

named after the late Fritz Sanger, was rejected in 1989 by a TV editor. Sanger was highly respected in the Federal Republic but had written for prestige papers in Nazi Germany.

Friederike Harmgarth

Hannover, Federal Republic of Germany

Cheli, E., E. Mancini, G. Mazzoleni, G. Tinacci Mannelli, *Elezioni in TV: dalle tribune alla pubblicita. La campagna elettorale del 1987*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 1989, 159 pp.

This interesting volume is a useful broadening of serious research on the symbiosis between broadcasting and politics. It is an analysis — and evaluation — of a national campaign in a country which has a ‘mixed’ broadcast system, with both a classic European government-operated sector and a commercial broadcast sector which is unregulated. The government system, RAI, sells no political advertising but provides free time, the amount of which is calculated with exquisite precision, to the political parties, along with round table discussions, interviews and analysis by political journalists. The unregulated commercial networks sell time to whoever they like and also provide some journalistic coverage.

There are many interesting data in this study, but the authors do not allow this fact to tie their hands. They feel the present Italian political establishment is elitist, inward-looking and insular; they feel that the media, both print and broadcasting, have over the years done nothing to get ordinary citizens intelligently involved in politics, and that this was true in 1987 despite a tremendous output of words and images.

They demonstrate that the content of television broadcasts during the national campaign of 1987 tended to concentrate upon the machinations of parties and politicians rather than issues of social policy which they feel would have greater interest for most voters.

RAI’s campaign broadcasting is supervised directly by a parliamentary watch-dog committee made up of deputies. Political journalists tend to become members of the political establishment in many countries and this is particularly true in Italy. Commercial broadcasting has no such official constraints or direct political input. However, it has the massive consideration of maximizing profits, which has led to decisions such as restricting political broadcasts to off-peak viewing hours.

Commercial broadcasting in Italy has a curious history. The legislation which created RAI gave it a monopoly. In 1976, however, the courts ruled that the monopoly applied only to nationwide broadcasting, leaving the field open to non-network stations — a qualification which entrepreneurs soon learned to circumvent. Italy now has a relatively small and efficient commercial system, the basic fodder of which is old television series and movies. The commercial sector did, however, give substantial attention to the election of 1987.

The authors of this study analysed the electoral content of RAI’s Channels 1, 2 and 3, and in the commercial group known collectively as FININVEST, they studied Channel 5, Network 4 and Italia 1. There also was some analysis of a third

source, Euro TV, but there are no data from that source. In any case, there is a rewarding amount of hard facts and figures, such as:

- total minutes of campaign broadcasts by each network (FININVEST broadcast some 1,500 minutes more than RAI; 38 percent of its total was paid commercials);
- in addition to a complete log of political material on the six networks, a breakdown by type (press conferences, interviews, journalists' reports, etc.);
- a list of the most frequent performers for all parties (not surprisingly, Craxi, Penella and Spadolini appeared most often);
- a number of tables providing an analysis of themes, repeatedly showing a heavy concentration on what are coded as 'political issues' i.e., they dealt with the structure of the system, the forming of coalitions, possible shape of the next government, etc.;
- a section on broadcast campaign advertising; there are data on the amount of time given to them on each of the networks; the amount of time bought by each party (the Socialists bought the most, with the Christian Democrats a close second). The authors tabulate the correlation between total air-time for each party and the increment (or loss) in the vote compared to the last election. The Socialists had the largest increment, almost 3 percent; the Christian Democrats were second in both air-time and increment; the Communists, who had the least air-time, had the largest loss. Interesting as this is the authors wisely point out that while this might suggest a connection, it is far from proving it.

The final major section of the study deals with the size of the audience and its viewing behaviour. The data come from a research organization called AUDITEL, which tracks both RAI and the private networks, and includes viewer figures for major campaign programmes on the six channels, including audience share for each sector, penetration and, particularly telling, data on the viewers of other programmes who switch over when a political programme comes on. As the writer of the chapter puts it, 'the Italian viewing public were not well-pleased at the intrusion of the electoral dish on their customary viewing menu'.

The empirical data are the most important elements of this study, but the authors do not simply present the figures and fall silent. In a final section headed 'How to use this research', they set out some recommendations for improving the quality and, more importantly, the audience appeal of political broadcasting:

1. a broad reduction in the amount of campaign broadcasts;
2. a targeting of material with careful matching of topics with audiences, with time and length important considerations;
3. establishment of an organization co-ordinating political broadcast schedules so they become more frequent and of more importance as election day approaches;
4. in connection with this, it is necessary that there is ample publicity in the press and television about upcoming programmes so that viewers can make intelligent choices.

Co-ordination and control are rarely found in political campaigns, especially in Italy, but we wish the authors well.

William E. Porter
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan