Rete 1 and Rete 2 began broadcasting for the same amount of time every day, and at the end of 1980 eliminated their afternoon interruption from 2 pm until 5 pm after the lunchtime news and some informational programs. They also employed new programming strategies, inaugurated more spectacular programs, increased the weekly number of films. Furthermore, commercials abandoned the

⁴⁵ Rete 1's programming spanned this broader timespan. Rete 2's programs only appeared between 9 pm to 11 pm until 1973, and from 6 pm to 11 pm from 1973 until 1976.

regimented and old-fashioned advertising shows and were scattered through the programming to influence the audience's purchasing habits more recurrently. Commercials also appeared during programs, although less frequently than they appeared during programs on private channels. Terza Rete, introduced at the end of 1979, presented discontinuous and random schedules until its reform in 1987 remaining at the margins of the programming innovation process that invested other public channels.

In particular, both Rete 1 and Rete 2 launched a new kind of program, capable of reproducing a habit-forming flow, and popularized cultural programs to enlarge viewership. In 1976, Rete 1, with *Domenica in* (Sunday Together, 1976-to present), and Rete 2, with *L'altra domenica* (An Alternative Sunday, 1976-1979), devised two long-running Sunday shows containing quizzes, sport news and music. *L'altra domenica* also contained sketch comedies and *Domenica in* aired television series. All these parts appealed to the same and vast audience, thus leading it through the Sunday afternoon and early evening programming. The shows were flowed programs precisely because they aimed at keeping the audience tuned into the channel by presenting a cohesive offering. RAI's example influenced also private channels. From 1985, Canale 5 programmed *Buona Domenica* (Happy Sunday, 1985-1987, 1991-2008) every Sunday to reinforce its weekend viewership and create an alternative to RAI's programming.

The spectacularization and popularization of cultural programs from the second half of the 1970s influenced not only prime time programs such as Rete 2's *Odeon* (1976-1978), centered around cinema, music, and social issues, but also progressively night ones such as the series of special information programs created by Rete 1's and Rete 2's news editorial staff, *Speciale TG 1* and *TG 2 Dossier* (both 1976-to present). All these

programs treated common social issues through informative and entertaining filmed reportages and employed a faster pace and a less elaborated language. Furthermore, they featured informal interviews with relevant personalities in show business and the political and intellectual realm alongside ordinary people. One example of this is the first Italian night talk show *Bontà loro* (How Kind of Them, 1976-1978).⁴⁶ The more appealing connotation of night cultural programs served as a means to attract and lead in more spectators from the popular programs of prime time. Through long-running Sunday shows and innovative cultural programs, Rete 1 and Rete 2 laid the foundations of their habit-forming flow.

At the same time, Rete 1 and Rete 2 shared other important programming innovations that progressively lead them to the formation of a habit-forming flow. Between 1976 and 1977, Rete 1 devised a sequence of programs from 7 pm to 8 pm to instill the habit of watching the channel before the 8 pm news. Family television series such as *Happy Days* (U.S., 1974-1984) preceded the popular informational program *Almanacco del giorno dopo* in order to daily lead in the audience towards the news. Television series in particular could “modellare la fruizione tv sui ritmi della quotidianità”, hence establishing quotidian viewing habits.⁴⁷ Likewise, Rete 2 with the daily variety show for children and their families *Buonasera con...* (Good Evening with..., 1977-1982) which contained cartoons and sitcoms such as *Atlas Ufo Robot* (*Grendizer*, Japan 1975-1977) and *Mork & Mindy* (U.S., 1978-1982), hoped to pull an evening audience consisting of families to the 7:45 pm news. However, in this phase Rete

⁴⁶ Monteleone, *Storia della radio e della televisione: società, politica, strategie, programmi*, 408-411, 417.

⁴⁷ “Model television watching on the rhythms of everyday life.” The translation is mine. Giorgio Gori, “L’invasione dell’altra fiction,” *Link. Idee per la televisione* 3 (2004): 32.

2 still randomly programmed cartoons, alternating them with health programs for adults. Only Rete 1 grouped children's television series and cartoons into an afternoon program aired around 4 pm, after the interruption from 2 pm to 5 pm disappeared at the end of 1980. Rete 1's *3,2,1... Contatto!* (3, 2, 1... Contact!) in 1980 and 1981, and other kids' programs in the following years, constituted a mini-flow, within an emerging macroflow, dedicated to children, where the same cartoons and television series alternated each day with games and sketch comedy presented by the hosts. While Rete 1 was developing a daily macroflow, it was also educating and preparing children to watch television as a flow.

While Rete 1 and Rete 2's habit-forming flow was emerging around the evening and prime time, and for Rete 1 also with children's programs, morning broadcasting was still missing, and the afternoon was almost completely unorganized. Rete 1 simply dumped old miniseries and educational programs without any sort of connection between 2 pm and 4 pm; Rete 2 scattered old-fashioned cultural programs and sport news through the afternoon schedule. At the end of 1980, Rete 1 and Rete 2 were simply filling up airtime to begin to contrast private channels' uninterrupted, yet still mostly unorganized programming.

Similarly, private channels sought to extend their airtime and sell more advertising spaces, and until the end of the 1970s, were mostly and randomly programming old and low quality films during the day. However, between the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, private channels such as Rusconi's Quinta Rete and Berlusconi's Canale 5 introduced new programming novelties that helped them become national networks and move towards a habit-forming flow. Together with the innovations in film

programming, these channels massively programmed American television series in combination with commercials. In addition to creating daily viewing habits, television series were predisposed to contain advertisements, the lifeblood of private channels, as they could not count as RAI for a license fee to subsidize their expenditures.⁴⁸ In doing so, it was possible to regularly present the audience with goods and inform their purchasing habits.

In particular, Rusconi's Quinta Rete, before contributing to the formation of the national network Italia 1, implemented a habit-forming flow comprising a significant chunk of the day. In 1979, Quinta Rete was the first Italian channel to introduce daily appointments with the same Japanese cartoons between 4 pm and 5.30 pm.⁴⁹ Moreover, in the evening, the channel also began juxtaposing cartoons to American and family television series such as *La casa nella prateria* and *Harlem contro Manhattan (Different Strokes, U.S., 1978-1986)* to lead in the children through the programming and attract a more mature audience.⁵⁰ After the purchase of the Paramount family-oriented film package in 1980, Quinta Rete also established solid viewing habits during prime time through the organization of films into weekly homogenous cycles. After the films, there were usually detective series such as *Mannix (U.S., 1967-1975)*, perfectly suited for the same audience as that of the Paramount films. The coherent juxtaposition of programs allowed Quinta Rete to better target the audience with pertinent commercial messages.

Canale 5's programming was not as coherent as Quinta Rete's, but it still included important innovation that facilitated the major and groundbreaking scheduling changes of

⁴⁸ Carlo Freccero, "In differita con l'America," in *Televisione: la provvisoria identità italiana*, eds. Gianfranco Bettetini and Aldo Grasso (Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1985): 207.

⁴⁹ Pino Farinotti, *I maghi del canale* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1985), 63-64.

⁵⁰ Martini, "Evoluzione dei modelli editoriali dei networks italiani," 580.

the following years. Between 1976 and 1980, Canale 5 appeared under the name of Telemilano (1976-1978) and Telemilano 58 (1978-1980). During the years of Telemilano, the channel's programming was quite scant as it limited its transmissions to specific months, days of the week, and time of the day. Sundays and Mondays were off days, as well as part of the summer, while the airtime was from 8 pm to 11 pm and featured chiefly political debates, cartoons, and old films.⁵¹ Limited financial sources and legislative uncertainties surrounding private channels determined the nature of Telemilano. In 1978, when Silvio Berlusconi decided to richly invest in the media realm, the channel changed its name to Telemilano 58, extended its airtime to the afternoon and the whole week, produced original programs, and acquired quality films from Titanus. However, programming was still fragmented as television series and films often repeated through the day and continuously changed during the week, hindering the formation of strong viewing habits.

In 1980 when Berlusconi transformed his channel into the national network Canale 5, the programming acquired more coherence, and began to feature afternoon strips of the same television series through the week. Additionally, since private channels could not broadcast live on a national scale, Canale 5 sent pre-recorded tapes of programs and commercials to all the channels Berlusconi was purchasing throughout Italy.⁵² The objective was to centralize programming, so that every channel simultaneously and homogeneously transmitted the same programs and advertisements. Commercials were

⁵¹ Aldo Grasso, "Memorie, frammenti e appunti sparsi su Telemilano," *Link. Idee per la televisione* 17 (2014): 62.

⁵² Judgment no. 202/1976 prescribed that private channels could only broadcast on a local scale. Consequently, national broadcasting remained RAI's monopoly. However, private channels utilized the escamotage of pre-recorded tapes to nationally broadcast their programs. Due to the nature of the tapes, this gimmick was nevertheless insufficient to overcome the barrier of national live broadcasting.

also centralized as Canale 5 favored the progressive removal of local amateurish advertisements and their replacement with more elaborated national ones.⁵³ The latter were better suited to coexist next to national and international programs and facilitated the formation of a habit-forming flow, due to their increasing technical and narrative elaboration. Canale 5, as well as Rete 1, Rete 2, and Quinta Rete, between the second half of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, was implementing and laying the foundation of the habit-forming flow, a programming practice that became dominant during the 1980s.

b) Coming in. The Habit-Forming Flow Era (1981-1991)

Between 1981-1991, both private and public channels finally embraced the habit-forming flow. New programs inaugurated the morning and afternoon schedules coherently extending airtime. Between 1981 and 1991, the habit-forming flow increasingly covered the entire day from early morning until late night, when mostly niches programs and re-runs filled the schedule.

A decisive contribution to the complete implementation of a habit-forming flow on Italian television came from Canale 5. From 1981 and 1982, Berlusconi's channel carefully organized the daily programming to expand its viewership. The talk show *Buongiorno Italia* (Good Morning Italy, 1981-1984, 1987-1988) officially opened up a new part of the day to television broadcasting—the morning—, and was the first program on Italian television to primarily target women, especially housewives. Canale 5 was aware of the commercial importance of this audience category, as women were largely

⁵³ Paolo Molteni, "Alle radici dell'impresa. Nascita, sviluppo ed esplosione di Telemilano," *Link. Idee per la televisione* 17 (2014): 33-41.

responsible for purchasing goods for the entire family. As a consequence, commercial insertions aimed at presenting housewives with relevant products, such as detergents and food.⁵⁴ *Buongiorno Italia* featured cooking classes, and also contained romantic comedies and television series of interest to women. Sitcoms centered on female characters and their everyday lives such as *Phyllis* (U.S., 1975-1977) and films such as *Casablanca* (1942) alternated with the talk show.

After the lunchtime family game shows *Bis* (1981-1990) and *Il pranzo è servito* (Lunch is Served, 1982-1993), Canale 5 returned to housewives in the early afternoon, with the romantic film cycle *Pomeriggio con sentimento*.⁵⁵ Until 1983, cartoons followed the cycle, at around 5 pm. While on one hand, cartoons after *Pomeriggio con sentimento* represented a fracture in the flow, since they were unfit for an adult audience, on the other, they intercepted children coming home from school. This demonstrates the habit-forming flow's attention for the spectators' everyday life. In 1982, Canale 5 also programmed cartoons at 7 pm between television series and music shows, with the goal of disturbing Rete 1 and Rete 2's family programs by taking advantage of children's complaints to watch their favorite animated heroes.⁵⁶ The same disruptive technique characterized Italia 1 from 1983, when it programmed a cartoon at 8 pm to compete against Raiuno's news (Figure 6).⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Daniela Brancati, "Buongiorno, firmato Berlusconi," *la Repubblica*, January 14, 1987, accessed July 23, 2015, <http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1987/01/14/buongiorno-firmato-berlusconi.html>.

⁵⁵ Through the 1980s the films alternated with soap operas.

⁵⁶ A survey promoted by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* at the beginning of 1986 revealed how 61.8% of parents allowed their children to watch their favorite programs in case of diverging opinions. See Maurizio Bedini, "La TV col dito in bocca," *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni 2* (1986): 53.

⁵⁷ Rete 1, Rete 2, and Terza Rete changed their names to Raiuno, Raidue, and Raitre in 1982 after the birth of Rete 4.

5

8,30 «Buongiorno Italia». Cartoni animati. Sceneggiati. TELEFILM. Rubriche.

12,40 «Bis». Quiz. Con Mike Bongiorno.

13,10 «Il pranzo è servito». Quiz. Con Corrado. Regia di Lino Procacci.

13,40 «Aspettando il domani / Sentieri / Una vita da vivere / General Hospital». Sceneggiati.

17,00 «Pinocchio / Gotrinito». Cartoni.

18,00 TELEFILM—Hazzard. «I misteri di Hazzard». 2ª parte.

18,30 «Popcorn Hit». Musicale. A cura di Claudio Cecchetto. Rubrica a pag. 97.

19,00 «Charlie Brown». Cartoni animati.

19,30 TELEFILM—Tarzan.

* **20,30** TELEFILM—Dallas. Con Linda Gray, Barbara Bel Geddes.

* **21,30** FILM—Biografico B/N «Adorabile infedele». Di Henry King. Con Gregory Peck, Deborah Kerr.

23,25 «Video 5». (Solo Lombardia).

23,30 «Pugilato».

0,30 FILM—Avventura «Proiettile in canna». Di John Villiers Farrow. (Usa, '54). Con Jean Simmons, Rory Calhoun, Brian Aherne. — TELEFILM—Hawaii Squadra Cinque Zero. «L'opera d'arte».

COMINCI

20,30

Il rifiuto TELEFILM

A due settimane dalla morte di Jock, J.R. non si è ancora ripreso e continua a disinteressarsi della Ewing Oil, il cui peso ricade tutto sulle spalle di Bobby. Miss Ellie sembra invece più tranquilla, ma in realtà si rifiuta di accettare la morte del marito. Anche Bobby, ha i suoi problemi per Kris.

DALLAS

5 **20,30**

9 **FILM DI GREGORY PECK**

«Beloved Infidel», biografico, Usa, 1959

L'incontro tra il noto romanziere Francis Scott Fitzgerald e la giornalista Shellah Graham, che vivrà con lui una profonda storia d'amore, è lo spunto per ricordare le dolorose vicende che segnarono la vita dello scrittore. Nella foto, Gregory Peck (66 anni), e Deborah Kerr (61).

A sinistra, Barbara Bel Geddes (60 anni). Sopra Linda Gray (39).

Figure 6 Canale 5's schedule on Tuesday, November 23, 1982 in *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 47 (1982), 113. © 1982 by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*.

Even when Canale 5 introduced the teenage game show *Doppio slalom* (Double Slalom, 1985-1990) in the mid 1980s, the fracture with romantic comedies and soap operas preceding this program remained. *Doppio slalom* allowed Canale 5 to better connect the afternoon to the evening programming, and utilized television series capable of leading in the teenagers while also attracting young adults and adults such as *Il mio amico Arnold* (*Different Strokes*) and *I Jefferson* (*The Jeffersons*, U.S., 1975-1985). Towards the end of the 1980s, game shows such as *Il gioco dei 9* (*The Game of 9s*, 1988-1992) intended for a vast audience started to dominate the evening programming in order to lead in as many spectators as possible towards prime time.

One of the most important innovations regarding Canale 5's prime time was *Dallas*. Throughout the 1980s, the American soap opera was not only juxtaposed to films

sharing similarity of tone and topic, but also to news magazines such as *Nonsolomoda* (More Than Fashion, 1985-2012 Canale 5), that echoed the fancy and luxurious atmosphere of *Dallas* by presenting the latest fads in the realm of fashion and furniture. In addition to *Dallas*, prime time featured many films suited for a vast audience followed by special information programs centered on the films' general themes or by popular talk shows such as *Maurizio Costanzo Show* (1986-2009 Canale 5), where culture and more mundane topics intertwined. Apart from an afternoon fracture, Canale 5's programming became quite cohesive during the 1980s, informing not only Italia 1 and Rete 4 once they became part of Fininvest, but also RAI's channels.

In 1982 Rusconi decided to build the national network Italia 1. Unlike Berlusconi, Rusconi signed affiliation deals with numerous private channels throughout Italy, rather than buying them. In fact, he was convinced the Parliament would soon pass a bill reinstating the local nature of private broadcasting. In this way, the affiliated channels experienced a great deal of independence in terms of scheduling and advertising.⁵⁸ Italia 1's 1982 programming consequently consisted in the random juxtaposition of programs upset by the low quality of local shows and advertisements. Beginning in 1983, after Fininvest's acquisition of Italia 1, the channel significantly renovated its programming style, and assumed young people, namely children, teenager, and young adults, as its primary target. The daily schedule revolved around the alternation between television series, cartoons, music programs, game shows, and during prime time, also films, whose main audience were children, teenagers, and young adults.

⁵⁸ Madron, *Le gesta del cavaliere*, 139-142.

Thanks to its focus on young people, Italia 1 was able to eliminate the fracture surrounding children's programs. By positioning *Bim Bum Bam* between family sitcoms or dramas, and television series starring superhero-like protagonists, Italia 1 created a more cohesive sequence. In doing so, the channel could teach children to watch television as a habit-forming flow by taking advantage not only of specific kids program as RAI mostly did, but also through suitable television series, such as *Ralph supermaxieroe* (*The Greatest American Hero*, U.S., 1981-1983) and *Star Trek* (U.S., 1966-1969). Moreover, children became a target for commercials during, before, and after *Bim Bum Bam*.

At the same time, Italia 1 also incorporated housewives and adults in its daily schedule, especially around lunchtime, prime time, and at night. The reason resided in

TEL. 02/21621

AUGURE: Francis Ford Coppola, regista (47); Enzo Greggio, attore (52); James Garner, attore (58); Michele Figini, sciatrice (20); Pietro Anastasi, ex calciatore (38); Wayne Rogers, attore (53).

7

8,30 TF—Gli eroi di Hogan.
 8,55 TF—Sanford & Son.
 9,20 TF—La casa nella prateria.
 10,10 TF—Wonder Woman.
 11,00 TF—La donna bionica.
 11,50 TF—Quincy.
 12,40 TF—Agenzia Rockford.
 13,20 Help! Gioco a quiz. Con Fabrizia Carminati e Umberto Smaila. Regia di Rinaldo Gaspari.
 — Tutto per denaro. Quiz. Con Nini Salerno e Franco Oppini. Regia di Alessandro Ippolito.
 14,15 Deejay Television. Musicale. A cura della Deejay's Gang.
 15,00 TF—Ralph Supermaxieroe. «Attenti alle scosse». Con William Katt.
 16,00 Bim bum bam. Varietà.
 — Lovely Sara. Cartoni animati.
 — Hello Spank. Cartoni animati.
 — Milla e Shiro due cuori nella pallavolo. Cartoni animati.
 ▶ 18,00 TF—Star Trek.
 19,00 Gioco delle coppie. Gioco a quiz. Conduce Marco Predolin. Regia di Roberto Meneghin.
 19,30 TF—La famiglia Addams. «Il cugino III...». Con Carolyn Jones.
 20,00 Memole, dolce Memole. Cartoni animati. «La baby sitter».
 ▶ 20,30 TF—Magnum P.I.
 ▶ 21,25 TF—Simon & Simon.
 22,20 Controcorrente. Settimanale sui fatti e dentro i fatti. A cura di Paolo Granzotto. Con Indro Montanelli.
 ▶ 23,05 FILM—Drammatico
 «Anni di piombo». Con Barbara Sukowa, Jutta Lampe.
 1,10 TF—Cannon. «Il riscatto».
 2,00 TF—Gli invincibili. «Testimoni d'accusa». Con Robert Vaughn.

STAR TREK
 18,00 Oltre la galassia
 Tornano i 79 episodi della più popolare serie di telefilm fantascientifici. Nel ventesimo secolo l'astronave Enterprise, al comando del capace capitano Kirk (William Shatner), supera i confini della nostra galassia. Fanno parte dell'equipaggio lo scienziato «vulcaniano» Spock (Leonard Nimoy) e l'ufficiale medico McCoy (DeForest Kelley).
 De sinistra, William Shatner (58 anni), DeForest Kelley (88), Leonard Nimoy (55).
 TELEFILM

A SCUOLA DI EMOZIONI
 20,30 Sulle orme di Sherlock Holmes
 Higgins (John Hillerman) rievoca un episodio del passato. Un ex compagno di accademia, David, dopo essere stato una spia in Russia, sbarca alle Hawaii, convinto di essere Sherlock Holmes. A lato, Tom Selleck (41 anni); e Magnum).
 MAGNUM P.I. TELEFILM

Specchio segreto
 TELEFILM ORE 21,25
 Brad Daniels, giornalista, vuole fare uno scoop: smascherare Lee, killer professionista. Daniels naturalmente si caccia in grossi guai e corre il rischio di essere ucciso. I fratelli Rick (Gerald McRaney) e A. J. (Jameson Parker) Simon aiutati da Downtown (Tim Reid) lo tirano fuori dai guai.
 SIMON & SIMON

Figure 7 Italia 1's schedule on Monday, April 7, 1986 in *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 14 (1986), 83.

© 1986 by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*.

this audience's higher spending capacity, much more than that of young people. In particular at around 12 pm during the mid-1980s, Italia 1 programmed the medical drama *Quincy* (*Quincy, M.E.*, U.S., 1976-1983), a show whose mellow medical examiner's investigations also leave space for some incursions into his private love life. *Quincy* was usually followed by similar crime series featuring romance, such as *Agenzia Rockford* (*The Rockford Files*, U.S., 1974-1980). Italia 1's goal was to lead in the housewives, and at the same time, attract, through the popular crime investigation genre, other young adults and adults during lunch time. During prime time, Italia 1 also tried to attract adults through popular films and television series. For instance in 1986, under the title *A scuola di emozioni* (School of Emotions), Italia 1 coupled *Magnum P.I* with *Simon & Simon* (U.S., 1981-1985), two detective series founded on themes such as drugs, corruption, murder, and robberies capable of appealing to a vast audience. The adult audience could also continue watching Italia 1 after the television series, thanks to news magazines such as *Controcorrente* (Maverick, 1986-1987), or horror films. The identification of a preferred target and the smooth inclusion of other types of audience facilitated Italia 1's employment of a habit-forming flow (Figure 7).

For the same reasons as Italia 1, between 1982 and 1984, Rete 4 originally consisted of an agglomeration of local channels with a great deal of programming and advertising freedom, which was responsible for its failure under Mondadori's ownership.⁵⁹ Berlusconi bought Rete 4 in 1984, and dedicated the channel's efforts on targeting a major consumer category – women. As a result, the channel acquired a strong female connotation. Many soap operas, telenovelas, or sitcoms with female protagonists

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 146-147.

OK! QUIZ
IL PREZZO E' GIUSTO! 20,30

Tre domande a Iva Zanicchi
Qual è, per lei, il concorrente ideale?
«Una persona estroversa, spontanea, simpatica, ma anche... un po' imbarazzata davanti alla telecamera».
C'è un altro programma che vorrebbe condurre?
«Sì, magari al fianco di Arbore. Se mi chiamasse Renzo, anche per fare la centralina, ci andrei subito».
Quale futuro vede per sua figlia Micaela?
«Ho cercato d'invogliarla allo studio della musica classica e della lirica, poiché ha una bella voce. Il fatto è che... non mi ascolta».

A lato, Lee Remick (52 anni). Sotto: James Stewart (79. Oscar nel 1940 per «Scandalo a Filadelfia».)

ANATOMIA DI UN OMICIDIO FILM 22,35
«Anatomy of a Murder» di Otto Preminger, giallo, Usa, '59; dur.: 2 h e 31'.
L'avvocato Paul Bleigler (James Stewart) viene invitato ad assumere la difesa del tenente Manion (Ben Gazzara), accusato di omicidio. L'uomo è infatti responsabile dell'uccisione di Barney Quill, che aveva otraggiato sua moglie Laura (Lee Remick). Sulle prime Bleigler esita, poi però finisce per cedere.

TEL. 02/21021

8,30 TELEFILM—La grande valata. «La perdita e il guadagno». Con Barbara Stanwyck.

9,15 FILM - Musicale BN
«L'elisir d'amore». Di Mario Costa (Italia, '47). Con Nelly Corradi, Tito Gobbi, Gino Sinimberghi.

11,00 TELEFILM—Strega per amore. «Jekill Jeanne e Hyde Jeanne». Con Larry Hagman.

11,30 TELEFILM—Giorno per giorno. Con Bonnie Franklin.

12,00 TELEFILM—La piccola grande Nell. «La nave dell'amore». Con Nell Carter, Dolph Sweet. Seconda parte.

12,30 TELEFILM—Vicini troppo vicini. «Giocatore».

13,00 Ciao Ciao. Varietà. Con Giorgio e il pupazzo Four.
— Hello Spank. Cartoni animati.
— «La fine del sogno».
— Lady Oscar. Cartoni animati.
— Isidoro. Cartoni animati. «Incontro di lotta libera».

14,30 «La valle dei pini». Sceneggiato. Con Louis Edmunds.

15,30 «Così gira il mondo». Sceneggiato. Con Patricia Bruder.

16,30 «Aspettando il domani». Sceneggiato. Con Mary Stuart.

17,15 «Febbre d'amore». Sceneggiato. Con Michel Evans.

18,15 C'è la vita. Quiz. Conduce Umberto Smalù. Regia di Roberto Meneghin.

18,45 Gioco delle coppie. Quiz. Conduce Marco Predolin. Regia di Roberto Meneghin.

19,30 TELEFILM—Quincy. «L'eroe mercante». Con Jack Klugman, Robert Ito, Gary Walberg.

20,30 OK! Il prezzo è giusto! Quiz. Regia di Silvio Ferri.

22,35 FILM—Giallo BN
«Anatomia di un omicidio». Con James Stewart, Lee Remick, Ben Gazzara, George C. Scott.

1,40 TELEFILM—Switch. «Il passato ritorna». Con Robert Wagner.

Figure 8 Rete 4's schedule on Wednesday, February 24, 1988
in *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 8 (1988), 102.
© 1988 by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*.

alternated during the day. In the early afternoon, the kids program *Ciao Ciao* (Hello Hello, 1982-1992 Rete 4) targeted children coming home from school at lunchtime. Similarly to Canale 5's cartoons, *Ciao Ciao* caused a fracture in a daytime programming primarily devised for an adult female audience. However, Rete 4 sought to attract children otherwise completely uninterested in the channel's offer.

Rete 4's prime time programming generally consisted of romantic films as well as television series such as *Colombo* (*Columbo*, U.S., 1968-2003) and, in 1987 and 1988, also a game show such as *OK! Il prezzo è giusto* (The Price is Right) suitable for the general audience (Figure 8). Occasionally, Rete 4 programmed western films during prime time with a similar strategy to the employment of *Ciao Ciao*. In this case, the goal

was to target the adult male audience almost totally neglected by the channel's offerings. Rete 4 usually smoothed the passage from a daytime dominated by soap operas and telenovelas to a more male-oriented prime time through the utilization of popular programs during the evening. The talk show *C'eravamo tanto amati* (We Used to Love Each Other so Much, 1989-1994) which focused on the marital problems of troubled couples, quiz shows such as *Telecomando* (Remote Control, 1989), or the detective and comedy series *Mai dire sì* (*Remington Steele*, U.S., 1982-1987) featuring a casual couple as private investigators, targeted both a female and a male audience, and softened the transition to western films. At night, more romantic or popular films usually characterized Rete 4's schedules. From the study of the schedules, it is noticeable how, by following Canale 5's lead, Fininvest's channels shared a quite cohesive habit-forming flow which contributed to build their success with the Italian audience and influenced RAI's programming strategies.

In order to contrast the fierce competition of private channels, especially Canale 5, RAI introduced significant changes to its schedules. During the 1980s, Raiuno created a more extended and quite cohesive programming, acting on the entire day. From the mid-1980s, noon talk shows and variety shows such as *Pronto, Raffaella?* (Hello, Raffaella?, 1983-1985) preceded by the morning talk show *Unomattina* (Morning on Channel 1, 1986-to present) coherently connected the programming. The shows targeted primarily women and senior citizens, but also workers on their lunch break. *Unomattina* especially contained television series able to interest the female audience such as *La tata e il professore* (*Nanny and the Professor*, U.S., 1970-1971), and also informal news reports. *Pronto, Raffaella?* (and other similar programs alternating through the 1980s at

this time) consisted of interviews with celebrities, politicians, and ordinary people, music, and short game shows. The program also contained the news, which appeared at 1.30 pm to address Italian families during or right after lunchtime, and possibly lead them to the last 15 minutes of the noon show.

Throughout the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, Raiuno featured the science program *Il mondo di Quark* (Quark's World, 1984-1993), after *Pronto, Raffaella?* ended at 2.15 pm, in order to lead in the adult audience and at the same time target high-school students returning home. The show appealed to a vast audience thanks to its informal tone and simple topics and language.⁶⁰ Between 3 pm and 4 pm, popular news magazines such as *Cronache italiane* (Italian Chronicles) and *TG 1 – Cronache* focused on everyday facts with the same tone and language as *Il mondo di Quark*, leading in the adult audience.⁶¹ At 4 pm, kids programs such as *Big!* (1987-1993) fractured the programming and suddenly abandoned adults. Due to its traditional focus on the news, as well as on the general and primarily adult audience, Raiuno never reduced this afternoon fracture. Around 6 pm, after the kids program, Raiuno addressed a more adult audience right when many Italians began to arrive home after a day of work. Short news editions and variety shows with reports on music, cinema, and theater such as *Ieri, Goggi, domani* (Yesterday, Goggi, Tomorrow, 1987-1988), and *Almanacco del giorno dopo*, met Italians when they returned home. The news followed at 8 pm. While between the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, television series occupied Raiuno's evening, during the 1980s the channel strongly emphasized live news and entertainment programs to better compete against private channels. In fact, the law prohibited private channels to

⁶⁰ Aldo Grasso, *Storia della televisione Italiana* (Milan: Garzanti, 2000), 360.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 151.

1
18.05

SE DEVI DIRE UNA BUGIA DILLA GROSSA
COMEDIA MUSICALE
Johnny Dorelli (59)
Gloria Guida (32)
20.30

1
22.50

C'ERA UNA VOLTA UNA FAMIGLIA
FILM TV
VISIONE 18

«Once Upon a Family» di Richard Michaels, drammatico, Usa, 1980; dur.: 1 h e 30'. Henry Demerjian è un grafico che, appena può, si dedica ai suoi hobby trascu- rando, sia pure involontariamente, la fami- glia. Sua moglie Janet decide di lasciarlo e così Henry deve occuparsi dei due loro figi, Liz e D.W. Janet torna, chiede il divorzio e la custodia dei bambini. Henry si oppone.

7.15 Uno Mattina. Attualità. Regia di Claudia Caldera. Chiamare 06/369951.
— Collegamento con GR 2 (ore 7.30)
— Tg1 - Mattina (ore 8/9/9.30)

9.35 Girsù il diaghetto. Cartoni animati.

9.55 So. Coppa del mondo. Slalom gigante maschile. 1ª manche. Da Adelboden (CH).

11.15 Intorno a noi. Attualità. Regia di Oliviero Sardinà. Chiamare 02/316564 o 316105.

11.30 TELEFILM—La teta e il professore.

11.55 Che tempo fa.

12.00 Tg1 - Flash.

12.05 Pronto... è la Rai? Varietà. Regia di Lella Artes. Prima parte. Chiamare 06/2693.

13.30 Telegiornale.

13.55 Tg1 - Tre minuti di... Attualità.

14.00 Pronto... è la Rai? Varietà. 2ª parte.

14.15 Il mondo di Quark Documenti. A cura di Piero Angela. Rubrica a pag. 13.
— «Predatori della savana». Di Lorne Greene
— «L'isola dei granchi fantastica».

15.00 Cronache italiane. Attualità.

15.30 Tg1 - Cronache. Attualità.

16.00 Big! Varietà. Con Pippo Franco. Regia di Lucio Testa. Chiamare 081/635455.

17.55 Oggi al Parlamento. Attualità.

18.00 Tg1 - Flash.

▶18.05 Ieri, Oggi, domani. Varietà. Conduce Loretta Goggi. Regia di Gianni Brezza.

19.40 Almanacco del giorno dopo.
— Che tempo fa.

20.00 Telegiornale.

▶20.30 «Se devi dire una bugia dilla grossa». Commedia musicale. Con Johnny Dorelli, Riccardo Garrone, Gloria Guida, Paola Quattrini. Regia teatrale di Piero Garnei. Regia televisiva di Eros Macchi. Vedere a pag. 81.

22.40 Telegiornale.

▶22.50 FILM TV - Drammatico
«C'era una volta una famiglia». Con Barry Bostwick, Maureen Anderman, Lara Parker.

0.25 Tg1 - Notte. Oggi al Parlamento. Che tempo fa.

0.40 Vita degli animali. Documenti.

8.00 Prima edizione. Attualità.

8.30 Muoviamoci. Corso di ginnastica.

9.00 L'alka s'è desta. Varietà.

10.00 Star bene con gli animali. Attualità.

Figure 9 Raiuno's schedule on Tuesday, January 19, 1988 in *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni 3* (1988), 94.
© 1988 by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*.

broadcast live on a national scale, hindering their opportunity to have news editions (Figure 9).

On prime time, popular genres such as films, variety shows, soccer games, and occasionally musicals targeted a vast audience already tuned into the channel for the evening news. At night, popular cultural programs, debates on prime time films, and films thematically connected to the 8:30 pm ones, perpetrated the habit-forming flow by trying to lead in more spectators through the night. Apart from an afternoon fracture, Raiuno's schedule acquired a quite cohesive overall structure, allowing the first public channel to maintain its leadership position with the audience during the long 1980s.

Contrary to Raiuno, Raidue only partially organized the morning programming, but it increasingly dedicated more programs to the female audience in the afternoon. Similar to *Pronto, Raffaella?*, the variety show *Che fai, mangi?* (Are You Eating?, 1983-1985) and the talk show *Cordialmente* (Cordially, 1985-1987), extended Raidue's airtime to noon before the 1 pm news edition. At the end of the 1980s, similarly to *Unomattina*, through the talk show *Mezzogiorno è...* (Noon is..., 1987-1990) and its introductory section *Aspettando Mezzogiorno* (Waiting for Noon), Raidue officially began broadcasting at 10 am. After the lunchtime news at 1 pm, Raidue scheduled American soap operas such as *Capitol* and *Quando si ama* (*Loving, U.S.*, 1983-1995) also oriented to a young female audience with love and intrigues characterizing the lives of all the members of rival families, including the youngsters. The soap operas usually started around 1.30 pm or 2 pm, in order to also intercept high-school girls coming home from school.

Until the end of the 1980s, the channel then devoted a significant chunk of its afternoon programming to teenagers and children. The teenage game show *Tandem* (1982-1987) usually followed the soap operas, leading in the young female audience and also attracting young men. After *Tandem*, and before the children's program *Pane e marmellata* (Bread and Jam, 1985-1986), documentaries with random subjects fractured the afternoon programming as they often addressed a more adult audience. There was also another small fracture in the afternoon, since before *Tandem* and after *Pane e marmellata*, flash news disturbed the coherent juxtaposition of programs. RAI's news editions and documentaries not always appeared as coherently connected to the previous

DATE STORICHE: 1949: a Parigi muore il musicista e compositore Ludwig.
1973: muore a Firenze Vittorio Gui, direttore d'orchestra e compositore italiano.
1978: muore Giovanni Gronchi, 91 anni, Presidente della Repubblica dal 1955 al 1962.

17 OTTOBRE G1

2 TEL. 06/2684890

9,30 Televideo. Pagine dimostrative.

11,55 Cordialmente. Varietà. Con Enza Sampò. Regia di Vittorio Nevano.

13,00 Tg2 - Ore tredici.

13,25 Tg2 - Ambiente. Attualità.

13,30 TF—Capitol. 309° episodio.

14,30 Tg2 - Flash.

14,35 Tandem. Varietà. Regia di Salvatore Baldazzi. Nel corso del programma
— Super G, attualità, giochi elettronici.
— La chiave di violino. Quiz (ore 15, 15).

16,00 Temi per esercitazioni didattiche. Documenti. «Eleonora De Fonseca Pimentel». Seconda puntata.

16,30 Pane e marmellata. Varietà. Conducono Rita Dalla Chiesa e Fabrizio Frizzi. Regia di Salvatore Baldazzi.
— Squadrone lottatore. Cartoni.

17,30 Tg2 - Flash.

17,35 Dal Parlamento.

17,40 TF—Maggiordomo per signora.

18,05 Simpatiche canaglie. Comiche.

18,30 Tg2 - Sporters.

18,40 TF—Le strade di San Francisco. «Paura». Con Karl Malden.
— Meteo 2 - Previsioni del tempo.

19,45 Tg2 - Telegiornale.

20,20 Tg2 - Lo sport.

* **20,30** TF—L'ispettore Derrick.

* **21,35** Abbozzaperta. Attualità. Regia di Ermanno Corbella. Chiamate 02/85006.

22,30 Tg2 - Stasera.

22,40 Tg2 - Sportsette.
— Pugilato. Italia-Jugoslavia. Dilettanti.

23,50 Tg2 - Stanotte.

24,00 Cinema di notte
— FILM—Drammatico B/N
«Les amants». Di Louis Malle. (Francia, '58). Con Jeanne Moreau, Alain Cuny. Le ricerca di un amore che la soddisfi da parte di Jeanne, moglie da otto anni di un giornalista di Digione.

L'ISPETTORE DERRICK

La tromba di Greg

La cantante Susanna Loon (Jeannette Mühmann) rimane coinvolta in un incidente stradale. L'amico Joachim Lutze, che si trovava per caso sul luogo, la trasporta d'urgenza all'ospedale. Il giorno seguente, recatosi in clinica assieme a Cornelia, Joachim riceve la notizia del decesso di Susanna. L'ispettore Derrick (Horst Tappert) sottopone l'uomo a un interrogatorio.

ABBOZZAPERTA

ATTUALITÀ

Per coloro che vogliono inserirsi nel «vivo» del dibattito sui temi di attualità proposti da Funari, il telefono è 85006, prefisso 02 per chi chiama da fuori Milano. A lato, Gianfranco Funari (54 anni; è...

I JEFFERSON

TELEFILM

I Jefferson e i Willis, i suoceri, sono molto preoccupati per Lionel (Damon Evans). Questi, infatti, dopo aver saputo che la moglie è in attesa di un bimbo, ha una reazione inaspettata. Sopra, da sinistra, Roxie Rocker (Helen Willis), Sherman Hamsley (George Jeffers...

Figure 10 Raidue's schedule on Thursday, October 17, 1985
in *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 41 (1985), 115.
© 1985 by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*.

or following programs due to its public service obligations to daily inform and educate the audience and private channels' lack of live broadcasting.

