

Football and right-wing populisms: S. Berlusconi and G. Becali

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ABSTRACT

Populism is an elusive concept, but at least analysts agree on the antagonism between the people and the elites. One of its hypostases can be found in the stadiums: football is a popular sport, particularly in Italy and Romania. The sport has become a powerful vehicle for mobilizing masses and for political propaganda. It can therefore represent a means of building a public image. In this context, we will examine the ways in which two ambitious men, Silvio Berlusconi and Georges Becali, used AC Milan and Steaua Bucharest to build a political career based on a foundation with a business base. The context of loss of landmarks linked to neoliberal globalization and economic financialization, required a popular and territorial compensation: football was the answer. The comparison of the two success stories combines the business financial base, the popular urban territorialism of the clubs and the mass demonstrativeness of their charismatic leader.

Introduction

The two personalities we present here might not be ethically speaking the most recommendable of the profession, but at least, they are well known and have a major heuristic advantage upon many other colleagues as far as their political cultures are concerned: we clearly know what they think in politics, as they have been hugely involved in domestic and even European politics. The political culture, as an interpretation of the overall social context given its specificity to a period, is for us a resurgence of the older *Weltanschauung*, with its peculiar ideological point of view, but also concrete behaviour and actions set in a medium or even long-term period, a sort of broader sense of a civilization global taste.¹ This perspective is useful for our subject, as a superficial approach would not link both fields, sport and politics, but as we know, they are connected. The conquering liberal ideology prevalent during the main part of the two men's careers is no less interested in high performance, self transcendence, socio-Darwinist competition and social mobilization than communism and liberalism during the Cold War or fascism in the interwar period. This large way of approaching politics through political culture manages a serious place in the realm of sport in general, especially a popular one like football in Europe, mainly when the protagonists are both, president of a club and more or less successful politicians.

An epoch of egos unleashed: business, football and politics under neoliberal rule

A discussion on how business, football and politics mix fruitfully in terms of values, ideology and methods would help us understand the political culture they produced. The two businessmen achieved success in football club and political party using the same method. S. Berlusconi

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bought AC Milan in 1986 and created Forza Italia in 1993; G. Becali took advantage of his fortune to control Steaua Bucharest in 1998, then to literally buy the New Generation Party in 2003. If the method of endowment of a party is not the same, the result is – its total control – and the ideological foundation lies for both in the demonstration of success in business and its media amplification, as well as the popular legitimization that football offers to the two ‘political entrepreneurs’ to access (for S. Berlusconi) or not (in the case of G. Becali) to political affairs at the highest national level.

The role in politics in business and sport is nothing new; however, let us propose the hypothesis of a profound change of meaning with the onset of liberal globalization after the decline of the Fordo-Taylorist system coupled with the Keynesian State during the 1980s. Before that period, sport in general and especially football with its popular image used to enhance cohesion among particular communities, mainly professional, on defined territories. For example, in Bucharest during the communist period, Steaua was the Army’s club, settled in the Ghencea district and favoured by Ceaușescu himself, whereas Dinamo Bucharest was the Ministry of the Interior club, in the Giulești – more working class and also gypsy – district, and for a long time dominated by one of Ceaușescu’s competitors at the succession at the head of the party, Alexandru Drăghici. And each Ministry had its own companies and their local associations.²

AC Milan is one of the most historic clubs in Italy. Founded in 1899, the club already had an extensive record of success (including two Champions Leagues and ten national championships) but was going through a period of crisis at the time of the acquisition, just as Italy was going through a political crisis at the time Berlusconi came to power. The businessman’s stated aim was to put the *rossoneri* (the colours of AC Milan’s shirt are red and black) back on top of European and world football. Before he bought AC Milan, Berlusconi was a big football fan. His favourite memories are the moments when he went to the San Siro Stadium with his father.

Globalization brought a loss of territorial cohesion because of offshore relocation of employments and of the abnormal promotions and money earning. There was also a sort of symbolical exchange between the core of the globalization system (Western countries) and the periphery: the centre massively relocated underqualified employments and drained from the elites in the periphery, and, in the sportive field, a few young people destined to become sportive supermen. At the centre of this worldwide business, one became the president of a club (or its owner, in the case of Becali and the somewhat peripheral and less regulated Romania). As for the industrial globalization, his role is to deal optimally with the high-value bodies traded all over the world and concentrate into the core of the global system, the liberal empire (with its centre-periphery, free-trade and unequal territories organization³).

The presidents are thus integrated into the worldwide net of exchanges which they have to control, but there is an important stress upon their management: they must also keep contact with the territorially based supporters in order to legitimate their club. This is the first illusion of football: supporters behave as if the team is theirs, locally settled and worth attaching to it, whereas they perfectly know that if there is something to be proud of, it is the president’s capacity of attraction, mainly financial. Italy’s importance in the field, at least in Europe or even in the world, is symbolized by the name of the players’ trade market, which is an Italian word: *mercato*.

Another illusion is that the presidents are mainly driven by the passion of the sport, whereas they see it as a means for higher positions. In fact, the supporters might not be that deluded, as they know that the capacity to hire the best players supposes to have a global sight on the *mercato* and great financial capabilities. That’s why football and money are so mingled, and also why football participates in the territorial polarization instead of representing territorial circumscriptions.

The last main illusion is the huge gap between the displayed ideologies of the two personalities, usually linked to a political ideology but also to some ethical assertion (in both cases, right-wing liberal or conservative ideas mixed with business fairness), and their concrete behaviour, much more questionable.

Some of these contradictions are developed hereafter.

Doctrine and practice: stress between conservative/reactionary discourse and suspicious business and behaviour

Both Berlusconi and Becali had right wing, moral discourses, which were founded upon conservative (and even reactionary for G. Becali) doctrines, but their business methods and social relations are much more questionable, even on judicial grounds.

Berlusconi can be defined first of all by antagonism: anti-communist above all, but also anti-state, anti-party, anti-political elite. 'His constant enemy is the public sector and the state, taxes, bureaucracy and partitocracy.'⁴ Silvio Berlusconi wanted to bring Italy into the neoliberal era. At the time of his entrance, Italy was at the end of its Fordist period, which was marked by the political, ideological and cultural domination of the Christian Democrats and the Communists, as well as by numerous extreme left-wing social movements, especially after May 1968 when attacks and violent acts were committed (the so-called 'years of lead'). The fall of the Berlin Wall and the communist bloc, as well as the judicial investigations targeting the political world for cases of corruption and illicit financing ('clean hands' operations) broke down the two main parties and left a great political vacuum in Italy in the early 1990s⁵ Therefore, it was necessary to regain people's trust, which Berlusconi understood before the others: 'Berlusconi filled a vacuum made by the previous governing classes, he embraced a large part of Italians who had become disappointed and detached from the politic and cultural fields, he seduced them under the guise of a TV star, a god of the city of human'.⁶

Silvio Berlusconi is a figure of *commanagement*.⁷ This notion, introduced by Pierre Musso, focuses on 'the ideological power of management, communication and their combination'.⁸ In summary, it is a question of associating a communication strategy with a managerial doctrine, a post-Fordist characteristic. Indeed, on the one hand, Berlusconi set out to conquer the collective imaginary thanks to the purchase of various media and a football club, which allowed him media omnipresence and a strong gain in popularity. The aim was to create a direct link with 'the people' so that they feel embodied by Berlusconi.

On the other hand, he perfectly represented the neoliberal enterprise by contributing to the invention of a new business model, post-Fordist,⁹ where immaterial activities (tertiary, in this case, television) took precedence over productive activities, often relocated in less developed countries. His programme was directly inspired by his own experience as a successful entrepreneur and defended neo-liberal values, such as free enterprise, economic deregulation, managerial modernity and welfare reduction.¹⁰ Thus, Silvio Berlusconi embodies the neoliberal doctrine through his business career.

Berlusconi did not just win over the voters with his neo-liberal programme. On the contrary, if his watchwords were freedom and security, it was above all his communication strategy and his opposition to the state and the parties, in this particular context, that shaped his political doctrine and enabled him to come to power. We find here two of the main characteristics of populism: the cult of the leader and anti-elitism.

However, if communication was the basis of his political strategy, his many legal cases weakened him because they damaged the image he fought so hard to build. Indeed, Berlusconi was notably accused of 'corruption of a witness (Mills case), tax fraud and balance sheet fraud (Mediatrade case) and use of prostitution of minors and abuse of office (Ruby case)'.¹¹

Paradoxically, Berlusconi's political career was born in a period of political scandal, with the 'clean hand' operation, positioning himself as a new man, wishing to 'clear' that corruption. The contradiction between the cult of his image and his legal cases has greatly affected his reputation, both nationally and internationally. Indeed, the *New York Times* wrote that 'Berlusconi still appears less like the leader of a Western European democracy than a dramatic figure from imperial Rome' and *The Economist* headlined 'poor Italy'.¹² In the end, 'Berlusconi is a victim of what made him successful'¹³ and the same analysis works for Becali's anticorruption discourse.

One of the best specialists of the Romanian populism, Sorina Soare, characterizes Becali's political doctrine as a 'messianic populism' militating for 'a spiritual renewal, the orthodox morals being defined as the principal source of the social cohesion'.¹⁴ Elsewhere, she articulates Becali's dilettantism in politics and Christian doctrine: 'His [electoral] failure is openly linked to a lack of political experience, which he considers as an advantage and a sign of purity'.¹⁵ His particular origins might explain something about his values and general ideas. He belongs to the Aromanian (or Macedonian-Romanian) minority from the Balkans, the rest of the Latin-speaking peoples submerged by the Slav invasions and transformed into mountain transhumant shepherds and active commercial diasporas all over the Balkans and in Central Europe.¹⁶ Colonized in inhospitable Dobrudja (South-East Romania) after 1913, a fraction adhered to fascist Movement of the Archangel Michael (Iron Guard).¹⁷ Deported to the even more inhospitable plain of Bărăgan during the communist period, Becali's family resumed after the 1963 amnesty sheep trade and by the end of that period George Becali had accumulated enough financial and relational capital to ensure the take-off of his fortune after 1989.

He then cultivated openly links with the formation Noua Dreaptă [The New Right], which faithfully adopted the Legionary doctrine and became integrated into the neo-fascist nebula The European Phalanx.¹⁸ He also expressed his admiration for the chief of the Iron Guard, so-called 'captain' Corneliu Codreanu.¹⁹ The revolutionary side of fascism was not as much stressed as the reactionary one, and G. Becali often reminded the mix of his Christian, pastoral and Balkan origins: 'His shepherd origins are then interpreted in a mythical key: 'In the Byzantin Empire, the great emperors were shepherds. [. . .] Thus, in the Romanian politics, I see myself as an apostle because I try to do what nobody before me thought to do'.²⁰

But the neoliberal aspect was also part of the new doctrinal mixture: 'Gigi Becali apprehends the PNG [Party of the New Generation] as a company whose profit is calculated in terms of visibility obtained and MP sieges won'.²¹ The successful businessman and the religious-minded man are both new faces of the political post-89 sensibility, granting supposed honesty, but also offering a model of success story, of social Darwinist virile masculinity, and not least ensuring victory upon evil (mainly communist, but also occidental decadence – obvious through tolerance to homosexuality –, grace to the simplicity and Balkan anchorage). The social generosity – Becali spent a lot of money for schools of poor villages badly financed by the liberal state, for churches in Romania and in the Mount Athos, for damaged houses by the floods²² – was the compensation of the enrichment and the popular legitimization like the ancient times boyars, who would distribute money during the religious feasts. But it could also be regarded as the local version of the Anglo-saxon private charity.

In the same perspective, and though cultivating his Macedonian origins through the enlarged family clan, Becali insisted upon his Romanian national option and rejected a minority-driven approach of politics: 'Romania is the only country which calls us her children. [. . .] If we say that we are a minority we will be nobody's children'.²³ Claiming to belong to the Romanian national community rather than mainly to a minority ensured also a possibility to have access to a large public, be it football supporters or electors. It also corresponded to the nationalist ideology that Becali defended. A cultural aspect of this nationalism was the use Becali made of the image of the Wallachian voievod of the sixteenth century, Michael the Brave, well known for having realized the short-lived unification of the three Romanian-speaking provinces.²⁴ He tried to borrow the rights of a movie realized during the Ceaușescu era about him and use it for his election campaigns, mixed with references to the fascist Movement of Archangel Michael.

But this façade image is rather damaged not only by the ideological and language excesses of this controversial personality but also by political versatility and very concrete judicial condemnations. In April 2009, Becali was arrested for three weeks in order to investigate a charge of person sequestration after his bodyguards had kidnapped and questioned three men supposed to have stolen Becali's car.²⁵ From his prison, he announced that he was a candidate for the European elections, but not on 'his' party's list, rather on his competitor's one, the Party of Greater Romania (PRM) of Corneliu Vadim Tudor, another very vocal right-wing populist, but a former praiser of

Ceaușescu!²⁶ Intriguingly, in the earlier years, they copiously insulted each other and the apparition of the PNG might also have been a trick to diminish the PRM's huge importance at the turn of the 1990 and 2000.²⁷

But the worse was still to come. In May 2013, he was condemned to a three years penalty for a fraudulent exchange of fields with the Romanian Army in 1999; the minister of defence and the commander in chief also received two-year penalties, and they were all imprisoned. Before going into prison, Becali suggested that it was a political decision to please the European Union and incite their members to accept Romania into the Schengen space:

If they thought that they would free the way to Schengen with Becali, it's their problem. [...] I didn't think that something like that could happen. Because one has done an exchange of fields sixteen years ago. This is Satan's country.²⁸

Thus, all the aspects of the political culture approached in this section could as well be framed into a critic of the ideological vacuum provoked by the fall of the communist block and the loss of sense consecutive to the loss of the link between social, political and cultural agents. As Romania was integrated into the liberal globalization, the football club could no more belong to public institutions like the Army for Steaua, which provided at the same time employments, national identity and territorial anchorage in a special district of the capital. Thus, the new owner of the club had to display compensative qualities like vocal nationalism, social generosity and cultural activities in order to keep the contact with the local and national supporters, abandoned to social distress because of the neo-liberal policies of the European Union's influence.²⁹ His fortune and global overview gave him a sort of legitimization for a political career, as the professional politicians promoted the same liberal values of globalization, financial success, and integration in supranational organizations. In Italy, private property was already open to neo-liberal influence, whose social-Darwinist roots were next to the image of sportive competition, if not to its spirit of fraternity and fair-play.

Methods: from football to politics, local and national push up for populism

In these two cases, we clearly observe a model and an imitator: 'Openly inspired by Silvio Berlusconi, Gigi Becali uses one of the most loved Romanian football clubs as a political launching pad'.³⁰ But in the European space, Bernard Tapie had been a forerunner since 1986 and the trail included his purchase of the Olympique de Marseille, minister of the city position, and also his becoming of a good client of the judicial courts with six months spent in prison in 1995–1996 because of a fixed match. However, Tapie evolved inside the political system, in spite of his maverick profile.

In the anti-system field, the boomerang effect from sport to populist politics has even more impact: the personality of a football club boss is adapted to the functional definition of a populist party – with a personalization around a charismatic leader, expected to win in a flamboyant manner, with weak party institutionalization and no concurrence inside the party.³¹ He concentrates money, total responsibility, winning spirit, popularity and shouting practice in the stadium.

Silvio Berlusconi's communication strategy was built around football. The various successes that he achieved with AC Milan allowed him to be omnipresent in the media and therefore in all discussions. Thanks to football and AC Milan popularity, he managed to spread his image in a positive way to a large, popular and not very politicized public. The year 1994 symbolized Berlusconi's absolute success: he won the elections, the Champions League and the Italian championship in the same year. AC Milan became the metaphor of Berlusconi's success.³² He made it possible to identify AC Milan with him, inventing a new form of marketing, defined by Francesco Bonini as meta-sponsorship.³³ Thus, he managed to create the image of a charismatic, victorious and popular leader, the famous 'providential man' capable of embodying the people. Roberto

Beccantini evoked the AC Milan as ‘half a football machine and half a party, with the obligation to sow trophies to collect votes’.³⁴ The same for Becali, we have seen that managerial troubles inside Steaua had negative consequences on electoral results.

Moreover, for populism to work, it takes a charismatic leader but also a popular dimension, which football best embodies, especially through its language. The party created by Silvio Berlusconi is called ‘Forza Italia’, the common intonation of the *Squadra Azzura* (the Italian national team) fans, typical of the sports vocabulary. The businessman’s strategy did not limit itself at the name of his party but at the majority of his speeches. His inauguration speech is the most famous example. Indeed, Silvio Berlusconi chose to use the following sentence: ‘I have chosen to go into the pitch’, to announce his candidature for the presidency of the Council. He justified himself by saying: ‘So I felt that the match was becoming dangerous, that it was all being played in the penalty areas and that the midfield was sadly empty . . . And we said to one another that we could not leave that vast space free’. Throughout his political career, Berlusconi repeatedly took his language from football.³⁵ Berlusconi’s new language merged football and politics and exploited ‘positive connotations of the most popular Italian sport, which attracts mass audiences and excites strong passions across the barriers of social class and regional origin’.³⁶ This strategy produced maximum interest among the largest possible audience, but it imitated revolutionary habits of modifying language.³⁷

Berlusconi’s strategy was successful: he won the 1994 elections with 47% of the votes. Although his victory was not just the fruit of football, the image of the charismatic, victorious leader who was close to the people enabled him to gain significant electoral support, and sometimes more, from the fans during his first electoral victory in 1994. AC Milan fans in Italy represented one in five supporters in 2005, so about 4 or 5 million people in Italy: this was a significant potential electorate, but also possible militants. ‘Sow trophies to collect votes’, wrote R. Beccantini. Indeed, in addition to its propaganda strategy towards the national public, AC Milan’s success allowed it to obtain and secure the loyalty of AC Milan fans’ votes. Some journalists even wrote that the club had become the vanguard of the Forza Italia party and that the 47% obtained in the 1994 elections was born in the heart of the red and black *tifo*.³⁸ Moreover, Silvio Berlusconi had never hidden his intention to rely on the votes of AC Milan fans. During an interview in 2011, he said that he ‘hopes that winning the national championship will allow the support of the tifosi’.³⁹ A sort of personal contract was passed between the leader and the fan/voter, articulating sportive and political societies.

If the businessman relied on the votes of the fans, in 2011 he also received militant support from the president of the Italian Association of Milan Clubs (AIMC). Founded in 1967, the AIMC is an entity that brings together AC Milan fans from different clubs across Italy and the world. The president of the AIMC sent a message to all the members of the Italian Milan Clubs, inviting them to vote for Silvio Berlusconi. This was a tract distributed to more than 300,000 people. If Silvio Berlusconi’s strategy through football was to conquer power, it continued to preserve it. In fact, one journalist has listed all the top players he recruited on the transfer market in the run-up to the various elections. The list is long: Baggio, Weah, Rui Costa, Inzaghi. Undeniably, Silvio Berlusconi used AC Milan not just for the sake of it, but largely for his own political ends.

In the same way, Becali mingles sportive, warfare and politics vocabulary. He once declared:

I look at the matches of the [national] championship and say to myself: ‘My God, it is in my interest. I’m at war and I must vanquish my enemy. I have an excuse before God’, declared Becali at Pro X.⁴⁰

Like a general on the battle field, he appeals to the divine grace in order to win against the enemy (mainly when the latter is represented by the Gypsies of Dinamo on the stadium or the minorities or stranger states and institutions in the political field). An example of authoritarian managing in both sport and politics is the comparison of Becali’s behaviour towards the club Steaua and the Party of the New Generation. Both became sorts of familial business controlled by the leader. The most famous Romanian football player and also Becali’s wedding witness in 1994, Gheorghe Hagi, best known member of the Macedonian community in Romania until Becali became very rich, resisted only three months as a coach of the Steaua (June–September 1996) with Becali as his boss having

extended total control on the club by transforming it in joint-stock company. Hagi just could not bear the submission of sportsmen to abusive businessmen.

The same paternalistic attitude also characterizes Becali's behaviour towards the PNG, as Sorina Soare puts it: 'The confusion between the party's siege and Becali family's house is iconic of the merge public/private characterizing the party'.⁴¹ And the consequences were the same for the football club: the other prominent members of the party, often its founders, simply left it.⁴² But Becali himself, as we have already seen, would not hesitate to present himself on a competitor party's lists, exactly as he could exhibit during a match the colours of the Dinamo Bucharest, a competitor club.⁴³ Like a football team, the political party became a business, with a fluid ideology focused on the leader's personality and interests.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we find the same characteristics at Berlusconi as at Becali, with one having served as a model for the other. Soccer contributed to reinforce the popular image of these two men, until they became populist leaders. Some people do not want to use the term 'populist', others prefer to use it with a qualifier. Here, we use the following term for these two men: 'soccer populism'. In fact, it was the purchase of two popular clubs in their country that allowed Berlusconi and Becali to build an image of ambitious, victorious men and charismatic leaders. The cult of the leader, which is one of the main characteristics of populism, comes from football for them. The popular dimension and the direct link that populism maintains, or seeks to maintain, with 'the people', also comes from football and its great popularity in Italy and in Romania. Their populist strategy for gaining power was thus based in large part on soccer. Without soccer, it would be difficult to consider them as populists, and in the case of Berlusconi, his political success might never have existed, as for Becali and Tapie.

Notes

1. Berstein, "L'historien et la culture politique." 67–77.
2. Sandu, *Ceausescu. Le dictateur ambigu*.
3. Burbank and Cooper, *Empires. De la Chine ancienne à nos jours*, 23 and 31.
4. Musso, "Le phénomène Berlusconi." 175.
5. Ibid.
6. Susca, "Phénoménologie de Silvio Berlusconi." 43.
7. Musso, "Silvio Berlusconi, figure symbolique du 'commanagement'."
8. Musso, "Le phénomène Berlusconi."
9. Lazzarato, "Berlusconi, l'entrepreneur politique."
10. Briquet, "L'entrée en politique d'un homme d'affaires."
11. Clément-Wilz, "La responsabilité pénale de Silvio Berlusconi." 37.
12. Musso, "'Bunga bunga' berlusconien et vélinisme néo-télévisuel." 93.
13. Ibid.
14. Soare, "Qu'en est-il du passé?" 47.
15. Soare, "Le populisme roumain."
16. Trifon, *Les Aroumains*, 548–549.
17. Sandu, *Un Fascisme roumain*, 393.
18. *Evenimentul Zilei Online*, November 28, 2006. See also Andrei Badin and Daniel Neamu, "Gigi Becali, legionarii și neonaziștii" [Gigi Becali, the legionaries and the neonazis], *Evenimentul Zilei*, August 5, 2005. <http://www.9am.ro/stiri-revista-presei/Politica/15648/Gigi-Becali-legionarii-si-neonazistii.html> (Accessed the October 2, 2011).
19. Soare, "Le populisme roumain." 84. See also Shafir, 'La Shoah entre histoire et mémoire', 494.
20. Ibid., 83.
21. Ibid.
22. See his Wikipedia page: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Becali (Accessed March 30, 2023).
23. Quoted in Trifon, *Les Aroumains*.
24. Cinpoș, *Nationalism and identity in Romania*, 165.

25. Pro – TV: “Unul din hotii pe care Becali i-ar fi sechestrat: ‘M-am suit in portbagaj sa nu murdaresc banchetele’” [One of the thieves that Becali would have kidnapped: I climbed in the car boot not to dirty the bench], November 4, 2012. <https://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/actualitate/o-victima-a-sechestrarii-din-dosarul-lui-becali-sustine-ca-s-a-urcat-de-buna-voie-in-portbagaj.html> (Accessed September 5, 2022).
26. Soare, Soare, “Le populisme roumain.”
27. Cinpoș, *Nationalism and identity in Romania*, 150 and 178.
28. DigiSport, “Gigi Becali a fost condamnat la 3 ani de închisoare cu executare în Dosarul Terenurilor” [Gigi Becali was condemned to 3 years of prison with execution in the Affair of the Fields], May 20, 2013. <https://www.digisport.ro/fotbal/gigi-becali-a-fost-condamnat-la-3-ani-de-inchisoare-cu-executare-in-dosarul-terenurilor-53746> (Accessed September 6, 2022).
29. See Ost, *The Defeat of Solidarity*; and Ban, *Dependență și dezvoltare. Economia politică a capitalismului românesc* (Dépendance et développement. Economie politique du capitalisme roumain).
30. Soare, “Le populisme roumain.” 83.
31. Ibid.
32. Porro, “L’innovazione conservatrice.”
33. Bonini, “Sport, azienda e politica.”
34. Beccantini, “Il ventennio rossonero.”
35. Semino and Masci, “Politics is football.”
36. Ibid.
37. See classical books by Viktor Klemperer about the Nazis (*LTI, la langue du III^e Reich*, or by Mona Azouf about French Revolution (*L’École, l’Église et la République 1871–1914*).
38. Bonini, “Sport, azienda e politica.”
39. <https://www.blog.it/post/10300/berlusconi-lo-scudetto-al-milan-aiutera-il-voto>.
40. “Gigi e ‘câine roșu’” [Gigi is ‘red hound’], *Gazeta sporturilor*, August 19, 2018. <https://www.gsp.ro/fotbal/liga-1/gigi-e-caine-rosu-becali-tine-cu-dinamo-in-duelul-cu-cfr-si-explica-de-ce-nu-se-uita-la-meciurile-din-europa-ce-sunt-tampit-546532.html>.
41. Soare, “Le populisme roumain.” 83.
42. “Gigi Becali rămâne singur în Palat” [Gigi Becali remains alone in the Palace], *Acasa.ro* 20, November 2007: “After Pavel Hoge and Alex Mihai Stoenescu, vice-president Vlad Hoge also left [. . .] because he cannot stay ‘in the same place as ignorant people’”.
43. “Gigi e ‘câine roșu.’”

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