



LUND
UNIVERSITY

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STV102

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Corruption -

A discursive analysis of a political scandal.

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Abstract

With the use of a discursive analysis political documents of the Italian socialist leader, Bettino Craxi, will come to the attention of this study. The theoretical framework and structure of the work, is based on the conviction that social processes, such as social behavior and language should be understood within their context. An objective reality is not denied but remains dependant on its surroundings and interpretation. The author thus affirms the value of analyzing corruption within its contextual discourse.

Italy is shown to have suffered severely from the existence of political crime, violence and heavy corruption leading up to the scandalous revelations of the Mani Pulite campaign in the 1990's. The following question was raised: *How can the discourse of corruption be characterized, before and during the process of Mani Pulite, from the perspective of the socialist leader at that time, Bettino Craxi?*

Two points are fundamental to the contemplation of this question. Firstly, articulations which associate positive developments to corruption, and secondly constructions of identities which permit and fix a specific meaning to corruption.

Key words: discursive analysis, Bettino Craxi, Italy, corruption, meaning

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1 Introduction

Italy's political reality has for many years been characterized by scandals, corruption and embezzlement. This culminated in the much known Mani Pulite campaign¹ in the early 1990's, which brought several leading politicians into trial and estimated corruption to have cost the Italian economy one trillion dollars during the decade of 1980-1990 (Gilbert 1995:130).

In the course of the revelations of the Mani Pulite process the population's rage grew and was directed towards their authority, the Italian state. The immense popular reaction put pressure on civil society to act and hence a radical change took place in the political landscape with two of the major parties, DC and PSI, dissolving (Ginsborg 1998: 526f).

The Italian government, however, managed to cover up the ongoing illegalities and remain in power for many years. The author believes that this was most probably made possible because of the dominant political discourse of corruption at the time. Such discourses were utilized by politicians to form perceptions of the world and themselves and, consequently, informing their actions and beliefs.

1.1 Research problem

This study aims to analyze the hypothesis that Italian politicians through the use of language and discourse have made, what can only be regarded as unacceptable behavior, accepted. Could the political rhetoric used have created and justified a society where politicians were allowed more benefits than ordinary people? Did discourse prevent politicians from properly identifying, understanding and confronting injustice within society?

Following on from the above, the analysis will proceed in finding the answer to the question: *How can the discourse of corruption be characterized before and during the process of Mani Pulite from the perspective of the socialist leader Bettino Craxi?*

In order to make it possible to arrive at an answer to this question, a few sub-questions are of interest: *What identities have the discourse created? Which associations do the discourse's articulations reveal and what meaning do they fix?* This study will continue in the next chapter with a discussion of the material analyzed, and chapter 3 will present the theory of the discourse analysis and illustrate how this will be methodologically used. Following this, a historic

¹ Equally, Operation Clean Hands

background will be drawn in chapter 4, chapter 5 will initiate the actual study, and lastly, chapter 6 will conclude the study's findings.

2 Material

The material from which I intend to draw my conclusions is constituted by speeches and reports presented by the socialist party member, Bettino Craxi. The documentation stretches from 1978 until 1994 when the socialist party², PSI, later was dissolved.

During this time period the PSI was affiliated with 13 different governmental arrangements and the main national party for five years³ under the rule of Craxi, the Italian prime minister for four of those years (governo.it 2007). Consequently, he could be argued to be one of the major characters of Italian politics of the time.

What makes Craxi so interesting was his major involvement in the Italian political corruption which was revealed in the 1990s. Craxi was prosecuted in 1992 (Gilbert 1995: 126ff). The material used thus permits the author to follow the events leading up to the fall of both the politician's party and his career.

The data analysed is aimed at other politicians, from the same party, PSI, and opposing parties. Since all politicians are engaged in the same national political discourse, the underlying structure of the language used will be of great importance in understanding how the politicians viewed themselves.

The material is gathered from the web site, www.fondazionecraxi.org, created by Bettino Craxi's own daughter. Unfortunately, the government itself, or even an more neutral source, have not chosen to provide the public with this kind of information which may have reduced the risk of partial and screened material. However, although there may be some controversies in the choice of data on account of the provider, the substantial time period of 16 years and the large number of documents still make it promising to perform a fruitful analysis.

Political speeches and writings during the last decade have been given more attention and become the subject to greater research (Bergström, Boréus 2000: 221). These studies have often identified inequalities in society of which many can be seen to be directly or indirectly reflective of particular political discourses common to the time. Discourses concerning gender, but also homosexuality and race are examples of these.

As earlier mentioned, this particular study will instead focus upon the affect of political discourse concerning the perceptions of politicians and their perceptions of the world, which potentially influenced their own opinions, decisions and actions. The conclusions drawn will next to always be demonstrated by a quote taken directly from source documents to prevent and minimize the risk of subjectivity which a discursive analysis inevitably involves⁴. Since the quotations

² Partito Socialista Italiano

³ Aug 1983 -Aug 1986; Aug 1986 - April 1987; June 1992-April 1993.

⁴ A further motivation to this can further be found in the following chapters.

have been translated by the author herself, the original statements are provided and can be found in Appendix 1.

Proceeding from the above discussion will be a description and development of the theoretic background structuring the actual analysis.