After the brief news edition, the late afternoon and evening programming consisting of television series, comedy sketches, and sport news, was more coherently organized to accompany the general audience towards the evening news and the popular programs of prime time. At night, *TG2 Dossier's* popular investigation and filmed reportages on contemporary social and political issues tried to appeal to the vast prime time audience. At times, minor sports and auteur film cycles addressed niche audiences and characterized Raidue's more selective programming into the late night (Figure 10).

Between the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, Raidue fixed its programming fractures by eliminating the afternoon programs for children and teenagers,

the flash news edition preceding them, and the documentaries, and more intensively targeted the female audience. Raidue, influenced by Fininvest and its attention to this major consumer category, dedicated most of the afternoon to programs whose ideal target was women. After the 2 pm soap operas, the talk show founded on the theme of love *L'amore è una cosa meravigliosa* (Love is a Wonderful Thing, 1989-1990) lead in the female audience through the afternoon. At 4 pm, the crime and romance television series *Cuore e batticuore* (*Hart to Hart*, U.S., 1979-1984), where a married couple acts as improvised detectives, continued to interest the female audience and lead it in towards the late afternoon and evening popular programming. At the same time, thanks to the crime genre, Raidue attracted a more generalized audience to lead in through the programming. Throughout the 1980s, Raidue coherently juxtaposed programs through the day in order to instill viewing and material consumption habits in the audience and more effectively compete with the other major private channels.

While Raiuno and Raidue were adopting a habit-forming flow starting from the late 1970s, Raitre only moved towards a more cohesive schedule later. The structural and programming reform of 1987 assigned the channel to the complete control of the Communist Party, which designed the literary critic Angelo Guglielmi as Raitre's director.⁶² Guglielmi adapted the programming innovations introduced by Fininvest and the other public channels, in order to popularize Raitre's offerings and create "un'offerta unitaria, un flusso non frammentato che in qualche modo intendeva riflettere il flusso

⁶² At the time, after the law no. 103/1975 placed RAI under the control of Parliament, the Christian Democrats and the Socialists respectively controlled Raiuno and Raidue. Until 1987, the Christian Democrats, through Raitre's director Giuseppe Rossini, also administered the third public channel.

della vita quotidiana.”⁶³ However, until the 1990s, Raitre only partially adopted this strategy. In fact, until the evening, cultural programs, sport events, news, and variety shows alternated without any precise logic.

Raitre followed the same strategy as Raiuno and Raidue, and began its habit-forming flow starting with the evening programming. At around 6 pm, popular sitcoms such as *Vita da strega* (*Bewitched*, U.S., 1964-1972) attempted at leading in the audience towards the 7 pm news, less popular with the viewers than Raiuno and Raidue’s long-established editions. At 7:45 pm the brief repertoire program *20 anni prima - Schegge* (20 Years Ago – Slivers, 1988-1995) consisting of clips from past RAI news editions and popular shows, smoothly connected the news to the following entertainment programs. At 8 pm, a game show such as *Complimenti per la trasmissione* (Nice Job on the Program, 1988-1989) or the satirical show about the daily news and television programs *Blob* (1989-to present), introduced the audience to the channel’s prime time popular offerings: political talk shows such as *Samarcanda*, the investigative program on missing people *Chi l’ha visto?* (Who Has Seen Him/Her?, 1989-to present), satirical variety shows such as *La tv delle ragazze* (Girls’ Television, 1988-1989), and less recent American and Italian films.⁶⁴ The latter, together with cultural programs similar to Raiuno and Raidue’s, often characterized night programming. By positioning entertainment programs right before and after the 7 pm news and *20 anni prima - Schegge*, Raitre tried to improve and stimulate a daily continuity in watching during the evening slot. These habit-forming programming strategies, while only partially informing

⁶³ “A united offering, an unfragmented flow that in some way intended to reflect the flow of everyday life.” The translation is mine. Angelo Guglielmi, and Stefano Balassone, *Senza rete. Il mito di Raitre 1987-1994* (Milan: Bompiani, 2010), 43.

⁶⁴ *Blob* was similar to *20 anni prima - Schegge*, but it had more of a satirical tone.

TEL. 06/36864890	
12,00 Meridiana: scienza e cultura. Documenti. Di Alessandro Meliciani.	18,45 Tg3 - Derby. Sport.
14,00 Rai Regione. Tg regionali.	19,00 Telegiornale. — Meteo 3. Previsioni del tempo.
14,30 Dante Alighieri: La Divina Commedia. Lettura di Giancarlo Sbragia. «Purgatorio. Canto XVII». Regia di Marco Parodi. In stereofonia.	19,30 Rai Regione. Tg regionali.
15,00 Nuove frontiere della scienza. Documenti: «Trapianto di cuore nel neonato». Di Claudio De Seta.	19,45 20 anni prima. Documenti.
15,30 Marmi. Varietà. Conduce Claudio Lippi. Regia di Carlo De Siena.	20,00 Complimenti per la trasmissione. Varietà. Con Piero Chiambretti. Regia di Antonio Gerotto.
16,30 «Nicholas Nickleby». Sceneggiato. Dal romanzo di Charles Dickens. Con Nigel Havers, Kate Nicholis. Seconda puntata.	20,30 FILM—Drammatico «Kramer contro Kramer». Di Robert Benton. (Usa, '79). Con Dustin Hoffman, Meryl Streep, Justin Henry, Jane Alexander, Howard Duff. (Nell'intervallo; ore 21,40: Tg3 - Sera).
17,30 Geo. Documenti.	22,20 Amadeus, un bambino prodigio. Documenti. Conduce Corrado Augias. Regia di Paolo Gazzara.
18,20 TELEFILM—Vita da strega. «Ritorno all'infanzia».	23,50 Tg3 - Notte.
	0,05 20 anni prima. Documenti.

Figure 11 Raitre's schedule on Wednesday, October 12, 1988
in *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 41 (1988), 110-111.

© 1988 by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*.

the daily schedule, benefited the channel, as its audience ratings continued to rise at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s (Figure 11).

Between 1981 and 1991, both public and private channels systematically adopted a habit-forming flow to cohesively and coherently structure their programming. Fininvest's channels organized their offerings by targeting both specific and general audiences. RAI's channels mainly employed a habit-forming flow that targeted a more indiscriminate audience, influenced by its public service nature and a less prominent commercial connotation. In 1991, with the emergence of the first subscription-based thematic channels Telepiù 1, Telepiù 2, and Telepiù 3, and especially from the 2000s with the pay television platform Sky and digital terrestrial television, a new programming model arose. These channels built their schedules without utilizing the habit-forming

flow, as they specifically focused on a predetermined and singular genre and/or theme to unify their programming. Despite such differences, it is possible to find a connection with the long 1980s' television programming. Indeed, the habit-forming flow had already paved the way for such channels, as it was educating viewers to look for similarities in programs.

After Raymond Williams' first conceptualization of flow in 1974, various scholars debated its validity and offered several refinements. By critically engaging with their work, and through an in-depth study of RAI and Fininvest's programming throughout the long 1980s, I demonstrated how my notion of habit-forming flow serves to describe how Italian television channels' programmers structured both program and advertising offerings in order to encourage continuous audience viewership. In doing so, I built on my previous argument that stressed the significance of film programming to illustrate the importance of the entire programming for its impact on viewers. Rather than concentrating exclusively on individual or groups of segments, as several scholars have done, I have analyzed the overall structure of individual channels and conceptualized my refinement of Williams' flow. Based on the idea of habit-forming flow, programs followed one another by similarity in the types of audience potentially interested, and often tone and/or topic in order to lead in the audience through the programming. At the same time, channels inserted announcements, promotional messages, and commercials, to influence the audience's viewing and material consumption practices.

The development of the habit-forming flow occurred between the second half of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1990s, when Italian television channels radically changed

their programming strategies. The advent of private networks and the reform of public broadcasting launched Italian television channels into an intense competition to increase viewership and, especially for the private sector, maximize revenues from commercials. Both RAI and Fininvest progressively perfected their habit-forming flow to better compete against each other and be overly present in the Italians' everyday life. In the next chapter, I prove how the habit-forming flow both shaped and was informed by social, cultural, and economic developments in Italy between the 1970s and 1980s. In particular, I expand my investigation to the relationship between television programming and modern consumption patterns. I emphasize how the habit-forming flow influenced the development of new consumption habits in Italy during the long 1980s. I examine the boom of supermarkets in Italy, and connect their growth with the television channels' adoption of a programming flow. I do so in order to illustrate the ways in which television programmers mimic the organizational logic of supermarkets to influence and increase audiences' consumption habits as they sought to replicate the glamorous, individualistic lifestyles displayed on television.

Chapter 3

Turning the Tide:

From the Television Habit-Forming Flow to the Supermarket

During the long 1980s, the implementation of the television habit-forming flow shaped, and, at the same time was informed by, a period of profound political, social, and economic transformations. The progressive waning of the socio-political movements together with the emergence of more individualist lifestyles, and a decisive improvement of the economic situation constituted crucial factors for the development and impact of the habit-forming flow. In fact, the objective of this innovative television programming style was to spread more individualized forms of viewing and material consumption than the previous two decades, when a broadcasting monopoly dominated the airwaves and mass consumption became more widespread.

In this chapter, I analyze the historical context in which the flow emerged and operated in order to illustrate how television programming contributed to inform Italians' consumption practices. I thus cite statistical data from the long 1980s gathered primarily from Italian statistical institutions such as ISTAT and Eurisko-Sinottica to demonstrate the connection between Italian television flow and Italians' purchasing habits. In particular, during this period, Italians devoted more of their finances to nonessential expenditures such as transportation and communication, culture and recreation, and to the maintenance and presentation of the self. I propose that these data paint a picture of a

society highly influenced by the emphasis on the physical care of the self and the products that filled television programming. Both Fininvest and RAI's vast programming centered directly and indirectly on the aesthetic maintenance of the subject and also featured and stimulated the purchase of nonessential and more individualized products such as personal cars, second television sets, VCRs, and toys. Therefore, I suggest that television programming aided in the surge of these expenditures.

Such different press outlets as *la Repubblica*, *L'Espresso*, and *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* also echo the findings of ISTAT and Eurisko-Sinottica in many articles published during the 1980s, in which they describe new consumption tendencies of Italians. However, they did so mainly with a sociological approach, without elaborating on the connections between spending and the television programming. Indeed, it is because these commercials and programs were part of a habit-forming flow that they affected directly and indirectly the consumption habits of the Italians.

I also show how the habit-forming flow belonged to a broader and quite ubiquitous phenomenon, that of the formats of modern consumption. The boom of supermarkets in the same years that Italian television channels adopted a flow illustrates this tie. Television programmers, in order to influence the spectators' consumption habits, modeled the flow after supermarket programming, that is, its coherent organizational logic, with the objective of increasing and channeling consumption. Programming is hence a strategy that aims to develop specific consumption behaviors in viewers/consumers.

The Politics of Social Life: Italy Between the 1970s and 1980s

Judgment no. 202/1976 of the Italian Constitutional Court opened up new opportunities for private investors in the television market. The formation of the strong private network Fininvest and the beginning of its harsh competition with the public broadcaster RAI in the long 1980s was a key moment for Italy's cultural and economic history. In order to understand the historical context in which a new kind of television programming emerged and contributed to shape new consumption habits, it is essential to analyze the social, political, and economic framework surrounding the television domain, and to focus on the whole programming.

Several historians and sociologists have only partially delved into and connected Italian television programming with the country's socio-cultural history. Adam Arvidsson, Emanuela Scarpellini, Marcella Rizzo, and Paolo Capuzzo have generally preferred to focus on separate elements composing television programming, such as commercials, quiz and game shows, and isolated programs centered around trendy consumption practices. These scholars did not highlight the significance of the entire flow in crafting new consumption habits, and the importance of the historical context in the development and repercussions of the new programming style on Italy's everyday life. Adam Arvidsson stresses how, as a result of massive investments in television advertisements, consumption, and no longer politics, began to supply behavioral models that helped define the formation of new identities of many Italians in the 1980s.¹ He thus isolates commercials from the whole programming without recognizing its importance in influencing Italians' consumption practices. Similarly, Emanuela Scarpellini echoes

¹ Adam Arvidsson, *Marketing Modernity. Italian Advertising from Fascism to Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 2003), 130-146.

Arvidsson's opinions while also pointing out how, between the 1970s and 1980s, consumption growth invaded all social strata, and not just the Northern urbanized middle class, as in the 1960s.² Marcella Rizzo maintains that television created a community of individuals exposed to the consumerist culture it promoted. However, she lists quiz and game shows as the only types of program conducive to consumption.³ Similarly to Arvidsson and Scarpellini, Paolo Capuzzo points out the impact of commercials on consumption habits, while only referring to selected television programs and their emphasis on consumerism.⁴

None of these scholars mentioned how the historical context was at the same time favorable for and shaped by the habit-forming flow as a whole. Furthermore, each programming element individually played an important part, but it was through their inclusion into a flow where viewing and material consumption were prominent and carefully laid out, that allowed them to affect Italy's modern patterns of consumption. For these reasons, I will connect the analysis of the social, political, and economic context of Italy between the 1970s and 1980s, to the emergence and effects of the flow on the consumption habits of the Italians.

a) Flowing Home: Youth Movements, Riflusso, and Individualism

During the 1970s, several relevant social and cultural changes signaled a transformation of attitude towards the political and religious authorities: the legalization

² Emanuela Scarpellini, *L'Italia dei consumi. Dalla Belle Époque al nuovo millennio* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2008), 238-289.

³ Marcella Rizzo, "The Creation of Shared Space and the Definition of a 'Light' Community in Italian Television in the 1980s," *Modern Italy* 18 (2013): 55-73.

⁴ Paolo Capuzzo, "I consumi tra economia e cultura nell'Italia del 'dopo boom'" (1973-2008)," in *L'Italia contemporanea dagli anni Ottanta a oggi. Il mutamento sociale*, eds. Enrica Asquer, Emanuele Bernardi, and Carlo Fumian (Rome: Carocci, 2014): 179-197.

of divorce following the 1974 referendum and the 1975 reform of family law which established not only juridical equality between husband and wife, but also stated that parents must value the capacities, aspirations, and inclinations of their children.⁵ The 1975 law formally ended the patriarchal and authoritarian conception of the family that had dominated until then.⁶ Another important socio-political event was the 1978 passing of a bill legalizing abortion.⁷ These changes resulted from the modernization of the country following the years of economic boom, and were further affected by the protests and demands of the social and political movements of the late 1960s and 1970s (such as the feminist movement) for a more equal society.⁸ In particular, the issues of divorce, abortion, and family strongly highlighted the role of the individual and his/her opportunity to decide over the collective control of the political, religious, and biological authorities. The focus on the individual and his/her freedom to choose would soon become an important pillar of private television channels' flow, as it gave the Italians the possibility to free themselves from RAI's monopoly and pick amongst a wider variety of glamorous and more individualized programs and lifestyles that better suited to their tastes.

⁵ Law no. 151 of 19 May 1975, "Riforma del diritto di famiglia," published in *Gazzetta Ufficiale* no. 135, May 23, 1975.

⁶ Paul Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra a oggi: società e politica 1943-1988* (Turin: Einaudi, 1989), 499.

⁷ Law no. 194 of 22 May 1978, "Norme per la tutela sociale della maternità e sull'interruzione volontaria della gravidanza," published in *GU* no. 140, May 22, 1978.

⁸ On the role of social and political movements in Italy see for instance Nanni Balestrini, Primo Moroni, *L'orda d'oro: 1968-1977: la grande ondata rivoluzionaria e creativa, politica ed esistenziale* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1997). Donatella Della Porta, *Movimenti collettivi e sistema politico in Italia*, (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1996). Mario Capanna, *Formidabili quegli anni* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1988). Sydney Tarrow, *Democrazia e disordine. Movimenti di protesta e politica in Italia* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1990).

At the same time, towards the end of the 1970s, a new socio-political movement was forming. The *Movimento del '77* was primarily made up of young people fed up with traditional politics.⁹ Consequently, at the center of their agenda was “the right to enjoyment and pleasure, and the refusal of the traditional discipline of work.”¹⁰ The 1977 Movement was different from that of 1968, as it was less inclined to abide by ideologies and institutionalized political parties. Moreover, the 1977 Youth Movement more strongly emphasized the right of the individual to personal satisfaction. However, it also included a more militarist section whose objective was the implementation of a war against the State.¹¹ Nevertheless, their protests unsuccessfully ended in 1977, as “l’ala militarista non aveva ottenuto ciò che sperava e la maggior parte del movimento, per quanto disgustata dai governi di solidarietà nazionale, non era pronta a prendere le armi.”¹² In fact, during the same year, there was a fracture between the youth movement and the Italian Communist Party (PCI) precisely because the latter reinforced its alliance with the Christian Democracy (DC) to support the government “in exchange for some influence,” but also because the PCI equated the 1977 Movement’s focus on the individual to the individualism typical of consumer culture.¹³

However, the collaboration between these two political blocks appeared to work largely in favor of the DC, causing the PCI to gradually cave before the better ruling capacities of the DC. Indeed, the Christian Democrats craftily limited the PCI’s political

⁹ Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra a oggi*, 514.

¹⁰ Arvidsson, *Marketing Modernity*, 140.

¹¹ Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra a oggi*, 514.

¹² “The militarist section had not reached their goals and the majority of the movement, inasmuch as it was disgusted by the democratic alliance between the DC and the PCI, was not ready to embrace violence.” The translation is mine. *Ibid.*, 516.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 512-516. See also Arvidsson, *Marketing Modernity*, 141-142.

initiatives to radically reform the Italian society.¹⁴ Thus, the hopes of the many PCI voters to collectively and comprehensively reform Italy waned. At the same time, the escalation of violence perpetrated by left and right wing terrorist groups at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, contributed to radicalize the political protests, but also determinedly discouraged many people from taking part in the political arena. A collective feeling of disappointment began to pervade Italian society, especially the majority of young people involved in the *Movimento del '77*. Between the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, many of them became part of the so-called *riflusso*: “backlash, retreat to the private” sphere due to political disengagement.¹⁵ More specifically, historian Anna Tonelli described the *riflusso* as “l’abbandono della politicizzazione a favore del privato, con la centralità dell’individualismo rispetto alla collettività e la sostituzione dell’impegno con il disimpegno e l’evasione.”¹⁶ All these values characterized both private channels and RAI’s programming during the long 1980s. Italian television programming then captured and amplified sentiments developing within the Italian society through its emphasis on consumer goods, hedonism, and more individualized programming offerings. The political disillusionment accompanied by an emerging individualism, and a desire to embrace light forms of evasion as a response to the violent intensification of terrorism found a crucial outlet in Italian television programming.

¹⁴ Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra a oggi*, 512, 539.

¹⁵ Arvidsson, *Marketing Modernity*, 130.

¹⁶ “The abandonment of politicization in favor of the private, with the centrality of individualism over the collectivity and the replacement of the social and political engagement with disengagement and evasion.” The translation is mine. Anna Tonelli, *Stato spettacolo. Pubblico e privato dagli anni '80 a oggi* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2010).

Other socio-political and economic factors affected the progressive development of more individualist approaches to everyday life. The oil crises of 1973 and 1979 caused by political instabilities in the Middle East and the resulting inflation hike provoked serious economic downturns in Italy, prompting Italians to gradually concentrate more on personal concerns about the future and less on the fight for collective social and political change. The quintessential example of this shift resides in the rupture between the working class and the unions and the PCI in 1980. During the autumn of 1980, Italy's largest automotive company FIAT, announced its decision to lay off several thousand blue-collar workers from its Turin factory due to the decrease in demand for cars in the international market. Large strikes took place until FIAT canceled the layoffs and offered three months of unemployment benefits for 24,000 workers. Following this new decision, many blue collars distanced themselves from the occupation of the factory and joined FIAT's office employees and middle managers in a march ("March of the 40,000") in favor of the desire to work, produce, and compete.¹⁷

The protest not only signaled the rupture within the working class after years of united political battle, but also between blue collars and the unions and the PCI. The unions and the PCI instead supported the continuation of strikes. Consequently, they failed to comprehend the new emerging attitude within the working class characterized by a stronger focus on individual freedom and the preference for the establishment of a dialogue with the managing class, over the perpetration of conflicts.¹⁸ The acceptance of traditional relationships of power based on a more individualist mentality replaced the collective challenge of power that characterized the late 1960s and the 1970s. In

¹⁷ Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra a oggi*, 542-545. See also Marco Gervasoni, *Storia d'Italia degli anni ottanta: quando eravamo moderni* (Venice: Marsilio, 2010), 22.

¹⁸ Gervasoni, *Storia d'Italia degli anni ottanta*, 100.

particular, an individualist approach to worklife emerged within the working class, and was opposed to the collective attitude from the previous decade. This transformation set the tone for the rapport between the managing classes and the workers during the 1980s highly in favor of the former.

Additionally, as the 1980s progressed, the socio-political role of blue-collar workers continued to decline. Although salaries better aligned with those of other European nations and new technologies appeared in many factories to improve working conditions, the image of the blue-collar worker suffered. The memories of the turbulent atmosphere surrounding many factories during the 1970s were very much alive. This aspect, together with a still relevant number of accidents, diseases, and deaths caused by work in the industry sector during the long 1980s, and a political debate that continued to highlight the miserable situation of blue collars, hurt the working class, aiding in diminishing its size and appeal especially among younger generations.¹⁹ Additionally, the increasing relevance of the maintenance and presentation of the self in the Italian society accentuated the unattractiveness for this type of job, as it often involved wearing overalls, and a great deal of uncleanness. A reduced working class was then slowly abandoning its leading role in the collective reformation of Italian society to embrace a more individualist and less confrontational stance.

The incapacity of politics and the unions to accept and interpret a demand for change in the political agenda was a key factor for the *riflusso*. None of the existent political and social institutions were capable of offering new, alternative models.

Consequently, the emerging private television stations were without competition, and

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 106. On the number of accidents, diseases, and deaths in the industry realm see data from INAIL published in Alberto Martinelli, Antonio Chiesi, and Sonia Stefanizzi, *Recent Social Trends in Italy 1960-1995* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 198.

channeled and offered their own answers to the Italians' demands through the promotion of consumer goods²⁰ Likewise, RAI followed a path similar to private channels' in order to stay competitive.

During the long 1980s, RAI and especially private television channels utilized marketing strategies to build their programming. By marketing, I intend the process of effectively and enticingly placing, presenting, and selling products. The habit-forming flow was an elaboration of television marketing, as through the coherent arrangements of the various elements of programming, channels aimed at attracting the audience and also "sell" them the advertisers' products. The flow contributed to aide in spreading the fascination with consumer goods and fresh, glamorous lifestyles through a coherent organization and selection of programs and advertisements. Hence, during the 1980s, as Arvidsson contends, "the problematic of identity was staged, acted out, and (sometimes) resolved on the arena of consumption, rather than, as had often been the case in the previous decade, that of politics."²¹ Television programming contributed to guide people's attention towards consumer culture to construct one's identity.

In fact, statistical data from Eurobarometer shows how between 1976 and 1989 a decreasing number of individuals regularly discussed politics. The reasons also lay in the disappearance of the major social and political movements, and in the resulting narrowing of the meaning of political. Indeed, in the late 1960s and 1970s, political was a much broader term involving various aspects of public and private social life, whereas in the 1980s, it only identified parties and their deeds.²² Moreover, in the mid-1980s, 90.8%

²⁰ Arvidsson, *Marketing Modernity*, 143.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 131.

²² Roberto Biorcio, "Cittadini e politica negli anni Novanta," in *L'Italia che cambia*, ed. Marino Livolsi (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1993), 130.

of Italians regarded independence and personal freedom as important. The data is telling of the presence of an individualist approach to life also informed by television programming with its more targeted offer of programs and commercials. In addition, the fact that less than half of Italians (43.5%) were interested in being part of a group or organization further demonstrates the presence of a stronger individualism.²³

b) I Want to be Free: Chance to Choose in the Habit-Forming Flow Era

The arrival and success of private television programming further challenged the political establishment and promoted an increasing centrality on the individual. These channels constituted an alternative choice to the traditional public network RAI and brought an abundance of advertisements, and perfected the programming to inform the spectator's viewing and material consumption practices.

The economic interests of both well-established and emerging companies and brands eager to find new markets held a pivotal role in the evolution of private television channels.²⁴ In fact, these channels in particular were able to significantly aid in spreading the fascination with consumerism through advertisements, game shows, and chiefly American commercial films, and television series. The arrival of private channels and their fresh offerings not only affected RAI, but also and more importantly gave the audience the opportunity to choose amongst a wider programming offering not limited to only that of the public network. Indeed, the viewers could now select new programs to watch, and hence liberate themselves from RAI's monopoly. They could also select those

²³ Gabriele Calvi, ed., *Indagine sociale italiana. Rapporto Eurisko 1986* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1987), 23.

²⁴ David Forgacs, *L'industrializzazione della cultura italiana (1980-2000)* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2000), 273.

stylized lifestyles, divulged directly or indirectly by television programming, perceived as necessary and better able to help them construct their identities and fulfill their needs. Still, the chance to choose was only superficial and limited. In fact, the audience chose amongst the programs that the network had pre-selected for them. As literary and television critic Beniamino Placido contended about the concept of choice regarding television watching:

Rientriamo in casa la sera, accendiamo l'apparecchio e gettiamo uno sguardo sul mondo. Può essere accaduta qualsiasi cosa (anche un terremoto nel Messico) ma noi stiamo al sicuro. Come il capitano Nemo, che dall'interno del "Nautilus" allungava il periscopio per guardare in giro; e intanto si faceva - sicuro e potente - le sue ventimila leghe sotto i mari. Ma il capitano Nemo il periscopio lo indirizzava dove voleva lui, come voleva lui. Noi invece subiamo sempre le scelte di chi ha davvero il comando del periscopio in mano, sceglie le immagini che vuole e ce le manda in casa.²⁵

Moreover, if the audience was completely free to pick the programs instead of just the channel, there would not be the need to have a flow aimed at capturing people's attention and instilling viewing and material consumption habits while, for example, introducing

²⁵ "We come back home at night, we turn on the device, and we take a look at the world. Anything could have happened (even an earthquake in Mexico), but we are safe. As Captain Nemo, who from inside the "Nautilus" stretched the periscope to look around and meanwhile he was navigating - safe and powerful - his twenty thousand leagues under the sea. But Captain Nemo directed his periscope wherever he wanted, as he wanted. Instead, we always depend on the choices of those who really control the periscope, choose the images they want and then send them to us at home." The translation is mine. Beniamino Placido, "Capitan Nemo, è vero che i mostri siamo noi?," *la Repubblica*, September 22, 1985, accessed November 10, 2015, <http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1985/09/22/capitan-nemo-vero-che-mostri-siamo.html?ref=search>.

new programs. Hence, through the television flow, the network's goal is to induce and guide the audience's "free" choices.

At the same time, the illusion of being wholly free to choose liberated the audience from any kind of respect for hierarchies and powers.²⁶ In these years, commercial television amplified the sentiment of "antistatalismo," (anti-State attitude) a feeling usually and notably present in the less cultured social subjects. In the long 1980s, new parts of the population also embraced this attitude: "tocca generazioni giovanili di formazione universitaria, si diffonde soprattutto nei settori femminili."²⁷ Fininvest's attention for and its success with young people and women contributed to spark "antistatalismo" amongst them since they negatively identified RAI with a paternalistic and bureaucratic State. More specifically, RAI had until now neglected these segments, as it had always largely presented a chiefly male-oriented connotation. RAI's offering was less aimed at the female audience and, with regards to the young generations, mainly contained just a few, traditional programs targeted to children. In this period, young Italians were also moved by a high level of unemployment, which none of the governments of the long 1980s were able to radically curb.²⁸ According to Forgacs, these anti-State attitudes were positive because they refuted the control of the parties on the

²⁶ Carlo Freccero, *Televisione* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2013), 61.

²⁷"It influences college students and graduates, and it spreads especially amongst women." The translation is mine. Alberto Abruzzese, Mario Morcellini et al. *Lo spettacolo del consumo: televisione e cultura di massa nella legittimazione sociale* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1986), 238.

²⁸ By observing data from ISTAT between 1984 and 1991, it is possible to calculate how juvenile unemployment reached an average of approximately 21% for male between the age of 14 and 29 years old, and around 33% for females of the same age span. See Paul Ginsborg, *L'Italia del tempo presente. Famiglia, società civile, Stato 1980-1996* (Turin: Einaudi, 1998), 588, 601.

television programs, but also negative, since they refuted the idea of information, State, and the political in favor of pure hedonism.²⁹

The result of all this lies in the storm of protests that exploded in October of 1984 when, due to their illegal nature, Retequattro, Canale 5, and Italia 1 were blacked out in Piedmont, Lazio, and Abruzzo. It is clear how a fresh and more individualized style of programming, which mixed primarily American and Americanized products and South American telenovelas, had a strong impact on Italy's culture. Many Italians appeared now unable to survive without Berlusconi's private channels and were unaware of or uninterested in their unlawful existence. Journalist and politician Paolo Guzzanti's coverage during those days of protests confirm these ideas:

I più incolleriti e disperati? Tutti coloro che non sanno nulla della questione politica delle televisioni private, delle leggi mancate e della grande partita a colpi di furbizia. E sono la quasi totalità [...]. Una signora anziana e sola: "So tutto su questa storia, ho letto i giornali. Ma quello che i giudici fanno è ingiusto anche se agiscono in nome della legge. La televisione privata, in questo paese che ignora i deboli, è diventata un servizio pubblico: che offre gratis emozioni, favole, sorrisi e anche qualche lacrima. A me piace piangere e passare il tempo. Sarà stata osservata la legge, non discuto. Ma c'è qualcosa di disumano in questa operazione: qualcosa che colpisce i più poveri e i più deboli nella loro fragilità, nei loro minuscoli equilibri di vita."³⁰

²⁹ Forgacs, *L'industrializzazione della cultura italiana*, 289.

³⁰ "The angriest and most desperate people? All those who know nothing of the political and legislative issues of private television stations, as well as the great deal of cunningness involved. And these people represent almost the entire group of protestors [...]. An alone and elderly lady says: I know all about this story, I read the newspapers. But what the judges are doing is unjust even if they act in the name of the law. Private television in this country that ignores the weak, has become a public service: offering free emotions, stories, laughter, and even some tears. I like to cry and pass the time watching television. The law might have been observed, I do not argue against that. But there is something inhuman in this: something that

Fininvest's journalists also conducted various interviews in Turin in the aftermath of the blackout. Many interviewees highlighted their right to freely choose what to watch, exemplifying the desires of self-determination and fulfillment, alongside the willingness to break-free from the traditional authority of the status quo (RAI, in this case). The focus on the individual and its desires already present in the 1970s had now evolved and taken the form of the support granted to the liberating, more individualized, and hedonistic flow of Fininvest's channels. At the same time, in an increasingly competitive television market, the success of commercial channels' innovative programming style also influenced RAI's. Thus, the habit-forming flow expanded to include all of the main national private and public television channels, and aided in spearheading a process of social, political, and also economic changes during this period. From the analysis of the socio-political context, it is noticeable how the social terrain was favorable for the cultural revolution of the long 1980s.

Consumption and the Habit-Forming Flow During the Long 1980s

Amidst important social changes, the Italian economy improved during the long 1980s, and created a more favorable setting for consumption. Thanks to the government's attempt to maintain political consensus with the Italians, public expenditures drastically increased. Such procedure strengthened the country's welfare state and consequently allowed people to save money on essential expenses and boost their income. For instance,

affects the poorest and most vulnerable in their fragility, in the smallest equilibrium of their lives." The translation is mine. Paolo Guzzanti, "Migliaia di telefonate per sapere perché sono scomparsi i puffi," *la Repubblica*, October 18, 1984, accessed November 10, 2015, <http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1984/10/18/migliaia-di-telefonate-per-sapere-perche-sono.html?ref=search>.

the government extensively invested in health care and laid out a process of massive hiring in the public administration sector. Simultaneously, an improved international economic situation contributed to Italy's growth after the oil crisis of the 1970s finished and the USA fortified their currency.

At the same time, the flow was forming and invading both private and public channels with ever-present and modern commercials and a coherent and vast programming offer. The advantageous social and economic backgrounds enabled the flow to aid in modifying Italians' consumption habits towards the lifestyles and goods it featured on the daily programming until the beginning of the 1990s when a political, financial, and economic crisis struck Italy and slowed down consumption rates. The crisis also contributed to put the reigns of political power in the hands of a major representative of the flow and its consumerist culture: Fininvest's largest shareholder Silvio Berlusconi.

a) Welfare State of Mind: Government, Economy, and the Society of the Spectacle

In order to try to maintain political consensus amongst the Italians and defuse the storm of social protests, the government significantly raised public expenditures between the 1970s and 1980s, without raising taxes accordingly.³¹ As a result, the public debt skyrocketed throughout the long 1980s.³² However, the implementation of a vaster welfare state helped both directly and indirectly increase Italians' income and change the nature of their spending budget, thus influencing consumption rates.

³¹ ISTAT, *I conti degli italiani. Compendio della vita economica nazionale*, vol. 25 (Rome: ISTAT, 1991), 86.

³² Data from Banca d'Italia shows how in 1981 Italian public debt amounted to 61% of Italy's GDP, whereas in 1991 it was 103.9%, the second highest in Europe. See Ginsborg, *L'Italia del tempo presente*, 53.

In particular, the 1978 healthcare reform centralized and universalized the services into public institutions, eliminating private insurance agencies, which only covered the workers and their relatives.³³ The 1978 bill gave Italians the chance to spend a smaller fraction of their family budget on healthcare and to direct their finances towards other expenses.³⁴ Additionally, the enormous development of public daycare centers enabled both parents to hold a job and have salaries to invest in consumption.³⁵ The introduction of full-day elementary schools from 1971, together with the hiring of many teachers during the 1970s and 1980s, further produced similar effects.³⁶ The government did not limit its public intervention to the improvement of services; in fact, the quota of redistributive government spending rose in this period. More generous family allowances and unemployment benefits contributed to sustain family incomes and consumption.³⁷

As far as income is concerned, the social protests forced the government to introduce more favorable wage indexation mechanisms for the workers towards the end of the 1970s.³⁸ Moreover, in order to maintain consensus, the government issued higher interest rates on its bonds, favoring the emergence of new investors who could then count

³³ Law no. 833 of 23 December 1978, “Istituzione del servizio sanitario nazionale,” published in *GU* no. 360, December 28, 1978 – Ordinary Supplement. See also Ginsborg, *Storia d’Italia dal dopoguerra a oggi*, 528.

³⁴ Stefano Cavazza, “Consumi, società e politica in Italia (1980-2000),” in *L’Italia contemporanea dagli anni Ottanta a oggi*, 212.

³⁵ Chiara Saraceno, “Famiglie, rapporti di genere e generazioni, politiche sociali,” in *L’Italia contemporanea dagli anni Ottanta a oggi*, 93.

³⁶ Law no. 820 of 24 September 1971, “Norme sull’ordinamento della scuola elementare e sulla immissione in ruolo degli insegnanti della scuola elementare e della scuola materna statale,” published in *GU* no. 261, October 14, 1971. For the specific data on the amount of teachers in Italian schools see ISTAT, *L’Italia in 150 anni. Sommario di statistiche storiche 1861-2010* (Rome: ISTAT, 2011), 358-363. Available at http://www3.istat.it/dati/catalogo/20120118_00/cap_7.pdf, accessed on November 11, 2015.

³⁷ Scarpellini, *L’Italia dei consumi*, 199-203.

³⁸ Cavazza, “Consumi, società e politica,” 211.

on greater incomes to utilize for consumption.³⁹ All of these government measures disarmed social tensions by providing Italian families with more services and more or less directly with more money to potentially devote to consumption.

Other significant economic factors informing the Italians' income and consumption patterns during the long 1980s resided in a more favorable international and national economic situation. The lower oil prices and the progressive strengthening of the US dollar during the first half of the 1980s decisively propelled Europe's economic growth, and also helped dissolve social conflicts.⁴⁰ For instance, the increment of exportations to the United States benefited the Italian economy, notably in the realm of fashion. Additionally, the national economy decisively improved after the instability of the 1970s. The Italian GDP grew more steadily between 1982 and 1988, when it reached 4.1%, its peak for the decade.⁴¹ This was favored by a more flexible and stable economic situation due to the waning of the labor movement, the decline of terrorism, more political stability guaranteed by the Craxi administration and "the restructuring of the productive process through the automation of factories and the subcontracting of certain activities to small-scale family firms of the emerging industrial districts."⁴² Italy was going through a mini-economic boom.

At the same time, inflation decreased after Italy adhered to the EMS (European Monetary System) in 1979 and ended the wild devaluations of its currency. The EMS'

³⁹ According to data from Banca d'Italia, the number of families holding government bonds grew from 4.2% in 1983 to 24.2% in 1991. See Alberto Martinelli, Antonio Chiesi, and Sonia Stefanizzi, *Recent Social Trends in Italy*, 370.

⁴⁰ Roberto Gualtieri, "L'impatto di Reagan. Politica ed economia nella crisi della prima repubblica (1978-1992)," in *Gli anni Ottanta come storia*, eds. Simona Colarizi, Piero Craveri, Silvio Pons, and Gaetano Quagliariello (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 2004), 199.

⁴¹ ISTAT, *I conti degli italiani*, 27.

⁴² Arvidsson, *Marketing Modernity*, 135.

objective was precisely to prevent large fluctuations of European currencies and hence curb inflation and improve the economy of the European countries.⁴³ The progressive decline of inflation, the more stable international and national economy, and the proliferation of public debt created advantageous conditions for private consumption.

As a result of the ameliorated economic context, the number of employed people increased by almost 1 million between 1980 and 1990, with a decisive increase in the tertiary sector.⁴⁴ The rapid development of the service industry testified to many Italians' desire to pursue more intellectual and grease-free jobs. The importance of the maintenance of the self pervaded Italian society in this period, contributing to influence the job market and, consequently, also the attention for forms of consumption connected with personal care and clothing.

During the long 1980s, Italian families were thus becoming more affluent, but also less prone to save and more interested in spending. In fact, by analyzing data from Censis, historian Simona Colarizi highlights how between 1976 and 1991, income grew by 45% per capita and family consumption by 60%.⁴⁵ Additionally, according to ISTAT, if in 1980 an Italian saved what corresponded to 14% of his/her total spending, in 1990 the savings decreased to approximately 9%.⁴⁶ From the second half of the 1980s until 1991, consumption increased more than salaries.⁴⁷ The importance of private consumption in this period is symbolized by an emerging conception of family as an

⁴³ Eugenio Gaiotti and Salvatore Rossi, "La politica monetaria italiana nella svolta degli anni Ottanta," in *Gli anni Ottanta come storia*, 328-329.

⁴⁴ Data from ISTAT demonstrate how between 1980 and 1990, the number of employed people in the service sector rose from 48.3% to 58.9%. See Ginsborg, *L'Italia del tempo presente*, 583, 600.

