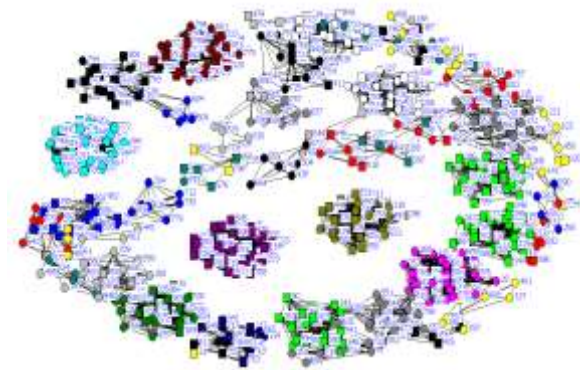


Collaborative networks in the TV fiction industry: Italian serials and sitcoms before the digital switch-off (1996-2009).

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The aim of the paper is to describe and explain the rise of Italian fiction products (serials and sitcoms) from 1996 to 2009 and describe their organizational structure and cultural characteristics, with focus on production collaborative networks. TV production sector in Italy in the nineties consisted in a dual system with two main broadcasting groups, Rai and Mediaset and the fifteen years here considered consisted in a consolidation of this bi-polarity structure. In the same period, however, the Italian TV fiction production market underwent an important transformation realizing international TV production standards (formats, plots). This singular national case is useful for understanding how TV fiction projects are created and to illustrate their scope as cultural products in the dynamic relation with the institutional setting (EU regulatory acta on media industry).

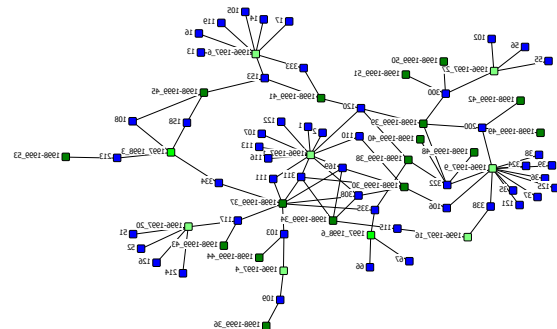
The case study, specifically, relies on original archives providing information about Italian TV media product (production company, broadcasting details, directors, screenwriters, composers/soundtrack and international collaborations) for total of 814 records from 1996 to 2009.



Fiction products (1996-2009) as nodes (ID= 1 to 814). Different colours/shape for production companies.

To provide an exhaustive picture, the paper analyses the organizational elements of the Italian

TV fiction industry (network analysis of production firms and their collaborators), and thematization of their cultural products (subjects). During the nineties, historical fictions and biographies constituted in fact an important part of the domestic TV productions supported by European co-production alliances. Italian TV fictions (ex. serials) were frequently custom-built for broadcasting abroad (cable TV), and as shown by networks of their collaborators (prize winners cinematographic professionals and screenwriters) TV and film producers competed for high quality and noticeable products (es. international casts and original film soundtracks).



Constellations of collaborative productions for the period 1996-1999. Blue squares are fiction producers (companies), green squares are collaborative fiction projects (fictions with more than two producers).

Furthermore, the analysis explored networks representing direct links like power and functional relations between TV channels and fiction producers and professionals' collaborative relations (directors, screenwriters and music composers, etc.). Analyzing the longitudinal networks with time sequencing for years, broadcasting period and industry performance the focus was put on the reciprocal connections between the main Italian TV broadcasting channels and the duopoly assets. Results illustrate how media industry production features (serialization, privatization of production, new contents) and strategic associations across EU TV production companies accelerate the transformation of Italian domestic fiction production and paved the way for forthcoming international TV media projects.