3 Method and theoretic background

The documents of Bettino Craxi will be analyzed discursively to cast light upon the leading discourse surrounding corruption. This chapter will describe what beliefs have given ground to the method, and likewise theory, of the discourse analyze. Thereafter the general ideas and basic claims of the theory will be presented which will structure the author's work as well as specify this study's main focus. Finally it will be illustrated how the theory will be used in practice.

3.1 Basic presumptions

The theoretical arguments of the following study are founded on a relativistic ontology. The reality isn't simply out there for anyone to study and draw conclusions from. It is dependent on the context, such as the historic background, the ambiance and the people interpreting the situation. Departing from this point of view I will, in addition, affirm a subjective epistemological position (Bergström, Boreus 2000: 21f). Much of knowledge is reached not directly from the object, but from other's observation of it. Discourse analyser, Connolly claims; "*language provides a perspective to the reality which we shall understand*"⁵ (Bergström, Boreus 2000: 234). Although not denying the existence of an objective reality, the author aims to argue for the necessity of analyzing language and discourse within its specific context. The Craxi documents will thus be recognized within the framework of Italian society and politics within this specific time period.

3.2 Theory of discourse analysis

Fundamental to discourse analysis is the opposition to the existence of entirely objective knowledge of the world. To reach "true" knowledge of the world it takes more than a merely plain observation of the subject. Moreover, analysts argue that human beings, including their understanding of their surroundings and themselves, are historically and culturally shaped. Hence "reality" is not static but constantly reconstructed within its context (Winther Jørgensen, Philips 2000: 11f).

⁵ My translation

The social is central to the theory; creating, developing and guiding our knowledge from which we later act and talk (Winther Jørgensen, Philips 2000: 11f). One of these social processes is the use of language.

Language can be understood as a factor, which shapes, and at the same time is guided by, the social and political reality surrounding its users. It creates and hands the people a filter through which they interpret the world. The author will further in the analysis show how this is done; one aspect of it could be the use of emotional expressions in relation to neutral phenomenon. Connecting two objects like these simplifies and helps people organise their reality. Language acts in this manner, and in several others, as one of the most basic and important tools guiding our opinions and thoughts. Thus, the knowledge we have about ourselves and about the world to a large extent can be drawn from language (Bergström, Boréus 2000: 234f, Chouliaraki, Fairclough 1999: 47f). Since the context in which we exist consequently shapes every human being's way of talking, thinking and acting, society and language share a number of characteristics and organisational traits (Howarth 2000: 17).

Every person's reality is constructed by different discourses, which all fight to structure the social (Jørgensen 2000: 49). Often referred to as the father of the discursive analysis, Michel Foucault (Howarth 2000: 48), defined discourses to be *"practices that systematically form the objects of which we speak"* (1972: 49). Within discourse theory, words and expressions as well as objects and actions are given meaning. Into this setting the human being is placed with the tools to identify and interpret the world, and furthermore react to it from this given standpoint. With this said, words or actions should not be understood simply as a method of naming objects or bluntly expressing their reality. Instead they constitute a much bigger system of underlying structures and layers of meaning (Howarth 2000: 8f, 28).

A discourse is never completely stable and is unable to dominate a individual's perception entirely. Discourses are constantly being reconstructed by the social, influencing the people what is and what is not accepted. Though nothing is constant, human beings can never act completely independently from a prevailing discourse. The possibilities to change the current structures always depend on what has been before (Jørgensen 2000: 46ff).

According to Foucault people are held disciplined by discourse. A discourse defines what is allowed and what is not, what is custom and what is not, what is sick and what is not etc. In the following manner the discourse maintains a certain amount of power. This power is closely related to knowledge but it is not seen as a factor held by any specific individual, nor is it directed towards anyone in particular. Instead it evolves in the relationships between human beings, involving negative consequences for some and positive for others (Bergström, Boréus 2000: 225).

The structural thinkers' major assumption of the nature of knowledge as relative, or dependent on the linkage connecting different objects is yet central to the theory. "Daughter" is understood from "mother" (Howarth 2000: 10), as "corruption" is from "crime" etc. Understanding can so be said to be drawn from the structure of linking objects together, organizing the differences and so giving

individual objects their meaning. Structuralists thus, are of the opinion that the meaning of singular objects only becomes important in relationship to the whole. The structure of connections between items helps us comprehend the social world (Howarth 2000, 10f, 17, Simons 1995: 24). Laclau & Muffe further develop these arguments, calling all internal elements of a discourse *moments*, getting their particular meaning from their *differential positions*. The relations between the moments are created and expressed through the practice the theorists call, *articulation*. Concrete articulations associate different elements in the text with each other, which stresses some particular meaning of the discussed and ignore other interpretations. From this it could be established that every social act, as well as written or oral expression, constitutes an articulation (Jørgensen, Phillips 2000: 33ff).

A social act, writing or speech for example, is always based on the current discourse. However, these expressions not only confirm to the structural context of the particular discourse, they are also a part of changing it. Such renewal can be reached in several ways. One of them is a broader or more limited use of terminology and another being a change of the relative placement of words next to each other (Jørgensen 2000: 36). Therefore, nothing is constant when attempting to understand the world in the manner described above. The context which creates the discourse is consistently evolving, paving the way for the "next reality" (Bergström, Boréus 200: 235).

Even with the above said, there could still exist an objective reality, according to many discourse theorists. They are simply of the opinion that the observed is first given meaning through the current discourse. Stated differently, knowledge of the world is relatively shaped, based on the surrounding context. A war can strike one person as unnecessary, filled with useless death, while another understands it as the only way to achieve an acceptable future (Bergström, Boréus 2000: 235; Winther Jørgensen, Phillips 2000: 15).

Moving the analysis further, the Marxist Italian theorist, Antonio Gramsci, coins the important concept of *hegemony* to describe a certain function of society. He based it on the thought that the superstructure⁶ partly, just as the economy⁷, could determine the conscious of the human being. The theory describes how there is no need for violence or repression to achieve what is strived for, instead the state must follow the principle of "organisation of consent"⁸. The domination and power of the most influential of society is justified, as well as adapted by the rest of the community, through a process in which all is given meaning (Gramsci 2000 (ed.): 306f, Jørgensen 2000: 39). A false consciousness is formed built upon the idea that society is fair, in spite of data showing a reality much different. The belief, nevertheless, secures the population's faith in the rulers' capacity. Thus, hegemony describes the structure of agreement that undermines the position of the less successful in society whilst covering up the intentions and interests of society's most powerful (Jørgensen 2000: 39). It could be expressed as an exercise of class domination to create consent amongst the population. The upper

⁶ That is; the state, the church, the judicial system etc.

⁷ The economy was by earlier comunists understood as the alone factor determinig society.

⁸ My translation

social class accordingly maintains and justifies its dominance using all “*practical and theoretical activities*” (Howarth 2000: 91) available to reach its goal, thus continuing its domination. In such a manner, the belief that politics is used in accordance with different actors’ needs and wills provides the foundation of political hegemony (Sterne 2003: 109).

Gramsci described how the superstructure's creation of meaning of the world could trigger the population to act and rebel against the material injustices; a scene other Marxists have had much difficulty explaining (Gramsci 2000 (ed.): 170f, Jørgensen 2000: 39). This text, however, will focus upon the contrary development, that is, the upper society bringing meaning to their actions, even unjust ones, which in effect blinds those people from other levels of society, as well as themselves in such a manner that it maintains their status and opportunity to control the economy.

Even if Gramsci acknowledges human beings’ possibility to think and act beyond the economy, he is of the opinion that material circumstances have the final say in governing people’s thoughts and actions (Mouffe 1979: 199, Jørgensen 2000: 39).

Post Marxists, Laclau & Mouffe, developed Gramsci’s thoughts on hegemony, which they placed in between *the objective* and *politics*, or in between the unchallenged truths and the reality. Obvious conflicts and alternative views of the world could, according to them, through the process of hegemony be suppressed and replaced by unquestionable beliefs constructing peoples’ reality (Jørgensen 2000: 44). The phenomenon, in consequence, functioned as a process, prohibiting doubt from reaching certain areas, turning what naturally would be apprehended as conflicts to neutral grounds. Through this act, the aforementioned “organised consent” of the people was attained.

A final factor, important to mention before going any further, is the concept of *interpellation*. A discourse “speaks” to the individual and gives him or her, a social position. Althusser describes how the interpellation of the discourse makes the receiver become a subject. People are constantly made subject to several different discourses in their surrounding, which sometimes can contradict each other. In an election a person can, for example, be turned to as a woman, a republican and a mother, which consequently could demand certain choices (Jørgensen 2000: 22). When interpellated as more than one subject, hegemonic processes may erase conflicts and, hence, in this situation inevitably prevents people from realizing them (Jørgensen 2000: 49).

3.3 Practical use

Conducting a discursive analysis is not in any way unproblematic, the author although claims this method to be constructive in confronting corruption. Researchers have many years now struggled to uncover the underlying structures behind this type of financial crime, but still have not been able to reach any convincing results. Developing an understanding of the social reality from a

discursive structure provides new means to comprehend corruption, and so forth an alternative way to challenge it. Difficulties met, will though be discussed in the following section.

3.3.1 Confronting difficulties

The choice of method involves its difficulties and these will in this section further be discussed and confronted.

Discourse analysers repeatedly hear the opposition claim lacking scientific status of their research. It is all too subjective, thus the results attained are only one interpretation of many possible (Bergström, Boréus 2000: 25ff, 259f).

The severity of the accusations makes it impossible to ignore to face the arguments. Even if a discourse analyser never could affirm equal scientific weight as what maybe a scientist of chemistry could, it would be of great shame to consequently leave the entire field for such a reason.

This method, as most other, is in constant development, building up the frame work, which to a larger degree could structure the analysis (Bergström, Boréus 2000: 221f) and so forth minimize subjectivity. Important to remember though, is that much of the actual strength of discourse analysis in fact lies in its work outside of the common methodological frame. Conclusions drawn from these studies could therefore, if not more, be used to create hypothesis for further study.

With this said, the author would like to specify this particular analysis' basic structure. Initially it is of importance to mention, its primary focus on the segments of the Craxi documents concerning the actual corruption, and avoid drawing conclusions from statements outside of this frame, which easily could imply false inferences. From here, attention will be set on concrete articulations relating concepts, ideas and objects, the discourse's creation of identity and much more, all based on of the theory already presented, as well as the terminology from the following section.

3.3.2 Terminology

Terminology, which constructs much of this analysis, will in the following part be discussed. Some of the more important concepts have although already been introduced in the above section of 3.2, such as articulation, moments, interpellation and hegemonic processes. Therefore these will be left out in this section.

The theorists, Laclau & Mouffe, which stand for most of the analysis's basic frame work, discussed the concept of *logic of equivalence*. This kind of logic unified and related objects, identities and ideas according to similarities they all shared. Differently expressed, it could be said that a *chain of equivalence* is created on the basis its elements common opposition to a certain factor. Furthermore, the *logic of difference* challenges the discourse's regular frame with the introduction of a new concept with the already stabilized. At times such an articulation can

lead up to an expansion of the very discourse, breaking what normally linked the chain of equivalence together (Howarth 2000: 105ff).

A final important term before moving forward to the actual analysis is *antagonism*, which is based on the notion of conflict. When one identity stands in the way of another, unable to co-exist, the relationship between the two is antagonistic. Some identities work well together without involving difficulties. It is when these express opposing demands on a person the conflict situation is reached, which results in a block of one of the discourses. Hegemonic processes can at such times dissolve the conflict and re-establish a sole meaning by undermining the other (Jørgensen, Phillips 2000: 55).

From this, the thesis will continue on with an historic background, which cast more light upon the case, before initiating the main discussion of the Craxi documents.

4 Historic background

Italian politics took a violent turn in the beginning of the 1990's when several leading politicians, in the well known Mani Pulite campaign⁹, were held in custody and charged for their involvement in unjust affairs and corruption scandals (Gilbert 1995: 126).

It first started in February 1992 when the high-up and well known politician and business man, Mario Chiesa, was arrested for accepting a bribe of 7 million lire (Gilbert 1995: 126). This event came to release a process much bigger, concerning many more successful, leading men of Italy.

It soon became obvious how Italy's socialist leader at that time, Bettino Craxi, was highly involved in much of these shady affairs and this fueled the interest amongst the Italian population for the story (Gilbert 1995: 127, Ginsborg 1998: 350f). This in a combination with the murders of the mafia prosecutors Paolo Borsellino and Giuseppe Falcone gave rise to a public no longer willing to accept their rulers' "work" on the other side of the law (Ginsborg 1998: 487ff, Gilbert 1995: 131ff).

The two main parties, also being the most corrupted, PSI and DC¹⁰, were consequently torn apart and left in pieces unable to continue governing the country (Ginsborg 1998: 526f). The personal accusations towards Craxi were from the very start of serious character, he although refused to resign as PSI's front man until as late as March in 1993 (Gilbert 1995: 136ff).

A crisis was reached, the lira fell into pieces in September 1992 and Gilbert describes how "*Italy was the sick man of Europe; its national debt was a third of the debt of the EC as a whole, its politics was the most corrupt and ineffective*" (1995: 133).

The system had finally, after many years of ill government collapsed and a new reality had to take place. The fall of PSI and DC in Italian politics resulted in a major change of the political geography and close friend to Craxi, Silvio Berlusconi, introduced in 1994 the Italians to his new party Forza Italia. He succeeded instantly to win relative majority of 21% and is yet today one of the main characters of Italian politics (Ginsborg 1998: 543ff).

The 1990's were not an exception of a time characterized by crisis in Italy. The death of Aldo Moro¹¹ in 1978 in many ways already cast light on the failing Italian state. It showed itself unable to bring the population stability, whilst being torn between the terrorists in the North and the mafia in the South (Gilbert 1995: 9, 25ff).

⁹ Equally Operation Clean Hands.

¹⁰ The christian democrats, Democratici Cristiani

¹¹ Prime minister for five years and leader of DC. Was held kidnapped by the Red Brigades for a little less than two months, after which he was shot and killed 1978 by the same group of kidnapers.

With this intense background of violence, crime and scandals, the Craxi documents need to be understood to enable any rightful conclusions or worthy hypothesis.

5 Analytic discussion

This section will, based on the earlier presented theoretic and historic background, analyse the documents of Bettino Craxi. General as well as more specific details characterizing the documents will be looked in to, and in most cases these will be represented by a quote from the texts. This, to prevent subjectivity from drawing incorrect or false conclusions and to enhance the transparency of the arguments.

As has been mentioned, of primary interest to the analysis are the specific segments or sections of the Craxi documents covering corruption and financial irregularities of Italian politics. The chapter will proceed in discussing, what the discourse associate corruption with and which meaning the discursive articulations through its practice fix? Following the next part in 5.2 will a closer look at the creation of identities and thereafter in 5.3 a discussion of possible conflicting discourses and stabilizing hegemonic processes.

5.1 Articulations and the relative meaning

The discourse of political corruption constantly through articulations associates its main character, corruption, with different concepts, ideas and objects, which gives it its meaning (Howarth 2000: 102). The following section will further look into the structure revealing such relations.