⁴⁵ Simona Colarizi, *Storia del Novecento italiano. Cent'anni di entusiasmo, di paure, di speranza* (Milan: BUR, 2000), 458.

⁴⁶ Capuzzo, "I consumi tra economia e cultura nell'Italia del 'dopo boom,'" 187.

⁴⁷ Gervasoni, *Storia d'Italia degli anni Ottanta*, 67.

individualist, business entity, especially for young people. Indeed, many of them, even those who worked, preferred to live with their parents longer to save money for immediate consumption.⁴⁸ Television programming, and notably Italia 1's definitely played a key role in the formation of this kind of attitude, as the constant bombardment of glamorous and appealing goods and lifestyles attracted young people's attention.

As the level of consumption raised and the economy improved during the long 1980s, the flow was expanding on Italian television channels. In particular, private consumption also increased because Italian television implemented a more effective programming flow. The flow was capable of coherently channeling the audience through the programming, and therefore making viewing and material consumption messages more successful.

According to ISTAT, private consumption began to surge again between 1983 and 1984, after a brief decline at the beginning of the 1980s due to the second oil crisis.⁴⁹ The resumption of those two years also coincided with the flow's further development to include Italia 1 and Rete 4, and the creation of Raiuno and Raidue's morning programming slots. The two events demonstrate the existence of a connection between television programming and consumption. Indeed, the glamorous narratives and settings of many programs and commercials and their coherent placement in the programming contributed to spread the fascination with consumer goods and stylized lifestyles, and aided in influencing the consumption habits of the Italians.

The success of television watching during the long 1980s further proves the presence of a link between the flow and consumption. Almost everybody, regardless of

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁴⁹ Capuzzo, "I consumi tra economia e cultura nell'Italia del 'dopo boom,'" 181.

gender, age, or class, placed himself/herself daily in front of the television screen. For 86.3% of Italians in the mid-1980s, watching television was the primary quotidian cultural activity, while only 0.6% never watched television.⁵⁰ A survey promoted by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* in 1988 outlines how, for the majority of people, life without television meant boredom and was unthinkable.⁵¹ Such figures demonstrate the relevance and influence that television programming acquired in the Italians' everyday life.

In particular, Marcella Rizzo holds that in the 1980s television “became a place for the construction and diffusion of a new identity that went beyond the confines of former political, religious or territorial affiliations and was instead linked to a more modern consumerist culture.”⁵² A consumerist culture deeply rooted in the importance of the individual thanks to the flow's coherent placement of programs based on specific target audiences, and the presence of pertinent and spectacular commercials with their focus on personal desires fulfillable only through definite goods. When watching the glamorous lifestyles presented by television programming, the result of the emphasis on the individual is that viewers often compare themselves to what they see, identify similarities, and notice shortcomings, which “create a surplus of longing and aspirations.”⁵³ This process involved the whole television programming, and not only quiz and game shows as Rizzo maintains. In fact, “in these years, viewers switched from simply enjoying television to becoming the consumers of the symbols and meanings that

⁵⁰ Gabriele Calvi, ed., *Indagine sociale italiana. Rapporto Eurisko 1986*, 173.

⁵¹ Marco Ferrari, “Ti va la TV? Gli Italiani e il piccolo schermo,” *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 36 (1988): 45.

⁵² Rizzo, “The Creation of Shared Space and the Definition of a ‘Light’ Community,” 66.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

television purveyed: consumers who adopted and spread the culture of the medium.”⁵⁴

The flow suggested consumerism as a means of constructing one’s identity.

Television programming contributed to spread the fascination with consumerism to all levels of society in the 1980s. The propagation of consumerism was different from that of the 1960s, when it characterized only the middle class. As historian Marco Gervasoni contends, all social groups and almost all of Italy, were experiencing new forms of consumption, and not just the Northern, urbanized areas as in the 1960s. Despite socio-economic differences between the Center-North and the South, consumerism invaded the entire country. Moreover, the consumption growth of the economic miracle “colmava infatti un gap che divideva il nostro paese da quelli avanzati, mentre quella degli anni ottanta era del tutto in linea con un’analogia tendenza vissuta dagli Stati Uniti, dal Giappone e dai paesi dell’Europa occidentale.”⁵⁵ In the 1980s then, Italy became a more modern country, also thanks to the role of television programming.

In addition, in these years, a new social class, magnetized by the society of the spectacle, came to life: the *neoborghesia* (neo-bourgeoisie). The more stable economic and social situation prompted its emergence. The *neoborghesia* consisted of “professionisti, dirigenti, intermediari finanziari nel mondo del terziario avanzato; e di imprenditori piccoli e medi [...]. Erano arrembanti, dediti al lavoro, veloci, rapidi, avevano il mito dell’America e consumavano.”⁵⁶ Their attraction to the myth of the

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁵⁵ “(It) bridged the gap between Italy and the other more advanced countries, while that of the 1980s was completely in line with a similar trend experienced by the United States, Japan and Western European countries.” The translation is mine. Gervasoni, *Storia d’Italia degli anni Ottanta: quando eravamo moderni*, 65.

⁵⁶ “professionals, managers, financial intermediaries in the advanced services sector; small and medium entrepreneurs [...]. They were rampant, devoted to work, fast, quick, and they

United States and elevated inclination towards consumerism is in line with the models perpetrated by Italian television programming. From this analysis, it is therefore evident how the social and economic setting facilitated the flow in spreading consumer culture throughout Italy during the long 1980s.

b) What is on your Shopping List? Consuming the Habit-Forming Flow

In the mean time, Italians, thanks to social changes, a favorable economic situation, and the influence of more individualized programming offerings capable of reaching specific segments of viewers, devoted a bigger part of their spending budget to forms of consumption centered on the individual.

In particular, Italians increasingly focused their spending on the items pertaining to the presentation of the self and other nonessential expenditures. As far as the latter is concerned, sociologist Marino Livolsi highlights how between 1975 and 1989 the expenses for transportation and communication, and recreation and culture grew by 8%.⁵⁷ Personal cars, second television sets, VCRs, toys, physical training, package holidays, and the spread of TV listing magazines to better follow a greater individualized offering of programs are quite revealing of the raising importance of individual consumption patterns during the long 1980s.

This period saw intensification in the purchase of new products centered more on the individual rather than only the family. In fact, mass goods such as a car, a television set, and a refrigerator that during the 1960s were present in 50% of the Italian

had the myth of the United States in mind and consumed.” The translation is mine. *Ibid.*, 106-107.

⁵⁷ According to ISTAT, the 8% increment brought these expenses from representing 15.3% of the average household budget in 1975 to 23.3% in 1989. See Marino Livolsi, “Consumi e consumi culturali: qualche nota di commento,” in *L'Italia che cambia*, 239.

households, were ubiquitous in the 1980s. In addition, the consumption of commodities centered on the physical care of the self became progressively more prominent. Indeed, both women and men spent an increasing amount of money on beauty products.⁵⁸

Between 1978 and 1992, according to data from Eurisko-Sinottica, there was a steady increase in the number of Italians claiming to regularly purchase not only cosmetics, but also dietary products, fashion clothing, and valuable jewelry. At the same time, “those who claimed to ‘Dress as it happens without worrying too much’ or ‘Dress as practically as possible’ decreased,” further signaling the relevance of the individual’s appearances.⁵⁹

These findings paint a picture of a society highly affected by the emphasis on the presentation of the self, brought about by commercial television and flow. More specifically, commercials and programs’ focus on personal care and clothing intensified during the period of “local” channels. *Cielo! Cosa mi metto?* (Good Heavens! What should I wear?) and *Bellissima* (Beautiful) characterized Telemilano 58’s programming between 1978 and 1980 with their emphasis on healthy eating habits, hairstyles, cosmetics, and clothing.⁶⁰ During the 1980s, both on Fininvest and RAI, aside from commercials centered on the maintenance of the subject, there were numerous programs and advertisements featuring glamorous hosts and actors always on trend with the latest clothing, hair, jewelry, and make-up fashions. The exorbitant attention for the physical

⁵⁸ Revenues for men’s cosmetics more than doubled between 1979 and 1984. See Dante Matelli, “Mister Vanità,” *L’Espresso* 41 (1985): 95.

⁵⁹ Roberto Biorcio and Marcello Maneri, “Consumi e società: dagli anni Ottanta agli anni Novanta,” 201.

⁶⁰ Luca Barra, “Programmi, palinsesti e dintorni,” *Link. Idee per la televisione* 17 (2014): 102. See also Alessia Assasselli, “Le produzioni del 1978-80,” in *Link. Idee per la televisione* 17 (2014): 108.

care of the self also sparked the publication of many magazines and books focused on beauty.⁶¹

Furthermore, the enormous quantity of dashing and often muscular actors and ravishing actresses populating primarily American films and television series also constituted the perfect connection between programs and commercials. This aspect, together with the glamorous atmospheres and the romanticization of personal dreams, desires, aspirations, accomplishments, and lifestyles of specific characters often pursuing the American dream facilitated advertisements' consumerist messages. In fact, commercials, just as many American fictional products, highlighted individualism as they aimed at targeting more or less specific viewers using stylized settings, attractive actors, and by appealing to their emotions to create an intimate connection between the product and the spectator.

It is at the same time essential not to underestimate the role that certain Italian films played in seducing the television audience and conveying the logic of individualism, key to the consumer culture of the long 1980s. RAI and Fininvest dedicated many film cycles to captivating Italian actors such as Sophia Loren and Adriano Celentano. These films extolled their individuality, especially their strong personalities and attractive physiques. Their inclusion in the television flow served as an ideal instrument to seduce the audience and leave it more vulnerable to be further enticed by commercials' individualist messages.

Part of the expenses on the presentation of the self include clothing and footwear, which developed towards more individualized forms of consumption. During the long

⁶¹ Rita Tripodi, "Belli per forza," *L'Espresso* 35 (1984): 37.

1980s, families dedicated a smaller percentage of their budget to this type of expenditure. In fact, the expanding large-scale retail trade began to offer low prices for clothing and footwear.⁶² At the same time, however, more Italians paid close attention to specific, quality brands, such as Armani and Timberland, founded in the many clothing and shoe stores blossoming throughout the country.⁶³ People sought prestigious brands to enhance their appearance and construct their identity based on fashionable garments.

The young Paninari represented the ultimate example of this new trend, as they were extremely concerned with clothing and footwear style.⁶⁴ For these youngsters, “il nemico non è più di classe, ma è colui che si dà un'immagine che non rientra nei canoni di una moda costosa, chi indossa senza vergognarsene Clark in offerta speciale, golf e giubbotti acquistati al mercato del sabato mattina.”⁶⁵ Nevertheless, this attitude was similarly discernible within more or less the whole Italian society. As a result, the people not following the new fashion trend were considered almost as outcasts, since they did not buy name-brand garments but “ne accetta(no) l'imitazione a minor prezzo; come se il nuovo scontro sociale fosse quindi tra la firma e la sua brutta copia. La paura e l'orrore della povertà, [...], di una immagine che non denoti opulenza, non è appannaggio solo di

⁶² Gervasoni, *Storia d'Italia degli anni ottanta*, 73.

⁶³ The percentage of people claiming to buy brand-name items rose between 1978 and 1992. In particular, it went from 23.3% in 1986 to 37% in 1992. See also Ginsborg *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra a oggi*, 554.

⁶⁴ Paninari literally meant sandwich eaters, since these young Italians used to eat and meet at fast-food restaurants.

⁶⁵ “The enemy is no longer defined by class membership, but the person who gives himself an image that is outside the canons of an expensive fashion, those who unashamedly wears on-sale Clark shoes and golf jackets purchased at the Saturday morning market.” The translation is mine. See Natalia Aspesi, “La lotta di classe in Timberland,” *la Repubblica*, March 3, 1987, accessed November 14, 2015, <http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1985/03/03/la-lotta-di-classe-in-timberland.html?ref=search>.



Figure 12 Paninari in Milan (1985).
© 2015 by *la Repubblica*.

chi i soldi ce li ha, ma anche di chi non ce li ha.”⁶⁶ The relevance of the presentation of the self was therefore widespread to almost all parts of Italian society during the long 1980s.

Commercials, but also the stylish clothes and shoes of the many actors and hosts scattered through a coherent and audience-acclaimed programming informed the obsession for renowned brands of clothing and footwear. Italians desired to transfer both the image of beauty conveyed by television personalities and the prestige and quality of the brand onto themselves to build their identity. Thus, if the percentage of the family budget for clothing expenses decreased, it was due primarily to large-scale retailing

⁶⁶ “They accept imitation at a lower price; as if the new social conflict was thus between the brand and its cheap replica. Fear and horror of poverty, [...], an image that does not denote opulence does not only concern those who have money, but also those who do not.” The translation is mine. See *Ibid.*

rather than a loss of interest for these items. Moreover, since family incomes were rising, the monetary spending for clothing was actually higher.

Furthermore, during the long 1980s, Italians spent a higher percentage of their family budget on individualized recreational activities, such as physical training, toys, and vacations. The emphasis on appearances affected also the booming market of gyms, the new habit of jogging, and a higher interest in physical activity in general.⁶⁷ Apart from commercials featuring in-shape actors, the constant and coherent television broadcasting of Hollywood blockbuster films starring Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger (the *Rambo*, *Rocky* and *Terminator* sagas), acclaimed television series such as *L'incredibile Hulk* (*The Incredible Hulk*, U.S., 1978-1982), fitness classes in morning and evening shows such as *Buongiorno Italia* and *Italia Sera*, and the presence of exercise machines as prizes in game shows such as *OK, Il prezzo è giusto!* contributed



Figure 13 *The Incredible Hulk*.
© 1978 by Universal Television.

⁶⁷ Gervasoni, *Storia d'Italia degli anni Ottanta*, 80.

to inform this practice. An indirect key influence was the advent of color on television in Italy in 1977. The introduction of this technological advancement stimulated appreciation and imitation of the aesthetic models projected by the flow.

Additionally, there was increased spending on other individualized recreational products, such as toys.⁶⁸ For instance, the popular children and teens' program *Bim, Bum, Bam* alternated cartoons and sketches with commercial messages targeting young viewers. The advertisements often depicted merchandising connected to the same cartoons being shown. This strategy undoubtedly influenced the impulse to purchase and consequent spending on toys, as kids could materially buy their favorite cartoons' toy replicas at the numerous specialized stores booming throughout the country.⁶⁹



Figure 14 *Bim Bum Bam* (1992).
© 1992 by Fininvest.

⁶⁸ Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra a oggi*, 562.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 554.

Other individualized recreational activities on which Italians spent a bigger fraction of their family budget were vacations. In particular, there was a relevant surge in vacations spent abroad, usually through more or less customized holiday packages designed for the personal gratification of the individual.⁷⁰ Many films and television series, together with exotic vacation packages often offered by quiz and game shows, consistently brought the foreign world to Italy and were co-responsible for instilling the desire to go abroad and experience new cultures.

As part of recreational expenditures, Italian families acquired an increasing amount of new and second television sets and VCRs. This trend caused a boom in electronic retail stores all over Italy.⁷¹ The arrival of color television, alongside a vaster, coherently organized, and more individualized programming offering, the skyrocketing increment in the scheduling of especially more recent films, and the presence of commercials and prizes in game shows glamorously displaying television sets and VCRs, triggered the rise in the purchase of these goods.

According to Eurisko-Sinottica, color television sets were present in 70.8% of families in 1986 and in 95.6% in 1992.⁷² Furthermore, during the long 1980s, Italians felt the need to own multiple television sets. A survey promoted by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* stresses how in 1991, 40.7% of families had two or more televisions at home. The reason was not only convenience, that is the chance to watch television in every room without missing any favorite programs. In fact, Italians bought a second or third television set to avoid disputes over the remote control due to a richer and more targeted programming

⁷⁰ Data from ISTAT show how the percentage of Italians spending their vacations abroad rose from 6.8% in 1982 to 16.7% in 1993. See Ginsborg, *L'Italia del tempo presente*, 575, 598.

⁷¹ Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra a oggi*, 554.

⁷² Biorcio and Maneri, "Consumi e società: dagli anni Ottanta agli anni Novanta," 188.

offer than during the years of RAI's monopoly. Moreover, families placed the additional sets primarily in the kitchen, not only to allow for an uninterrupted and collective television watching, but also to enable women to enjoy their favorite programs while cooking the meals. Televisions were also present in adult bedrooms, usually to watch night programs or to give the husband or wife the possibility to follow different prime time programs. In some cases, children's bedrooms featured a television set to watch cartoons or other programs suited for a younger audience, without provoking any family confrontations over the possession of the remote control.⁷³ A more individualized programming offer was thus crucial in causing both the acquisition of multiple television sets and their personalized utilization.

The striking increase in the programming of films prompted the emergence of a new consumption practice between the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s: the purchase of videotape recorders (or VCRs) and VHS.⁷⁴ Programmers coherently and appealingly organized film programming within a channel's flow to effectively attract the audience and influence its viewing and material consumption habits. At the same time, through VCRs, the viewers could extract a film from the television programming and watch it at his/her own convenience. Therefore, the videotape recorder introduced a more individualized form of viewing consumption. The VCR and the VHS also sanctioned the transformation of the film text into a material and personal commodity, demonstrating a connection between television film programming and modern and individual consumption habits. From the late 1980s and early 1990s, films on VHS became available also at the new video stores. The stores, together with television film

⁷³ Ivo Singer, "A ciascuno il suo," *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 46 (1991): 68-75.

⁷⁴ Based on data from Eurisko-Sinottica, families owning a VCR went from 3.5% in 1986 to 45.4% in 1992.

programming sparked the success of VCRs, and inaugurated a new kind of domestic use of films, through the recording, renting, and buying of VHS. Films on VHS hence emphasized collectability, prompting many people in these years to build personal video libraries. Films then became objects that one could materially touch and utilize, as with any other type of goods.⁷⁵

Media scholar John Ellis' idea of repetition is particularly apropos to further analyze the connection between the phenomenon of video culture, television film programming, and the flow as a whole. He maintains that repetition, as "a form of continuity-with-difference," is an important characteristic of the television series and serials.⁷⁶ However, many programs repeated on Italian television throughout the weekly schedule, not only those indicated by Ellis, but also game shows and varieties. Television programming therefore presented a higher level of repetition, which, when it comes to films, helped affect the consumption of VHS. In fact, repetition instilled in the viewer the desire to re-watch a film previously seen at the cinema or on television, influencing the decision to buy a VCR to tape it and own it, and consequently reinforcing its commodification.

Television film programming and the flow also informed cultural expenses during the long 1980s, such as cinema attendance. The impressive surge in the broadcasting of films on television contributed to a plummeting decline in cinema tickets sold: from approximately 544 million in 1974 to about 90 million in 1990.⁷⁷ In terms of revenues,

⁷⁵ Gianfranco Bettetini, "Dal cinema alla televisione, e oltre," in *Un secolo di cinema italiano: atti del convegno "Cent'anni di cinema italiano," Accademia delle Scienze, Torino, 3-5 giugno 1999*, ed. Piero Brunetta (Milan: Il Castoro, 2000), 164.

⁷⁶ John Ellis, *Visible Fictions: Cinema, Television, Video* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 122-123.

⁷⁷ SIAE, *Lo spettacolo in Italia. Annuario statistico. Anno 1995* (Rome: SIAE, 1996), 128.

according to SIAE, Italian films lost a substantial portion of their quota, since they went from representing 48.1% in 1980 to 17.2% of the total proceeds in 1989. However, American (and British) films significantly increased their share, and rose from 33.4% to 75.9% during the same period.⁷⁸ On one side, the striking amount of films broadcast on television contributed to lower the general number of tickets sold, while on the other it aided in spreading the fascination with primarily American films, as they were remarkably present and successful on television.

However, in the 1990s television film programming and the flow informed what film historian Lino Micciché called a “cineripresina,” a slight rise in the number of cinemagoers.⁷⁹ Specifically, based on data from SIAE, the number of tickets sold rose from 83 million in 1992 to 92 million in 1993, and 98 million in 1994.⁸⁰ In these years, it is plausible that the generation that was born in the late 1960s and 1970s and grew up with a new kind of television programming, and was thus exposed to a plethora of films, developed a new form of cinophilia. This was not only characterized by the renting or buying of films on VHS, but also by a return to the cinema, where, as with the videocassette, it was possible to experience the film text without the influence of the flow. For this generation, the flow was not a novelty, as it was for previous generations, who, attracted to the spectacle of television, significantly reduced their cinema going in the late 1970s and 1980s. Instead, for these young Italians, the flow was the norm a fact that facilitated their enthusiasm for cinema going.

⁷⁸ Umberto Rossi, “Gli anni Ottanta – Una documentazione. III. Il mercato,” in *Schermi opachi: Il cinema italiano degli anni '80*, ed. Lino Micciché (Venice: Marsilio, 1998): 442.

⁷⁹ Lino Micciché, “Il lungo decennio grigio,” in *Schermi opachi: Il cinema italiano degli anni '80*, 6.

⁸⁰ Fania Petrocchi, *Il mercato cinematografico italiano (1990-2000)* (Rome: Osservatorio dello Spettacolo: 2001), 7.

Furthermore, the development of multiscreen cinemas in Italy in the early 1990s, with their multiple and more individualized film offerings (just as the television flow), and new comforts (i.e. cozier seats, just as at home), was another decisive factor in the “cineripresina.” It is therefore legitimate to argue that the robust programming of films within the flow contributed to send Italians back to the cinema in the 1990s.

The prominence of television programming also affected the surge of cultural expenses, more specifically the purchase of TV listing magazines. According to Ads (Accertamenti diffusione stampa), the most popular magazine in Italy during the long 1980s was one focusing on television: *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*.⁸¹ Data from ISPI (Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale) and Ads estimate that at the beginning of the 1990s



Figure 15 On the left *Telepiù 8* (1990), in the middle *Telesette 1* (1990), and on the right *Guida TV 43* (1981).

© 1990 by *Telepiù*, © 1990 by *Telesette*, and © 1981 by *Guida TV*.

⁸¹ Marino Livolsi, “I lettori della stampa quotidiana e periodica (1972-1992),” in *La stampa italiana nell'età della TV: 1975-1994*, eds. Valerio Castronovo and Nicola Tranfaglia (Rome: Laterza, 1994), 546.

12 million people read *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* every week. However, all TV listing magazines became highly popular during this period. *Tv Sorrisi*, *Telepiù*, *Telesette*, and *Guida TV* gathered almost 19 million readers each week at the beginning of the 1990s, a third of the Italian population at the time.⁸² The data prove how television acquired a prominent place of interest in the Italians' everyday lives. Indeed, these magazines served as a tool to better orient the reader/viewer's choices in a vaster and more individualized programming offering.

In addition to the expenses dedicated to the maintenance of the self, recreational and cultural activities, television programming also contributed to influence the purchase of personal cars. While the possession of one car for each family was the norm in the 1980s, many Italians purchased second cars. One reason for this was the increase of women, particularly in the North and Center, in the workforce. Furthermore, a rising number of other individuals also bought personal automobiles as Italians began to consider them essential to everyday life.⁸³ At the same time, many commercials and programs, such as the television series *Hazzard* (*The Dukes of Hazzard*, U.S., 1979-1985), *Supercar* (*Knight Rider*, U.S., 1982-1986), and *Miami Vice – Squadra antidroga* (*Miami Vice*, U.S., 1984-1990), fueled the fascination with updated cars and the desire of owning personal automobiles, by glamorizing their social roles and dynamic capacities.

One of the cars quite successful especially with young adults was Autobianchi Y10. It was small but dynamic, and was also produced in its turbo version, a more

⁸² Gigi Vesigna, "Assolutamente primi," *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 27 (1991): 86-87.

⁸³ According to Eurisko-Sinottica, between 1986 and 1992 the presence of one car for each family grew, even if it was already significantly widespread (from 84.8% to 88.9%). The percentage of families in which one or more individuals drove personal cars rose almost twice as much (from 45.3% in 1986 to 52% in 1992). See Biorcio and Maneri, "Consumi e società: dagli anni Ottanta agli anni Novanta," 188.



Figure 16 *Miami Vice*'s promotional poster in *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 38 (1986), 83.
© 1986 by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*.

individualized characteristic increasingly trendy in the 1980s. The attraction for this car among young Italians was also due to commercials specifically targeting this segment. For instance, the advertisements starred popular television personalities from the youth-oriented channel Italia 1. In this way, the commercial seductively featured program hosts, thus combining advertisements with key elements of various programs. In the case of Autobianchi Y10, Italia 1's showman Gerry Scotti was the protagonist of a 1989 commercial. The purchase of cars then became more individualized during the long 1980s, also thanks to the allures of television programming.

Finally, other spending habits changed towards more individualized forms of consumption during these years. Marino Livolsi explains how Italians dedicated a smaller fraction of their family budget to food. While this was still the main expense for families, Italians could now take advantage of low prices, thanks to the enormous popularity of

supermarkets during the long 1980s. However, since family incomes were rising, the monetary spending for food continued to grow consistently.⁸⁴ Indeed, the coherent and impressive display of goods both at the supermarket and throughout the more individualized television programming, urged Italians to buy more.

Simultaneously, Italians spent more for new food products.⁸⁵ After its launch in 1975, the brand Mulino Bianco gained significant success in Italy during the 1980s, becoming one of the main leaders of the European bakery product market.⁸⁶ At the basis of Mulino Bianco's success was also a large use of commercials and individualized marketing strategies. The advertisements not only represented the whole family joyfully consuming Mulino Bianco's products, but also often individual members, in order to better reach the desired target. Through a strong appeal to personal emotions and the individualization of the commercial message, Mulino Bianco boosted its revenues.

Other advertisements depicting new kind of food products followed similar strategies. One relevant example is the case of frozen meals, a relatively new kind of product. This type of food was already present in the first supermarkets that opened in Italy in the late 1950s, but their consumption was quite low.⁸⁷ However, they boomed after women started to have jobs and had less time to cook. The frozen food brand Findus introduced *sofficini* (crispy pancakes) in 1975 and employed individualized commercials to popularize the product. The advertisements targeted young Italians, as they often depicted them as pleasantly satisfied at the sight and taste of *sofficini*. All of these food

⁸⁴ Gervasoni, *Storia d'Italia degli anni ottanta*, 71.

⁸⁵ Livolsi, "Consumi e consumi culturali," 239.

⁸⁶ "La storia del Mulino," accessed November 16, 2015, <http://www.mulinobianco.it/storia-e-pubblicita/la-storia/1976-89/nuovi-prodotti-nuovi-successi>.

⁸⁷ Scarpellini, *L'Italia dei consumi*, 227-228.

commercials promoting new products pertinently appeared during programs to fulfill the flow's objectives of informing the spectator's consumption habits.

This analysis reveals the connection between the flow and more individualized forms of consumption. Television programming affected not only the viewing habits of the spectators. Through commercials and programs, it also directly and indirectly influenced the consumption practices of the audience. A coherent and more individualized programming offering aided in sanctioning a more striking prominence of the individual's needs and desires in shaping the paths of consumer culture during the long 1980s.

Italy's media, social, economic, and political situation during the long 1980s provided favorable conditions for consumption. However, in 1992, a financial, economic, and political crisis shook Italy. The skyrocketing public debt and a political corruption scandal triggered financial speculations against Italy.⁸⁸ In order to fix the economy, the government introduced new taxes, which had a negative impact on consumption rates.⁸⁹ The precarious economic context, together with the arrests of many politicians from the ruling parties, determined Fininvest's largest shareholder Silvio Berlusconi's rise to political power in 1994.

During the long 1980s, Berlusconi was not interested in becoming Italy's Prime Minister; rather, he needed political backing to build and protect his media empire. Nevertheless, he obtained popular consensus through the success of his television

⁸⁸ "George Soros, lo speculatore (non) pentito: 'Giusto l'attacco all'Italia nel 1992. Noi solo messaggeri di cattive notizie,'" last modified July 12, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2013/05/12/george-soros-lo-speculato_n_3262351.html.

⁸⁹ Between 1991, peak year for consumption during the long 1980s, and 1996 private consumption fell by 3%. See Capuzzo, "I consumi tra economia e cultura nell'Italia del 'dopo boom,'" 181.

channels, depicted as a free-of-charge alternative to the government-owned RAI. When Berlusconi entered into politics, he utilized a similar rhetoric: he and his newborn party Forza Italia were anti-establishment. Furthermore, Berlusconi's television channels hinged on the construction of a precise and carefully-planned public image through a coherent habit-forming flow. This programming style also proposed consumerism as a means to construct one's identity and not politics. In the same manner, Forza Italia revolved around the idea of "style, look, and image," presented candidates working at Fininvest's advertising agency Publitalia, and utilized the same agency to promote the party itself.⁹⁰ Additionally, Forza Italia's main proposals centered on the growth of consumption rates: "lower taxes, economic growth, a million new jobs."⁹¹ Therefore, Berlusconi's political party replicated the pillars of Fininvest's channels' flow, since they both supported the attention for one's image and consumerism.

In addition, both the party and the channels' flow depended on brand management operations to build and uphold their image with the voters/audience. In fact, both aimed at developing fruitful relationships with their targets to gain their preferences: Forza Italia through a major advertising campaign and promises of endless economic abundance, and Fininvest's channels' flow through its coherent and spectacular programming style. Based on the connections between Berlusconi's party and his television channels' programming, it is evident how the habit-forming flow found its political concretization through Forza Italia. However, in the political realm, the flow's goal was to influence votes, rather than viewing and material consumption habits. For the latter two, supermarkets rather than political propaganda were of primary importance, as

⁹⁰ Arvidsson, *Marketing Modernity*, 144. See also Giovanni Gozzini, "La televisione tra due Repubbliche," in *L'Italia contemporanea dagli anni Ottanta a oggi*, 236-237.

⁹¹ Arvidsson, *Marketing Modernity*, 144.

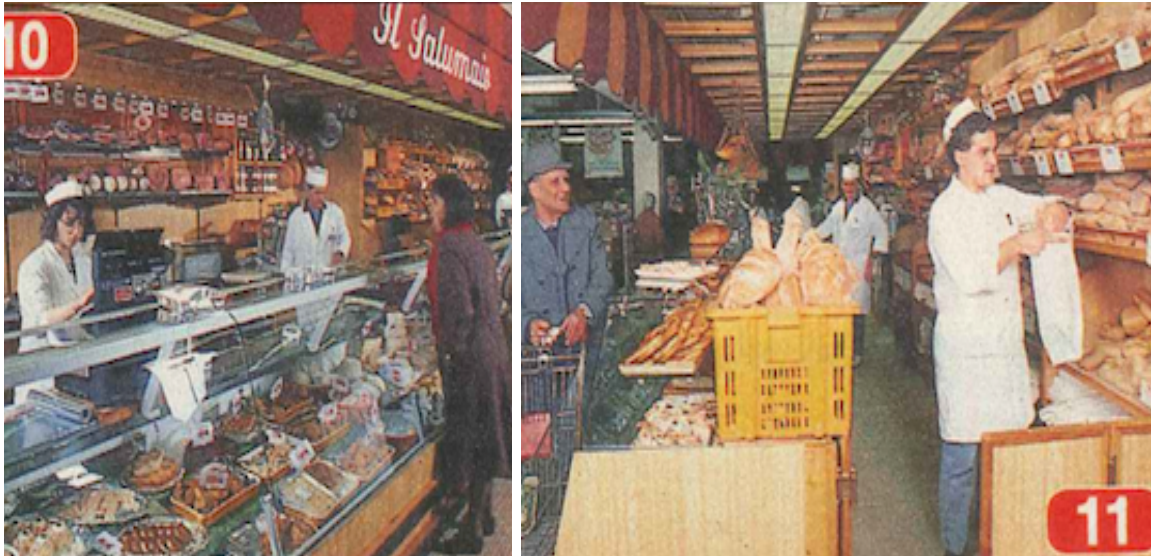
programmers reproduced their marketing strategies in the successful construction of an effective flow.

Shop Till You Drop: The Habit-Forming Flow in the Supermarket

The main place where Italians conducted many of their purchases during the long 1980s was the supermarket. The habit-forming flow reproduced the effective organizational logic of the supermarket, that is its programming or layout, to cogently place its wide variety and large quantity of programs and commercials throughout the day and week. Another goal was to incentivize the viewers to frequent these large stores, as well as others, where they could find many of the goods appearing on television.

Therefore, it is not a coincidence that in this period, the habit-forming flow developed at the same time supermarkets boomed. The connections between the two strengthened when Silvio Berlusconi's Fininvest acquired the department store and supermarket chain Standa.

During the long 1980s, supermarkets' layout and television programming presented similar characteristics. Both displayed a variegated and abundant offer of products strategically organized to facilitate consumption. Grocery stores' marketers and television programmers carefully positioned items through the aisles or programming in order to influence the customers/viewers' consumption habits. In order to accomplish this effort, supermarkets' layout depended on product association through metaphoric and hyperbolic modulations, just as the television flow. In the case of the former, marketers placed similar products together, such as dairy items. To create the latter, they displayed



Figures 17 and 18 The delicatessen (left) and bakery (right) sections at the supermarket, in *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 12 (1990), 68.
© 1990 by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*.

complementary products next to one another, as in the case of cold cuts beside bread.⁹² As sociologist Kim Humphery contends, “the concept of ‘flow’ – the movement of the shopper throughout the whole store – was central to [...] supermarketing.”⁹³ Through product association, supermarkets’ layout and television programming facilitated this movement and enticed the customer/spectator.

Moreover, both emphasized presentation to make their products noticeable and appealing. Promotional messages, announcements, and commercials corresponded to the attractive packaging of supermarket goods, devised to make them clearly visible and attractive. Supermarkets’ layout then helped customers buy what they desired, and convinced them to purchase more products through a coherent organization of the store

⁹² The specific examples of product association come from Elena Mora, “Alice al supermarket. Viaggio in un moderno Paese delle Meraviglie,” *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 12 (1990): 66-73.

⁹³ Kim Humphery, *Shelf Life. Supermarkets and the Changing Cultures of Consumption* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 86.

and the aid of packaging.⁹⁴ The same happened with the television flow, since it presented programs based on the spectator's daily routine, and also stimulated continuity of watching through a cohesive offering and the inclusion of promotional messages and announcements.

Finally, the supermarket's layout and the television flow seemed to give the consumer/viewer the chance to be completely free to choose, since the access to and selection of goods/programs was apparently unlimited and unorchestrated. In reality, grocery stores were the ones responsible for deciding "which products to sell and, therefore, which products you buy."⁹⁵ Consequently, the freedom to choose was not totally in the hands of the customer. Additionally, "the shopper was encircled within the mechanics of the shop: directed around its perimeter and through its aisles, cajoled by its colourful and abundant products."⁹⁶ The supermarket's layout consisted of a planned path of aisles and allures to affect the shopper's purchases.

Similarly, programmers picked the programs, and designed the flow to lead in the audience through a coherently organized, spectacular programming and influence audience consumption habits. Based on this analysis, it is arguable that supermarkets and Italian television channels' habit-forming flow displayed crucial similarities during the long 1980s. After almost 20 years of limited development in Italy between the end of the 1950s and the mid-1970s, supermarkets informed the emerging commercial television channels, and at the same time benefited from their (and RAI's) implementation of a flow.

⁹⁴ Elena Mora, "Alice al supermarket," 69, 71.

⁹⁵ Marion Nestle, *What to Eat* (New York: North Point Press, 2006), 20.

⁹⁶ Humphery, *Shelf Life*, 94.

Unlike the television flow, supermarkets appeared in Italy in 1957. In 1975 the year before the boom of private television channels, there were 939 supermarkets, located chiefly in the North of Italy.⁹⁷ The first supermarket opened in 1957 in Milan. Amongst the main reasons for the lack of an immediate boom of large-scale distribution, historian Victoria de Grazia notes how at the time Italians' low incomes were insufficient to afford the abundance of goods on the supermarket shelves, and the ability of traditional small-scale retailing to offer various extra services such as deliveries, credits, repairs, advice, and gossip.⁹⁸ It is also crucial to highlight how there were no extensive advertising campaigns to support the wide variety and abundance of products displayed in supermarkets.

The boom of supermarkets occurred in the long 1980s, when the habit-forming flow and advertising flourished. From 1976 until 1991, the number of grocery stores grew from 1,022 to 3,551, and appeared throughout Italy.⁹⁹ In this period, private channels and RAI adopted a habit-forming flow, and increased the presence of commercials in their daily programming. In particular, between 1977 and 1984, the incidence of advertising revenues on the public network's budget rose from 27% to 40%, and continued to augment in the following years.¹⁰⁰ Fininvest's Publitalia's proceeds

⁹⁷ Antonio Pilati "La pubblicità dei mezzi di comunicazione," in *La stampa italiana nell'età della TV: 1975-1994*, 266. See also Scarpellini, *L'Italia dei consumi*, 225.

⁹⁸ Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire. America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 401-415.

⁹⁹ Pilati "La pubblicità dei mezzi di comunicazione," 266.

¹⁰⁰ Francesco De Vescovi, *Economia dell'informazione televisiva* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1986), 37. See also Giuseppe Richeri, "La globalizzazione dei media in Italia. Il caso della TV e del cinema," in *L'Italia contemporanea dagli anni Ottanta a oggi*, 263.

from commercials radically expanded from 12 billion lire in 1980 (roughly \$14 million USD at the time) to 2,870 billion in 1993 (approximately \$1.8 billion USD at the time).¹⁰¹

The drastic rise in television advertisements further influenced Italians' consumption practices as audiences were exposed to an ever-increasing amount of commercials, and consequently products, often located at supermarkets. Advertisements pertinently appeared through the television flow and intertwined with coherently arranged programs to lead in the viewers through the programming and expose them to the consumerist messages. Thus, the combination of advertising and the enticing essence of the flow prompted the success of supermarket shopping. During the long 1980s, these large stores progressively took the place of small retail shops and became a major place of consumption.

The triumph of both supermarkets and the habit-forming flow fostered the implementation of a more accentuated connection between them. In 1988, Berlusconi's Fininvest acquired the national department store and supermarket chain Standa. Berlusconi desired that the viewers could find many of the products advertised on Fininvest's channels at these stores. In addition, Standa was present on Rete 4, Canale 5, and Italia 1 through major advertising campaigns starring popular hosts such as Marco Columbro to make sure Italians visited its stores.¹⁰² During the long 1980s, television programming not only borrowed the supermarket's organizational logic to inform the

¹⁰¹ Paolo Madron, *Le gesta del cavaliere* (Milan: Sperling & Kupfer, 1994), 105.

¹⁰² Fininvest sold Standa in 1998 due to the disastrous situation of the department store's budget. There were in fact many difficulties in changing the old-fashioned and long-established Standa into a more "dynamic selling machine" to make it more competitive in the vast and booming large-scale distribution market. See Paul Ginsborg, *Silvio Berlusconi* (London-New York: Verso, 2004), 63. Stefano D'Anna, and Gigi Moncalvo, *Berlusconi in Concert* (London: Otzium, 1994), 254, 258.

audience's consumption habits, but it also contributed and attempted to exploit the success of these stores.