When Craxi discusses corruption, the specific reality of that system, at that time, is rarely a topic. It is instead frequently termed and put on the agenda as the “*economic sanitation*”¹² (Craxi 09.08.1983:3; 29.03.1978:22...). Consequently, what is talked about is the process towards a healthier political body and not the actual expressions of the disease. This can be seen in the following segment.

*“The political stability, the economic sanitation and the political efforts have produced an increasing image and prestige of Italy in the world.”
(Craxi 31 March 1987: 17)*

Craxi has with the creation of this expression managed to turn the corruption into a positive process. And not only has he done this, in this specific section the politician claims to already have made large efforts and reached promising results. Such a reaction permits him to connect the concept in question, to other encouraging developments. The concrete articulation relates the different nodal points, likewise moments of the discourse; political stability, political efforts and,

¹² My translation.

what earlier was corruption, now transformed into economic sanitation. The associations look away from the problem and instead stress a positive evolution of the political field. The stated could in fact be affirmed to constitute a hegemonic articulation, disguising the conflict area of corruption to a neutral or even a positive concept. Processes common to this will in more depth be discussed under section 5.3.

Representing yet another important association to corruption does the public administration (Craxi 22.04.1981:17; 11.05.1984:17...), often made equal to the concept of bureaucratism. Craxi describes the problematic scene in the following manner:

“there is need for a true and proper plan of the administrative reform, directed to, step by step, sector by sector, facilitate, unify, qualify and to recapture, new efficiency, new professionalism, new credibility and new transparency... bureaucratism marries inefficiency and together they take the hand of corruption” (Craxi 29.10.1982:18)

Corruption, inefficiency and bureaucratism by this, form one chain according to the logic of equivalence, efficiency, professionalism, credibility and transparency form another. The relationship between the two chains could be characterized as openly antagonistic, with one excluding the other. Inefficiency is held contrary to credibility and so also corruption to transparency. Co-existence of the concepts within one identity is articulated as impossible, hence one direction must be chosen. According the perspective of the objective reality and what later was proven, the antagonistic relationship is merely a façade created and an attempt to fix meaning and internalize a logical explanation to the problem.

From the same time quotation it can be seen how the corrupted public administration is highlighted and expressed as the problematic area of concern. The specific politicians are left out and avoided to be pinpointed as the source to the problem. Thus the problem remains on a general and non-personal level, neutralising any reaction that it otherwise possibly could have generated. Hypothetically by this choice of action, anger towards the corrupted system can not be directed to anyone in particular and it might instead prevent all reactions.

The difficulty corruption implies on society is not either, in the above example explicitly a topic, even if they through the concepts of inefficiency and bureaucratism get closer to a given description. Focus still remains on the positive change and processes towards a better society.

Moving the analysis ahead, moral is an additional aspect which in frequent articulations gives meaning to corruption (Craxi 22.04.1981:20; 11.05.1984:18...).

“the art of moralisation of the public life and of society’s defence from crime is on the other hand necessary. There blows a wind of criminality and corruption that obligates a profound reaction of the State.” (Craxi 04.04.1982: 7f)

In these earlier years, there is fixed a positive relationship between moralisation and the fight of crime and corruption. Later, at the time when Craxi and PSI meet the accusations of corruption themselves, a switch of meaning can be traced through the made associations.

“There is a problem of moralisation in the public life that needs to be met with seriousness and preciseness...” (Craxi 03.07.1992:4)

The argument conflicts with the earlier leading discourse, consistent with the logic of difference, and expands and fixes a new meaning of corruption. A different relation to the concept of moral is consequently enough to slightly transform the interpretation of the larger discourse. From being seen necessary, a reaction of moralisation is transformed into a problem and a negative factor.

To some extent, corruption can also be associated to *change*. A further look can be given the segments used so far. Themes as the positive development of Italian society, administrative reforms, a desired need to put a stop to crime and the concept of reaction can each and every one be discussed to highlight change. A nodal point can from there be drawn to processes and further from there to processes of positive character. Once again it can be affirmed that through such a transformation corruption is permitted to be portrayed in an optimistic frame.

The author will return to other important associations to the concept of corruption, attention will however, in the coming section, be concentrated on the creation of identities.

5.2 Creation of identities

Through any discourse, identities are shaped (Bergström, Boréus 200: 234f). The passage below will further analyse how this could be characterised and done in the Craxi case.

The leading socialist politician, together with his party members, news papers, the Italian population etc. create an identity for his party through social practices such as statements and actions. One example can be found in the following segment:

“A programme driven collectively, based not upon discipline, seen that we are not known as a much disciplined party, but upon the true conviction of principles and of solidarity. A choice of action that will make us strong, respectable and respected.” (Craxi 11.05.1984: 4f)

By turning to his colleagues, or through the act of interpellation, they're made subjects to the discourse. At the same time identities are given the politicians, based on the value of principles and solidarity. An internalization of such standards is attempted when linking the specific concepts to the encouraging factors strength and respect.

The same segment contains an antagonistic articulation when Craxi rules out discipline as a factor the PSI party members primarily can identify themselves with. The mentioned aspect could possibly conflict with the earlier created and established identity of his colleagues. Narrowing down their characteristics, could in that case avoid a possible internal antagonistic situation of what it means to be a socialist. Their identity is clarified given certain characteristics and ruling out others, shaping and fixing meaning what it involves being “one of them”.