During the long 1980s, the development of the television habit-forming flow affected, and was in turn influenced, by the political, social, and economic realm. The socio-political changes of the 1970s brought more emphasis on the individual's desires and his/her chance to choose more autonomously. Private television channels built on this individualist attitude to construct their programming, and offered Italians a more glamorous and individualized alternative to RAI's monopoly. The habit-forming flow also began to characterize the public network, now attempting to remain competitive within a broader television market.

At the same time, the rapid increase in government spending, and the improved international and national economic situation, positively affected the income and consumption patterns of Italian families. Italians were hence becoming richer. Thanks to the socio-political changes occurring at the time, and the wide popularity of the habit-forming flow and its more individualized programming offer, Italians started to dedicate an increasing amount of their spending budget to forms of consumption centered more on the individual: maintenance and presentation of the self, personal cars, second television sets, VCRs, toys, and vacations were amongst the trendiest expenses during the long 1980s. However a major financial, economic, and political crisis terminated the favorable situation for private consumption of the long 1980s and brought to political power Silvio Berlusconi and the habit-forming flow itself.

At the same time, supermarkets were booming and influencing television programming through their organizational logic. Supermarkets therefore became both a concrete and a symbolic place for consumption, as their number and popularity rapidly grew and television channels employed their layout to inform the audience purchasing habits.

Conclusion

Cosa resterà di questi anni '80?:

The Legacy of the Long 1980s

The long 1980s were a key period for cultural and social life in Italy due to the numerous changes brought about by the advent of private television, the gross success of film programming on television, the creation of a habit-forming flow, and the development of more individualized forms of consumption. My dissertation analyzes programming and the long 1980s through multiple lenses therefore seeking to outline new directions for future scholarship across Italian studies, media studies, and history. My project demonstrates programming as the selection and evaluation of specific elements in order to configure them effectively and purposefully as a means of achieving a specific desired outcome. It is only through analyzing the strong connection between television (film) programming and consumption practices, that it is possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of their effect on Italy's social and cultural life. I combine all of these aspects in order to understand the changes that occurred in the long 1980s in Italy — in the Italian television market, in cinema once it was massively programmed on television, and in consumption habits.

From the formation of private channels in the mid-1970s to the introduction of pay television at the beginning of the 1990s, cinema's effect on the television realm rapidly and systematically increased. Films, as well as all of the other programs, were

part of a comprehensive and coherent programming strategy, whose objective was to inform the viewers' viewing and material consumption patterns. I define this programming technique as habit-forming flow. According to my formulation of habit-forming flow, programs with similar types of audience potentially interested, tone and/or topic usually followed one another throughout the day. Through this coherent juxtaposition and the insertion of announcements, promotional messages, and commercials, television programmers aimed at leading in the audience through the programming in order to inform its viewing and material consumption habits. Consequently, I also prove how the habit-forming flow contributed to influence the development of more individualized forms of consumption, thus highlighting its pervasiveness beyond the television scope.

The changes that came about in the long 1980s continued to influence the following decades. While the habit-forming flow is still largely present today on mainstream television networks such as RAI and Mediaset (formerly Fininvest), the emergence of thematic channels during the 1990s resulted in a more personalized television programming. Nevertheless, the habit-forming flow informed the development of such specialized channels and programming, since it had instructed audience to seek similarities in programs during the long 1980s. Furthermore, the habit-forming flow was also responsible for the success of specific television genres, such as cinema. The flow, with its vast offering of films, had accustomed audiences to watching numerous movies on television. For instance, the subscription-based channel Telepiù 1 was dedicated solely to cinema, and was born out of the popularity and success films acquired on television.

The individualization of television programming continued into the 2000s with the development of on-demand television and the emergence and success of Internet streaming websites. For example, the pay television platforms SKY and Mediaset Premium offered audiences the opportunity to select specific programs to watch live or at a later time, without the inclusion of commercials. Such advancements, together with the explosion of DVD distribution, were an outgrowth of the widespread adoption of VHS for personal and commercial use in the late 1980s and 1990s, and an additional refinement of that chance to choose introduced by private television.

Moreover, in October 2015, the American and international streaming Internet platform Netflix became available also in Italy, further expanding the possibility for the audience to decide even more autonomously what programs to watch and when to watch them. The new service provides a plethora of on-demand products to its subscribers: films, television and web series, and documentaries, all free from advertisements. All these products not only give audiences new methods of interacting with programming and film, but also encourage the development of a new way to study cinema and television.

Beginning with the creation of VHS and continuing through the appearance of Netflix, films and television programs can be watched and re-watched numerous times, with the possibility of pausing, rewinding, or fast-forwarding. Moreover, scholars are no longer restricted to viewing films in a movie theater and other programs on mainstream television, as they are available virtually anywhere whether on thematic channels, DVD (or VHS), or the Internet, allowing them to interact with films in new ways. The emergence of these new practices, built on the success of the television programming

flow of the long 1980s, only further illustrates the profound effect that period had over the Italian population and media. At the same time, the television habit-forming flow also affected the Italian press and contemporary literature during the long 1980s and beyond, demonstrating even more deeply its pervasive effect on the Italian society.

Let's Put It on Paper I: Habit-Forming Flow and Press

Due to the rising popularity of television programming in Italy's everyday life, many newspapers such as *la Repubblica*, *La Stampa*, and *Il Manifesto*, started to publish private television channels' schedules next to RAI's, beginning in the second half of the 1970s. At the same time, newspapers increasingly included overviews of various programs. These new practices contributed to enable the simultaneous formation of a new type of television reviewing.

One such example is literary and television critic Beniamino Placido's daily television column "A parer mio" (In my Opinion, 1985-1993) appearing in *la Repubblica*. Placido represents quite a peculiar case since he was also a television host and author of cultural programs for RAI during the early 1980s before running this column. In his articles, Placido was one of the first television critics to give dignity to the medium without necessarily demonizing it:

la televisione era il male. Se si aveva una serata libera, era al cinema che bisognava andare. Fu così che mancai malauguratamente alcune esperienze fondamentali. [...] La perdita di questa e di altre esperienze di spettacolo popolare televisivo più che decoroso mi fece pensare che non bisognava dar sempre retta agli altri.¹

¹ "Television was evil. If you had the night off, you had to go to the cinema. Consequently, it was because of this idea that I unfortunately missed some fundamental experiences. [...] The

Moreover, while he had an idealized view of cinema, as he maintained that television mistreated and killed it, he offered important insights on television programming as a whole and not just on individual programs.² This testifies to the complexity of television programming and the consequent need to examine its entirety to understand its mechanisms.

Placido's column precisely consisted of a daily criticism of television offerings both as individual programs and as a whole. For example, in his article "Capitano Nemo, è vero che i mostri siamo noi?" (Captain Nemo, Is It True that We Are the Monsters?) he argued that the abundance of programs only offers the spectator an illusory chance to choose.³ This contributes to aggravate the dichotomic principle of omnipotence and impotence that Placido held to be at the core of the relationship between television programming and the audience. The latter is in fact only apparently in control of his choices; in reality these depend on the networks' strategies. Therefore, Placido's approach to television programming is at times in line with mine, since I focus on its entirety, rather than on isolated elements. Nevertheless, he maintained a mainly narratological approach to the analysis of programming rather than a theoretical one, and also did not expand on the historical and sociological context surrounding the television scope in his column.

loss of these more than decent experiences of popular television made me realize that it was not necessary to always listen to others." The translation is mine. Beniamino Placido, "E se la televisione tornasse ad essere la televisione?," in *Nautilus. La cultura come avventura*, ed. Franco Marcoaldi (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2010): 134. See also Aldo Grasso, ed., *Storie e culture della televisione italiana* (Milan: Mondadori, 2013), 200.

² *Ibid.*

³ Beniamino Placido, "Capitan Nemo, è vero che i mostri siamo noi?," *la Repubblica*, September 22, 1985, accessed November 10, 2015, <http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1985/09/22/capitan-nemo-vero-che-mostri-siamo.html?ref=search>.

However, one of the most interesting examples of the synergy between television's habit-forming flow and the press is the most-widely purchased magazine in Italy during the long 1980s: the weekly listings magazine *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*. Although, it has been scarcely explored by media scholarship, in these years, the magazine not only contained the schedules of individual Italian television channels, but also columns, surveys, and reviews on specific films and programs, signifying its firm connection with television programming. *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* published this additional information in order to inform television watching and encourage audiences to purchase the magazine and the products it advertised.

In particular, between 1987 and 1989, the film critic Gian Luigi Rondi wrote the column "Rondi in onda" (Rondi on Air) in which he often positively discussed the programming of films on television. The magazine created Rondi's column to exploit and fuel the success of cinema on television. Throughout his articles, the film critic enthusiastically endorsed the colorization of black-and-white films when broadcast on television, and the educational role of the latter in helping the audience to identify original and quality films to see when going to the movie theater. He was also not opposed to the insertion of commercials during films.⁴ Rondi's attitude is quite surprising in light of his austere stance on film viewing. As film critic Gianni Canova highlights, Rondi, President of the Venice International Film Festival in the mid-1980s, forbade people from entering the movie theater during the exhibition once the film had already

⁴ See for instance Gian Luigi Rondi, "Ma il colore sì," *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 3 (1988): 17; "Vince Kubrick," *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 6 (1988): 17; "La follia del cinema," *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 11-12 (1988): 25.

started.⁵ His change of attitude probably depended on his role as a film critic for a TV listing magazine owned from 1984 by Fininvest's largest shareholder Silvio Berlusconi.

The magazine's popularity in the long 1980s, demonstrates audience/readers' appreciation for a strong interaction between television programming and the press. Such interdependent relationship between *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* and television programming resided also in the presence of sweepstakes. These sweepstakes were promoted by the magazine, but were connected to television programs, as well as the purchase of specific commodities (such as detergents and toothpastes). As a result, this publication together with the aid of television programming aimed at informing the readers/viewers'

Figure 19 Sweepstakes advertisement in *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 6 (1985), 36.
© 1985 by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*.

⁵ Gianni Canova, "In ritardo dal futuro," *Segnocinema* 23 (May 1986): 16.

consumption habits. Indeed, people could buy *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*, fill out a postcard present in the magazine with their personal information and the answer to a question about a certain program, attach a particular product's label to the card, send it to a specific television program or channel, and finally watch the program to discover if their efforts were worthwhile. Prizes were often items promoted by the television flow: color television sets, VCRs, cars, vacations, as well as cash. These commodities were also generally becoming highly widespread among the Italian population during this period, thanks in part to the synergy between television programming, press, and consumption. The combination of the abovementioned entities contributed to expose Italians to the glamorization of these products, through their insertion into spectacular sweepstakes.

Furthermore, during the long 1980s, advertisements began to occupy increasing space on television as well as in *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*: “come sul piccolo schermo bisogna fare ripetuti spot interrompendo film e altri programmi, all'interno di un giornale non bisogna preoccuparsi di interrompere rubriche e servizi.”⁶ Moreover, as in the case of the television's habit-forming flow, pertinent advertisements often appeared next to or in the middle of a column or individual article. For example, a reader might find an advertisement for an automatic garage door and gate opener next to Carlo Luna's column on cars (Figure 25) or an advertisement for cough medicine adjacent to Piero Angela's health and science column (Figure 26). Hence, *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* also followed organizational principles similar to those of the habit-forming flow, in order to maximize

⁶ “Just as on television, where there are numerous commercials that interrupt films and other programs, in a magazine there is no reason to worry about interrupting columns and articles.” The translation is mine. Massimo Emanuelli, *50 anni di storia della televisione attraverso la stampa settimanale* (Milan: Greco & Greco, 2004), 401.



RIB
"L'AUTOMATISMO"
PER CANCELLI, SERRANDE, GARAGES.

RIB è l'automatismo per chi se ne intende e capisce la differenza, per chi desidera avere il meglio, per chi vuole una automazione che duri nel tempo senza problemi.

RIB è l'automatismo per chi non si accontenta di un prodotto solamente economico, per chi sceglie il prestigio insieme alle comodità e alla sicurezza.

Perché RIB non solo progetta, ma costruisce e collauda nei suoi stabilimenti ogni singolo pezzo dei suoi sistemi automatici.

Non avete scelta: scegliete RIB.



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RIB snc - Via Piave 13 - 20124 Cologno (MI)

Desidero fissare, senza alcun impegno, un appuntamento con il vostro personale specializzato. Sono interessato a: cancelli serrande garage altro

Nome _____
Via _____
CAP _____ Città _____

TV
Il vostro clacson



CINTURE, RETROMARCIA E CARBILLO. «Le case produttrici di auto hanno l'obbligo di vendere le loro vetture già corredate di cinture di sicurezza anteriori. Perciò, in assenza di queste, se ne può esigere la fornitura senza maggiorazione del prezzo di listino». È uno dei quesiti che mi pone una lettrice romana, la signora Bruna Carratella, che allaga alla sua lettera anche un francobollo per la risposta. Prego lei e gli altri lettori che mi seguono di non farlo: disorientato o per lettera si appena posso rispondo a tutti.

Quando il quesito sollevato, la risposta è molto semplice. Tutte le macchine omologate dopo il 31 dicembre 1979 devono, per legge, essere dotate di cinture di sicurezza anteriori. Quindi se viene venduta una macchina senza cinture si viola la legge e se si chiede una maggiorazione di prezzo per averle la violazione è doppia. Per le auto più antiche l'obbligo delle cinture non c'è, ma c'è solo quello degli attacchi.

La seconda domanda riguarda la luci di retromarcia. La lettrice chiede se c'è l'obbligo per le case di vendere auto che ne siano automaticamente dotate. Rispondo che per questo quest'obbligo non c'è, mentre dovrebbe esserci, in troppo poche auto, un sistema di accensione un accessorio ma uno strumento importante ai fini della sicurezza. Aggiungo che una macchina senza luci di retromarcia la giudicherei molto negativamente e che oggi quasi tutte ne sono dotate.

C'è un terzo quesito. Più che un quesito si tratta di una richiesta della gentile lettrice. Cioè di dedicare la settimanale «spaglia» soprattutto ad auto di piccola cilindrata a prezzi accessibili alla gran parte del pubblico. Credo che se si esamina la collezione di *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* si scoprirà, come è logico, che le auto piccole e di prezzo contenuto sono in realtà ignorate. E vero che appaiono anche molte «spaglie» di auto importanti e abbastanza costose, tuttavia per queste c'è una analogia richiesta, altrettanto corse e pressioni, di numerosi lettori. Cerco quindi di accostarle tutti.

Carlo B. Lina

TV
Viaggi nella scienza



IL BELLO, IL BRUTTO, E L'INTELLIGENTE. Brutto uguale successo. Questa è la conclusione alla quale sono arrivati due studiosi americani dopo un test psicologico condotto su studenti. I due ricercatori (James D. Moran e John McCuller) hanno voluto verificare se era vero oppure no la teoria secondo la quale bellezza e intelligenza nei maschi vanno solitamente insieme. Dopo aver fatto visitare le foto di un gran numero di studenti di una scuola a studenti di un'altra scuola (vivendo così il periodo che si conoscono), i due ricercatori hanno chiesto ogni volta di dare un giudizio sulla bellezza della persona raffigurata nella foto. Paragonando poi i giudizi dati e i risultati di test di altre ricerche secondo la quali esisterebbe invece un meccanismo psicologico che spinge gli individui a comportarsi proprio come gli altri li vedono. In questo modo, quindi, l'essere bello, che spesso viene associato con un uguale grado di intelligenza, socievolezza e simpatia, porterebbe un individuo a ericettare ad eccitare in molti campi. Una persona meno attraente invece, non potendo godere di questo «sincronismo» da parte della collettività, non sarebbe portata a sfondare nella vita. Ma secondo Moran e McCuller è il contrario che si verifica: le persone meno attraenti cercano di controllare il loro comportamento attraverso i risultati di altri test. Il che significa che i risultati raccolti nella loro ricerca testimonierebbero proprio quanto andavano delle cose. Detto ciò, sorge un dubbio: a parte la relatività dei giudizi sulla bellezza, che possono ovviamente variare, esistono veramente criteri validi per giudicare e misurare l'intelligenza di una persona?

LA MANTIDE RIABILITATA. Il morbo diffuso la credenza che, durante l'accoppiamento, la femmina della mantide uccida il suo compagno succhiandogli la testa e poi divorandolo. Recentemente però, due ricercatori (Richard Lake del Max Planck Institut sulla Repubblica Federale Tedesca, e W. Jackson Davis dell'Università di California, a Santa Cruz) hanno fortunatamente messo in dubbio questa tesi. Studiando infatti il comportamento di numerose coppie di mantidi cinesi, i due hanno concluso che l'uccisione del maschio avviene solo in condizioni molto particolari. Infatti, su trenta coppie osservate, solo una volta si è verificato l'attacco al maschio da parte della femmina. In questo caso, però, essa era molto affamata, dopo giorni di digiuno, e il povero maschio non si era mostrato particolarmente conciliante nelle sue proposte. Il corteggiamento delle mantidi è, a dire il vero, molto complesso. Si compone di nove sequenze, più o meno evidenti. Il rituale consiste in pratica in uno scambio di informazioni personali tramite una mimica a base di colpi di stomaco, sudorazioni e movimenti del corpo che, oltre ad avere un significato ben preciso sul codice d'amore delle mantidi, servono, secondo i due ricercatori, a ridurre l'istinto aggressivo contro livelli di sicurezza. Ma allora dove si è originata la credenza delle terribili femmine di mantide? Non si da escludere secondo Lake e Davis che le precarie condizioni di osservazione e cibo nelle quali erano tenute le mantidi sono state nel secolo scorso, quando cioè si scrissero i primi saggi, abbia modificato le loro abitudini a tal punto da farle apparire come vedove assente di sangue. Un mito, quindi, che deve essere sfatato.

Piero Angela

BRONCHENOLO
CONTRO LA TOSSE

Calma la tosse e, con la sua formula, avvolge un'efficace azione antinfiammatoria, fluidificante, balsamica ed espettorante. Ma non aspettate che la tosse diventi forte: ai primi fastidiosi sintomi, Bronchenolo.

Per adulti e bambini oltre i due anni. Contro la tosse, lo sciroppo di **bronch**.

Ora anche in compresse da sciogliere in bocca, comode da portare con sé.



Reg. Min. San. n. 6202 e 60014 - Aut. Min. San. n. 6340. Liqueur aromatizzata e sciroppo.

PAGELLA ACI DELLA SETTIMANA

ARTICOLI	9	FRON	0%
FANTASIE	10	TENITA	0%
CONFEZIONI	2	LETTERE	0%
PREFAZIONI	10	FORUMI	0%



Yellow Volkswagen Golf GTI. Prezzo lire 16.100.000

Figure 20 Examples of the arrangement of columns and relevant advertisements in *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* 8 (1985), 14, 16.
© 1985 by *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni*.

the advertisement message's effectiveness by juxtaposing it to the same potential reader of a column or separate article.

Finally, because Silvio Berlusconi purchased this publication in 1984 from the publishing house Rizzoli, the acquisition represents another example of vertical integration and the ways in which television and press worked together to increase audience viewership. For example, *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* gave increasing space to Fininvest's programs, through the implementation of surveys and advertisements focused on its films and television series. The magazine did so in order to take advantage of the popularity these genres had on television to sell more copies and enlarge their viewership. For Berlusconi, but also for other advertisers such as RAI, *Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni* constituted an important and complete resource to advertise Fininvest's programs, secure the spectator's loyalty, and limit the practice of zapping.