An identity is not just given the larger group of politicians, the public identity of the Craxi persona is just as well created. In the documents it can be seen how he to a large extent, refuses to mention himself directly in connection to negative aspects. Expressions as “I” or “me” are rarely seen here. The situation although turns, as shall be seen below, in respect to the positive.

“For what concerns me, I will never forget how Italy in the 80's evened out the fall of the regression, the stagnation and the inflation, coming out of the economic and productive crisis to move into a circle of expansion and development, never seen before, reaching the highest points of growth amongst the industrialised countries of Europe...”
(Craxi 29.04.1993: 3)

The identity of Craxi is accordingly created within an optimistic frame whilst the negative concerns of society are held on a general and non-personal level. The concrete articulations associate only “the good”, this time the prosperous society, with his character and leaves out the problematic scene. It is thus attempted establish a hegemonic positive identity, closing out any negative idea and so keeping Craxi from being associated to problems.

When continuing to look at his own creation of identity, it is interesting to uncover how the PSI leader defends himself when a confrontation with the negative aspects can't be avoided. Talking about the scandal, his own involvement is, just as before, left out and he refuses to be more specific than mentioning the actors; the PSI and the communists. The articulation, as earlier, remains positive, associating PSI with the identity of an innocent. Communists are on the other hand playing the part of the “other”, taking the blame.

“In either case it is certain that PSI since 1976 has not received any contribution from any state nor foreign party. Neither communists nor ex communists could say the same, and not just them, but it is in first place to the mentioned I turn, since it is amongst them there are raised the most severe, superior and indignant voices.” (Craxi 04.08.1993: 4)

By turning the attention to the communists' questionable affairs, he consequently draws it away from PSI and from himself. At the same time, his statement indicates how PSI merely was one in a group using unjust measures, thus making an attempt to neutralise the severity of the computed illegal acts.

Attention is given the time when PSI can't be accused of crime and not the actual period, they quite obviously certainly could, according to both his

statement and juridical accusations later proven. He consequently remains optimistic and keeps within the bright frame even in the time of radical events.

Returning to the identity of the politician, Craxi in 1993 expresses an antagonistic relationship between being a politician and being a criminal.

“In the case that much of this information needs to be considered as purely criminal, a large part of the system would be criminal. I do not believe that there is any responsible politician of an important organization in this room that could stand up and pronounce a contrary view to mine.” (Craxi 29.04.1993: 2)

The opposing identities are affirmed on the notion of common sense. Obviously, according to Craxi, the general political scene can not be regarded as criminal, thus neither can the politicians. The important politicians mentioned are also the ones being interpellated and subjectified. Interestingly an antagonistic relationship is created between their and Craxi's opinions. It is not, drawn from the articulation, possible to claim the identity of a responsible politician working for an important organization, and at the same time not share the thoughts of Craxi on the matter discussed. With this he consequently tries to specify the normality and what is permitted. Managing to shape the discourse accordingly could lead to the position of dominance but with what is today known this was not succeeded.

The author will from this, in the coming chapter, proceed to discuss possible hegemonic processes neutralizing antagonistic or conflicting meanings and identities, like the above, and so stabilizing only one understanding.

5.3 Hegemonic processes

As discussed in the theoretic chapter, hegemonic processes, according to Laclau & Mouffe, transform conflicts of the objective reality into unchallenged truths (Jørgensen 2000: 44). Articulations, which could be claimed hegemonic, have already been displayed, but this part will further develop the thoughts constructing the certain theoretical claim.

In shaping the discourse of corruption Craxi attempts to fix a sole meaning of the Italian problem, avoiding an interpretation too wide.

“The problem of the financing of the political parties, more so than the financing of the political system in its complete sense, has come back to light, in a devastating manner.” (Craxi 03.07.1992: 4)

Specifying his own understanding of the actual problem, the financing of the parties, the conflicting view, that is the financing of the entire system, is erased. He thus clearly states what is of interest and what is not, what should be discussed and what should not. One aspect fixes the meaning of the problem and should alone be regarded as the issue to encounter. Ruling out alternative interpretations,

giving the interpellated one explicit concretization could be argued to constitute an effort to control and narrow down their understanding and discussion of corruption. The hegemonic articulation has the interest to fix a unifying and alone meaning to the discourse, undermining conflicting views and so providing the subjects with an undisputable truth of what is worth discussing (Jørgensen 2000: 44).

The practical non-existence of the *citizen* in the documents is another area that could be discussed on the basis of hegemony. This specific character is next to never present in the documents, the light instead is cast upon the actors of society, PSI and other political parties. What reason could lay behind avoiding the actual people of society as a topic? Definite answers can obviously not be affirmed, possible reasons why could although be argued.

Keeping the discussion on a more general level, could be debated to be a trace from an established hegemonic accomplishment. When preventing more specific reflections from taking place an actual reaction could be prevented based on the idea that it is unknown what in particular to react upon. Thus the interpellated subjects are kept under control and calm from responding. By not putting the citizen on the agenda, conflicts could be argued to be avoided and the politicians from seeing the actual problem since not confronted with any details. Consequently, the political reality of the people is kept away from attention that could stir up a dangerous situation for the political leader.