Let's Put It on Paper II: Habit-Forming Flow and Literature

The influence of the habit-forming flow reached beyond weekly and daily publications on television; it also shaped contemporary Italian literature. From a literary perspective, programming is the design and arrangement of the layout in a specific novel. In this section, I examine Italian novels published in the 1980s and 1990s to investigate how television programming informed contemporary Italian literature. They include Stefano Benni's *Terra!* (Earth!, 1983), Aldo Nove's *Woobinda: e altre storie senza lieto fine* (*Woobinda: And Other Stories Without a Happy Ending*, 1996), Isabella Santacroce's *Destroy* (1996), and the anthology of short stories *Gioventù cannibale* (*Cannibal Youth*, 1996) written by the so called "giovani cannibali" (young cannibals) featuring authors such as Niccolò Ammaniti, Luisa Brancaccio, Daniela Luttazzi, and also Aldo Nove.

The works of these authors most clearly depict the pervasive effect of the television programming on the Italian society, and the ways in which the fast-paced, action-filled narratives broadcast on television were informing narrative rhythms practiced by various contemporary Italian writers at that time. In fact, their writing referenced television's influence as they criticized a consumerist and shallow society dominated by this medium. However, and somewhat ironically, they employed the television narrative format in doing so. For this reason, their criticism of the Italian society between the 1980s and 1990s was only partial since they utilized the television narrative style themselves in their oeuvres. Moreover, these authors failed to provide any

alternative model as a basis on which to build a new society instead of the consumerist and television-absorbed one they criticized.⁷

The decision of these authors to replicate the television flow seems to have depended on its wide success with the Italian audience. In doing so, they hoped to attract readers used to the habit-forming flow. As Aldo Nove revealed about *Woobinda*:

il mio scopo dichiarato era quello di riportare il ritmo dello zapping in letteratura, scrivere televisivamente, ciò che è breve, veloce e spezzato. [...] È stato un misto di scelta letteraria e di... come dire... gratificante comodità, perché così si vive e così si parla. [...] Mi è capitato durante la lavorazione del libro di mettermi davanti alla televisione e di segnarmi le frasi, i modi di dire tipici, particolarmente vuoti. Vuoti però significativi, drammaticamente efficaci...⁸

Nove, as well as the other authors, aimed at reproducing the television flow as a whole, beyond the “zapping,” as he was aware of television programming’s pervasive effect on the Italian society. In addition, many of these writers themselves were particularly familiar with the language of television, as they grew up between the 1970s and 1980s right when a new programming style was developing. Stefano Benni, born well before the long 1980s, was a television author during the 1980s, and participated in the debate around the advent of new modalities of television watching during that period, such as

⁷ Stefania Lucamante, “Introduction: “Pulp,” Splatter, and More: The New Italian Narrative of the *Giovani Cannibali* Writers,” in *Italian Pulp Fiction. The New Narrative of the Giovani Cannibali Writers*, ed. Stefania Lucamante (Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2001), 27.

⁸ “My main purpose was to bring the rhythm of zapping into literature, to write as if it were television, that is, what is brief, fast, and fragmented. [...] It was partially a literary choice and... you know... partially a gratifying convenience, because this is how people live and talk. [...] While I was writing my book, I happened to sit in front of the television and write down phrases, idioms, all particularly empty. Empty but meaningful, dramatically effective...” The translation is mine. Claudia Bonadonna, “Now Generation. Aldo Nove,” *Pulp 2* (1996): 11.

the frenetic utilization of the remote control.⁹ All these writers were hence acquainted with television programming and its power of attraction.

The writings of the “young cannibals” were particularly reliant on television. Their spectacularized depiction of violence hinged on its glamorization and success on television. Many films, television series, and also cartoons between the 1980s and 1990s featured a great deal of stylized violence. As literary critic Gian Paolo Renello maintains: “the blood and flesh that *Cannibali* writers throw at us in their texts are the same that we see in films or, even better, in television series.”¹⁰ Therefore, violence is primarily a means to attract potential readers, rather than simply a way to denounce the excessive moralism of the Italian society.¹¹ The “young cannibals” were therefore only partially transgressive, since they appear to have chiefly relied on mainstream television’s successful use of violence for their own commercial success.

Benni, Nove, Stantacroce, and the “young cannibals” also utilized television’s habit-forming flow as a prominent model to structure their works. In particular, chapters are brief or divided into subchapters, which replicated the short sequences of television programming where advertisements and programs continuously and coherently alternated without disrupting the flow. For instance, Nove’s *Woobinda* features several microstories united into an overall macrostory of perverse and alienated characters morbidly polarized by consumerism and addicted to television watching. As Renello contends, “Nove’s writing is ‘televise’”: flat, linear, and sequential. It is brief, precise, and given in jerks

⁹ See for instance Stefano Benni, “Telecomandati,” in *Il Patalogo quattro: annuario 1982 dello spettacolo. Cinema e televisione*, ed. Franco Quadri (Milan: Ubulibri, 1982), 229-230.

¹⁰ Gian Paolo Renello, “The mediatic body of the *Cannibale* Literature,” in *Italian Pulp Fiction*, 140-141.

¹¹ Daniele Brolli, “Le favole cambiano,” in *Gioventù cannibale*, ed. Daniele Brolli (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), V-X.

like a series of frames.”¹² Consequently, the fast pace and cohesiveness of the novel reflect that of the television flow.

Moreover, descriptions in these works, while minimum, are incredibly visual due to the inclusion of goods advertised on television. In Ammaniti and Brancaccio’s short story “Seratina” (Some Night!) from the anthology *Gioventù Cannibale*, clothing brands such as Stefanel, Benetton, and Fendi enter the story just as commercials invaded television programs.¹³ Similarly, in Santacroce’s *Destroy*, brands substitute for the description of a specific item: the protagonist Misty simply refers to her jacket as Carhartt, a camera as Nikon, and a television set as Grundig.¹⁴ The prominence of product brands and their insertion into the story reproduce the emphasis television placed on the many commodities coherently scattered through the programming. Santacroce chose to limit the accuracy of her descriptions, as she was aware her audience was familiar with television programming and the products it advertised.

Furthermore, the authors’ use of numerous genres in their writing also reflects the television flow. Their stories are often a pastiche of different genres where many substories intertwine without disrupting the flow of the novel, as with television and its variegated, yet mostly cohesive offerings. The most evident example is Benni’s *Terra!*, where fantasy, satire, poetry, as well as new jargon coined by the author himself coherently interlace throughout the various stories comprising the novel, rendering it quite peculiar. This was also a prominent characteristic of television programming during the long 1980s, as channels arranged and juxtaposed heterogeneous programs and genres without endangering the flow.

¹² Renello, “The mediatic body of the *Cannibale* Literature,” in *Italian Pulp Fiction*, 148.

¹³ Niccolò Ammaniti and Luisa Brancaccio, “Seratina,” in *Gioventù cannibale*, 5.

¹⁴ Isabella Santacroce, *Destroy* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1996), 8, 13.

Finally, some works share television programming's chronological freedom. Literary critic Massimo Arcangeli holds that in some cases, as in Santacroce's *Destroy*, it is possible to elude the chronological order of the chapters without disrupting the story's whole meaning.¹⁵ Reading the chapters out of sequential order would not negatively affect a reader's appreciation of and understanding of the text. Literary critic Marino Sinibaldi also contends that *Destroy*:

organizzato in brevi paragrafi che declinano il titolo complessivo e possono essere letti in qualunque ordine senza che la trama, trascurabile com'è, ne risulti sconvolta [...]: lo si può aprire anche a caso e trovarvi comunque, fin dalle prime righe, descritto in tutta la sua interezza il pezzo di mondo che si propone di narrare.¹⁶

Yet neither Arcangeli nor Sinibaldi identify this format as a feature typical of television programming, which the spectator could intercept at any time when selecting the channel to watch, without jeopardizing its internal coherence.

My analysis of these literary works seeks to provide initial points of reference to conduct further research on the relationship between Italian television programming, press, and literature during the 1980s and 1990s. Future study in this area will benefit from an even deeper study including closed readings of the texts mentioned above, and the continued analysis of the influence of to the habit-forming flow on their content and

¹⁵ Massimo Arcangeli, *Giovani scrittori, scritture giovani: ribelli, sognatori, cannibali, bad girls* (Rome: Carocci, 2007), 136.

¹⁶ *Destroy* "is organized in short sections that follow the overall title and that can be read in any order whatsoever without endangering a trivial plot [...]: one can randomly open it and start reading it and still find, from the very first lines, an accurate description of the specific piece of the world that the book desires to narrate." The translation is mine. Marino Sinibaldi, *Pulp. La letteratura nell'era della simultaneità* (Rome: Donzelli, 1997), 81-82.

style. In this section, I began to demonstrate the strong influence television's habit-forming flow exercised on contemporary Italian literature. Several writers tailored their narrative style to replicate television programming in order to attract especially young generations, progressively captivated by the language of television.

The most evident innovation of my research thus far is that it identifies the habit-forming flow and proves its pervasiveness from the mid-1970s through the 1990s in Italy. Television programming's significant success with Italians, particularly through the extensive broadcasting of films — interrupted and enhanced by frequent television commercials — informed Italians' consumption practices. Moreover, it affected Italian press and literature, prompting new modes for discussing television and the creation of new narrative formats. The conception and implementation of the habit-forming flow on television significantly impacted Italian society and culture during the long 1980s and beyond.

Appendices

Appendix A. Film Cycles

Rai

Film Dossier (Raiuno)

Gregory Peck – Le avventure di un americano tranquillo (Rete 1)

Il club del martedì (Raidue)

Lunedì Film (Raiuno)

Pomeriggio al cinema (Raiuno)

Sabato club (Raidue)

Uomini: trent'anni di fascino maschile (Raitre)

Fininvest

Cinema d'autore (Canale 5)

Cineteca di mezzanotte (Italia 1)

Film superstar (Rete 4)

I Bellissimi (Rete 4)

I Filmissimi (Canale 5)

Lunedì Film (Italia 1)

Nati per vincere (Italia 1)

Pomeriggio con sentimento (Canale 5)

Superfilm (Italia 1)

XX Secolo (Canale 5)

Appendix B. Television Programs

Rai

Almanacco del giorno dopo (Raiuno, 1976-1994)
Ars Amanda (Raitre, 1989)
Atlas Ufo Robot (Rete 2, Japan 1975-1977)
Big! (Raiuno, 1987-1993)
Blob (Raitre, 1989-to present)
Bontà loro (Rete 1, 1976-1978)
Buonasera con... (Rete 2, 1977-1982)
Capitol (Raidue, U.S., 1982-1987)
Carosello (Rete 1, 1957-1977)
Che fai, mangi? (Raidue, 1983-1985)
Chi l'ha visto? (Raitre, 1989-to present),
Complimenti per la trasmissione (Raitre, 1988-1989)
Cordialmente (Raidue, 1985-1987)
Cuore e batticuore (Raidue, *Hart to Hart*, U.S., 1979-1984),
Dallas (Raiuno, U.S., 1978-1991)
Domenica in (Raiuno, 1976-to present)
Happy Days (Rete 1, U.S., 1974-1984)
Ieri, Goggi, domani (Raiuno, 1987-1988)
Il mondo di Quark (Raiuno, 1984-1993)
Italia Sera (Raiuno, 1983-1986)
L'altra domenica (Rete 2, 1976-1979)
L'amore è una cosa meravigliosa (Raidue, 1989-1990)
La tata e il professore (Raiuno, *Nanny and the Professor*, U.S., 1970-1971)
La tv delle ragazze (Raitre, 1988-1989)
Mezzogiorno è... (Raidue, 1987-1990)
Miami Vice (Raidue, U.S., 1984-1990),
Mork & Mindy (Rete 2, U.S., 1978-1982)
Odeon (Rete 2, 1976-1978)

Pane e marmellata (Raidue, 1985-1986)
Pronto, Raffaella? (Raiuno, 1983-1985)
Quando si ama (Raidue, *Loving*, U.S., 1983-1995)
Samarconda (Raitre, 1987-1992)
Speciale TG 1 (Raiuno, 1976-to present)
Spot. Uomini, storie, avventure (Raiuno, 1986)
Tandem (Raidue, 1982-1987)
TG 2 Dossier (Raidue, 1976-to present)
Unomattina (Raiuno, 1986-to present)
Vita da strega (Rete 1, Raitre, *Bewitched*, U.S., 1964-1972)
3,2,1... Contatto! (Rete 1, 1980-1981)
20 anni prima - Schegge (Raitre, 1988-1995)

Fininvest

Agenzia Rockford (Canale 5, Italia 1, *The Rockford Files*, U.S., 1974-1980)
Bim Bum Bam (Italia 1, Canale 5, 1981-2002)
Bis (Canale 5, 1981-1990)
Buona Domenica (Canale 5, 1985-1987, 1991-2008)
Buongiorno Italia (Canale 5, 1981-1984, 1987-1988)
C'eravamo tanto amati (Rete 4, 1989-1994)
Ciao Ciao (Rete 4, 1982-1992)
Colombo (Rete 4, U.S., 1968-2003)
Controcorrente (Italia 1, 1986-1987)
Dallas (Canale 5, Rete 4, U.S., 1978-1991)
Doppio slalom (Canale 5, 1985-1990)
Drive in (Italia 1, 1983-1988)
Il gioco dei 9 (Canale 5, 1988-1992)
Happy Days (Italia 1, 1974-1984)
Hazzard (Canale 5, Italia 1, *The Dukes of Hazzard*, U.S., 1979-1985)
I Jefferson (Canale 5, *The Jeffersons*, U.S., 1975-1985).
I Robinson (Canale 5, Italia 1, *The Cosby Show*, U.S., 1984-1992)

Il mio amico Arnold (Canale 5, Italia 1, *Different Strokes*, U.S., 1978-1986)
Il pranzo è servito (Canale 5, Rete 4, 1982-1993)
La casa nella prateria (Italia 1, *Little House on the Prairie*, U.S., 1974-1983)
L'incredibile Hulk (Italia 1, *The Incredible Hulk*, U.S., 1978-1982)
Love Boat (Canale 5, U.S., 1977-1987)
Magnum, P.I. (Italia 1, U.S., 1980-1988)
Mai dire sì (Rete 4, *Remington Steele*, U.S., 1982-1987)
Maurizio Costanzo Show (Rete 4, Canale 5, 1982-2009)
Mork & Mindy (Italia 1, U.S., 1978-1982)
Nonsolomoda (Rete 4, Canale 5, 1984-2012)
OK! Il prezzo è giusto (Italia 1, Canale 5, Rete 4, 1983-2001)
Phyllis (Canale 5, U.S., 1975-1977)
Quincy (Canale 5, Italia 1, *Quincy, M.E.*, U.S., 1976-1983)
Ralph supermaxieroe (Italia 1, *The Greatest American Hero*, U.S., 1981-1983)
Ricordi di Guerra (Rete 4, *War and Remembrance*, U.S., 1988-1989)
Telecomando (Rete 4, 1989)
Simon & Simon (Italia 1, U.S., 1981-1985)
Star Trek (Italia 1, U.S., 1966-1969)
Supercar (Italia 1, *Knight Rider*, U.S., 1982-1986)

Appendix C. Videography

Rai

- Braccato (Le battant, 1983)*: VHS January 17, 1987, Raidue
Caruso Pascoski (di padre polacco) (1988): VHS November 6, 1990, Raidue
Cronaca di una morte annunciata (1987): VHS November 14, 1990, Raidue
Delitto sotto il sole (Evil Under the Sun, 1982): VHS September 5, 1988, Raitre
Il magnate greco (The Greek Tycoon, 1978): VHS June 8, 1990, Raidue
Lili Marleen (1981): VHS May 8, 1985, Raitre
Lo chiamavano Trinità (1970): VHS March 12, 1987, Raiuno
Papillon (1973): VHS November 24, 1990, Raitre
Paris, Texas (1984): VHS February 7, 1987, Raidue
Piccolo grande uomo (Little Big Man, 1970): VHS February 3, 1989, Raiuno
Ritorno al futuro (Back to the Future, 1985): VHS December 24, 1989, Raidue
Sinfonia d'autunno (Autumn Sonata, 1978): VHS July 11, 1985, Raiuno
Storia d'amore (1986): VHS November 11, 1988, Raitre

Fininvest

- All'inseguimento della pietra verda (Romancing the Stone, 1984)*:
VHS January 6, 1991, Canale 5
Creator (Dr. Creator, specialista in miracoli, 1985): VHS April 27, 1989, Rete 4
Footloose (1984): VHS June 19, 1989, Italia 1
Ghostbusters (1984): VHS December 11, 1989, Canale 5
I Goonies (The Goonies, 1985): VHS January 12, 1990, Italia 1
Il piccolo diavolo (1988): VHS October 8, 1990, Canale 5
Il principe cerca moglie (Coming to America, 1988):
VHS January 14, 1991, Canale 5
Sindrome cinese (The China Syndrome, 1979): VHS May 21, 1986, Canale 5
Superfantozzi (1986): VHS November 18, 1990, Canale 5
Urla del silenzio (The Killing Fields, 1984): VHS October 31, 1989, Canale 5

Appendix D. TV listing magazines

Tv Sorrisi e Canzoni: Italian weekly TV listing magazine. Collection of 350 issues from 1982 until 1991, purchased from a private citizen.

Scelta TV: Italian weekly TV listing magazine. Online archive available at www.sceltatv.org.

Appendix E. Laws, Decrees, Directives, and Judgments

1. Television Broadcasting:

Decree of the President of the Italian Republic no. 156 of 29 March 1973, “Approvazione del testo unico delle disposizioni legislative in materia postale, di bancoposta e di telecomunicazioni,” published in *GU* no. 113, May 3, 1973 – Ordinary Supplement.

Judgment no. 226 of 10 July 1974, published in *Gazzetta Ufficiale [hereafter GU]* no. 187, July 17, 1974.

Judgment no. 225 of 10 July 1974, published in *GU* no. 187, July 17, 1974.

Law no. 103 of 14 April 1975, “Nuove norme in materia di diffusione radiofonica e televisiva,” published in *GU* no. 102, April 17, 1975.

Judgment no. 202 of 28 July 1976, published in *GU* no. 205, August 4, 1976.

Law no. 10 of 4 February 1985, “Conversione in legge, con modificazioni, del decreto-legge 6 dicembre 1984, n. 807, recante disposizioni urgenti in materia di trasmissioni radiotelevisive,” published in *GU* no. 30, February 5, 1985.

Law no. 223 of 6 August 1990, “Disciplina del sistema radiotelevisivo pubblico e private” (*GU* no. 185, 08/09/1990 – Ordinary Supplement no. 53).

Council Directive 89/552/EEC, of 3 October 1989, on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities (*Official Journal of European Communities*, no. 298, 10/17/1989).

2. Cinema

Law no. 1213 of 4 November 1965, “Nuovo ordinamento dei provvedimenti a favore della cinematografia,” published in *GU* no. 282, November 12, 1965.

3. Education

Law no. 820 of 24 September 1971, “Norme sull'ordinamento della scuola elementare e sulla immissione in ruolo degli insegnanti della scuola elementare e della scuola materna statale,” published in *GU* no. 261, October 14, 1971.

4. Family

Law no. 151 of 19 May 1975, “Riforma del diritto di famiglia,” published in *GU* no. 135, May 23, 1975.

Law no. 194 of 22 May 1978, “Norme per la tutela sociale della maternità e sull'interruzione volontaria della gravidanza,” published in *GU* no. 140, May 22, 1978.

5. Health Care

Law no. 833 of 23 December 1978, “Istituzione del servizio sanitario nazionale,” published in *GU* no. 360, December 28, 1978 – Ordinary Supplement.

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