Continuing the theoretical discussion of chapter 3, in which it was described how Gramsci argued hegemonic processes to be an expression and tool of domination and particular interests of the powerful (Howarth 2000: 91), the above stated could indicate such a phenomenon. That is, that Craxi left out the citizen to prevent or unable a reaction and so prolong his domination of Italian politics.

The frequent linguistically passive use of corruption could be explained in a similar manner. Phenomenon expressed accordingly, is not caused by any particular person, group or process, it has simply happened. Below, one such example can be found.

“ of equality and of liberty against the privilege, the exploitation and the domination of the working class” (Craxi 22.04.1981: 1)

The characteristics describe an unjust situation present in society, but it is kept general and accusations can not be traced to anyone in specific. The descriptive aspects are not further developed and they are kept inactivated, when not connected to a verb. Instead they remain static factors without origin or a certain effect. The concept could hence again be argued to narrow down the interpretation or understanding of corruption and avoid a public questioning of the issue

The concept of corruption is not at any time completely absent from the Craxi documents, even if it quite logically is much more dominant in those of the 1990's and directly confronted. Follows does an example, in which Craxi explicitly faces the accusations held against him and his party.

“I am of the opinion that the act of justice must follow its track but in respect to the principles of the constitution, equality of the citizens before the law and the rules which guarantee the rights of the individual.” (Craxi 04.08.1993: 3)

The challenging of corruption is through the concrete articulation associated to certain control factors. He demands the presence of normative authorities: the constitution, the law and the basic individual rights, to guide the accusations. According to him these do not, but should influence and characterize everyone involved before continuing the legal process. The associations thus clarify what should be regarded as a correct reaction and what shouldn't. His opinion is expressed to be equal to the obvious and the indisputable, so trying to introduce a hegemonic process making any other belief impossible.

5.4 Discourse evolution

With documentation following the Italian system for more than 15 intense years, especially what concerns the political corruption, the author would like to discuss a possible evolution of the discourse.

A discourse is as mentioned in the theoretical chapter never static, it evolves in its context and gradually transforms into something else, one option solely involving an expansion of its interpretations of the world and another involving a more violent shift to an entirely new system (Winther Jørgensen, Philips 2000: 11f).

The change of meaning to corruption caused by the changed relation to the concept of moralisation has already been argued. It doesn't however finish with that, he years show proof of yet other modifications of the discourse.

The strategy and arguments Craxi uses to convince the politicians of a way out of the difficulties experienced a reform in the decade of the 1980's. Initially faith as well as optimism was claimed to conquer the problems and to turn the situation around.

“...despite that the problems have become more urgent, despite that you sometimes are tempted to fear the worst. There remains an inner state of faith and optimism.” (Craxi 26.04.1981: 7)

But in 1992 the argumentation has changed.

“...everyone has been able to observe that there has not presented itself any suggestions or claims of an alternative coalition, nor any concrete and realistic alternatives...” (Craxi 03.07.1992: 3)

Craxi no longer claims a positive belief that could guide Italy out of its fall, instead he stresses the necessity to remain in power based on the missing political

alternative. The earlier discussed ever constant associations of corruption to positive processes and concepts have now been broken and a fuller picture is presented. The introduction of the negative might be claimed to have paved the way for new and less flattering associations to corruption, PSI and Craxi himself, which the positively shaped frame had prevented.

Later that same year, Craxi is forced to resign from his post and only two years later PSI ceases to exist (Gilbert 1995: 136ff). Perhaps this could be connected with the initially leading discourse's fall. Its dominance to structure opinions, thoughts and world views of the politicians could have erased the possibility for such an immense public reaction seen in the 90's. With its collapse it could no longer characterize society and so the scandal had the possibility to break loose.

Obviously, the discourse, seen only through the words of Craxi, could never be affirmed to give a full explanation to the events of the 1990's, but it could possibly form one piece of a larger puzzle.

With this concluded, the chapter will terminate in a few final reflections before moving on to the drawn conclusions of the analysis.

5.5 Final reflections

Even if the basic arguments already have been stated above, the author would like to add a few details in the following section, prior to concluding the analysis.

Limitations are always necessary when structuring a report like the above. Most of them have already come to discussion; one aspect could still nevertheless be mentioned.

The creation of subjects accomplished by interpellation is an important factor to a discursive analysis. The main attention of this particular study focused on the politicians, Craxi however revolves to more than them within the discourse, some could be argued being the police and others reporters of the media. The limitation to the politician was however seen to amplify the possibilities to manage a constructive discussion and to reach a conclusion of value.

6 Conclusions

The above study of the Craxi documents had the interest to characterize the discourse of political corruption between 1978 and 1994 through the words of the socialist leader.

The method of a discourse analysis is at times discussed as unfaithful and subjective. To avoid such accusations, explicit quotes are used to clarify the stated arguments. Total objectivity can nonetheless never be claimed and therefore the results should, with the author's point of view, be seen more as hypotheses drawn from the analysed structure.

Corruption is throughout the documents in concrete articulations associated with diverse concepts and ideas. Those found to be in most frequent use were; "economic sanitation", moralisation and bureaucratism. With these, the discourse of corruption is created and given meaning. The aspects fixes the possibilities of interpretation and so control the perception of the interpellated politicians, enabling vs. making it impossible for them to react, talk and behave in a certain manner.

When two conflicting ideas of a discourse meet, hegemonic articulations and processes seek to undermine one of those and establish one indisputable truth. Craxi could be argued doing this as he specifies what is of interest when talking of corruption. He just as well describes the particularities from which the corrupted and their acts need to be confronted. Anything that lies outside of the frame he presents should not be accepted and the "obvious truth" is by this affirmed.

The creation of identities is yet another important aspect to fully understand the meanings set by the leading discourse. The general refusal to be specific or personal is one main point drawn from this. Especially this becomes evident when discussing the problems of society. In such situations Craxi doesn't in connection name himself by "I" or "me". Not only is his own person avoided, he also refuses to mention any specific colleague. As the agenda, on the other hand, is changed to positive developments, the politician also reforms his approach.

The discussion has in several ways lifted up the positive versus the negative framing the discourse. The attempt to constantly transform the concept of corruption and thereafter associate the same with an optimistic surrounding is for a substantial period of time successful. But when the pressure from the revealed scandal in the 1990's sharpens the reality the discourse created collapses and proves unable to defend Craxi. His personal career is over and so also the future for his party.

As stated earlier, the author interprets the conclusions more as hypotheses than as specific results. Craxi is merely one part of the large system constructing the discourse of corruption at that time. To capture the entire scene would demand a supplementing analysis of the media, the opinion and discussion amongst the

public, the social norms, the judiciary system and even more. Inevitably this would result in a study impossible to perform caused by its size.

Consequently the choice to limit the field of research to the Craxi documents became one option that possibly could reveal new structures, even if a full picture never could be affirmed.

On that notion, further study of the discourses shaping and permitting role of crime and corruption is welcomed and believed to contain aspects of great importance.

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8 Appendix 1

Page 13

31.03.1987: 17

“La stabilità politica, il risanamento economico, il buon lavoro politico hanno prodotto una crescita dell’immagine e del prestigio dell’Italia nel mondo.”

Page 14

29.10.1982: 18

“occorre una vera e propria pianificazione della riforma amministrativa, diretta a semplificare, a unificare, a qualificare e a riconquistare gradino per gradino, settore per settore, nuova efficienza, nuova professionalità, nuova credibilità e nuova trasparenza...il burocratismo si sposa con l’inefficienza e tutti e due insieme si imparentano con la corruzione”.

Page 14

04.04.1982: 7-8

“l’opera , che è invece necessaria, di moralizzazione della vita pubblica e di difesa della società dal crimine. C’è un aria di malavita e di corruzione che deve impegnare a fondo la reazione dello Stato.”

Page 15

03.07.1992: 4

“C’è un problema di moralizzazione nella vita pubblica che deve essere affrontato con serietà e con rigore...”

Page 15

11.05.1984: 4-5

“Una linea di condotta collettiva, basata non sulla disciplina, giacché non siamo come è noto un Partito molto disciplinato, ma sulla libera convinzione, su di una scelta di principio e per un dovere di solidarietà. Una condotta che ci fa forti, rispettabili e rispettati”

Page 16

29.04.1993: 3

“Per parte mia, io non dimentico che negli anni Ottanta l’Italia ha rimontato la china della regressione, della stagnazione e dell’inflazione, è uscita dalla crisi economica e produttiva per entrare in un ciclo di

espansione e di sviluppo senza precedente toccando le punte di sviluppo più alte tra i paesi dell'Europa industrializzata..."

Page 16

04.08.1993: 4

"In ogni caso è certo che dal 1976 il PSI non ha ricevuto alcun contributo da nessuno Stato o Partito estero. La stessa cosa non possono dire né i comunisti, né gli ex comunisti, né del resto solo loro ma è a loro che mi rivolgo in primo luogo, perchè è anche tra di loro che si sono levate voci particolarmente severe, sprezzanti e indignate."

Page 17

29.04.1993: 2

"Se gran parte di questa materia deve essere considerata materia puramente criminale allora gran parte del sistema sarebbe un sistema criminale. Non credo che ci sia nessuno in quest'aula, responsabile politico di organizzazioni importanti che possa alzarsi e pronunciare un giuramento in senso contrario a quanto affermo"

Page 17

03.07.1992: 4

"È tornato alla ribalta, in modo devastante, il problema del finanziamento dei partiti, meglio del finanziamento del sistema politico nel suo complesso..."

Page 18

22.04.1981: 1

"di eguaglianza e di libertà contro il privilegio, lo sfruttamento e la dominazione delle classe proletarie."

Page 19

04.08.1993: 3

"Penso che l'azione della giustizia debba compiere il suo corso ma nel rispetto dei principi della Costituzione, della eguaglianza dei cittadini di fronte alla legge, delle regole che garantiscono i diritti della persona."

Page 19

26.04.1981: 7

"...nonostante i problemi si siano fatti più acuti, nonostante talvolta si sia tentati di temere il peggio. Rimane uno stato d'animo di fiducia e di ottimismo."

Page 19

03.07.1992: 3

“...tutti hanno potuto constatare che non si sono fatte avanti né ipotesi di coalizione diverse, né alternative concrete realistiche...”