

## **The Italian breakfast: Mulino Bianco and the advent of a family practice (1971-1995)**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** This article examines how Mulino Bianco, an iconic Italian bakery brand has reshaped the symbolic and material aspects of breakfast in Italy, transforming a declining practice into a common family occasion.

**Methodology:** A socio-historical analysis of the iconisation process has been undertaken with a framework investigating the symbolic, material and practice-based aspects of the brand and their changes over time. Archival marketing material, advertising campaigns and interviews with brand managers constitute the main data for analysis.

**Findings:** Three crucial moments have been identified in which the brand articulates its relationship with the practice of breakfast. During the launch of the brand, the articulation was mainly instigated via the myths of tamed nature and rural past, and the material aspect of the products reinforced such an articulation. In the second moment, the articulation was established with the brand's materiality, emphasised through the use of promotional items targeting mothers and children. In the last phase, a cementification of the articulation was achieved mainly via the symbolic aspect of the brand – communicating Mulino Bianco as emblematic of a new family life in which the 'Italian breakfast' was central.

**Originality:** Theoretically this paper advances our understanding of the pervasive influence of brands in family life, showing how they do not simply reshape existing family food practices, rather they can re-create new ones, investing them with symbolic meanings, anchoring them with novel materiality and equipping consumers with new understandings and competences.

**Key words:** breakfast, family food practices, Mulino Bianco, iconisation process, Italy.

## Introduction

In contributing to the debates regarding how the marketplace reshapes family life and how branding activities influence family food consumption practices, this paper examines how Mulino Bianco, the white mill, an iconic Italian bakery brand has reshaped the symbolic and material aspects of breakfast in Italy. This case study forms an important illustration of the way in which family transformations are intertwined with marketplace ideals and moralised representations of domestic life, gendered divisions of domestic labour, ‘good’ food and a ‘healthy’ life. We focus on an iconic food brand and its pervasive influence on a domestic family practice, because branded food is charged with symbolism (Moore *et al.*, 2002), is active in the ‘social reproduction of home and family identities’ (Moisio *et al.*, 2004: 362) and has a crucial role in reshaping existing domestic rituals (Wallendorf and Arnould, 1991). In this paper, we move away from the currently dominant ethnographic and interview-based methods for investigating the effect of brands on family life, utilising a socio-historical analysis of the launch and iconisation process of Mulino Bianco and its crucial role in reshaping the way Italian consumers have breakfast.

Barely known outside Italy, the influence of this iconic brand in shaping Italian food culture has been noted by historians and consumer researchers (Dickie, 2007; Arvidsson, 2003, Mortara and Sinisi, 2016). In tracing the history of Italian food, the historian John Dickie includes Mulino Bianco amongst the quintessential elements of the current food culture, whose mix of reinvented peasant tradition, catholic values and industrialised production makes it the ‘Italy’s best-loved fake’ (2007:2). The pervasive presence of this brand in the current Italian marketplace is also illustrated through the use of the idiomatic expression the ‘Mulino Bianco family’, denoting a middle-class and harmonious nuclear family. Yet, not many know that such an expression - often used in a denigratory way to indicate the marketised idealisation of family life (see Dalli *et al.*, 2006) - is a backlash towards a very powerful marketing campaign of the late 1990s in which the iconicity of the brand, established a decade before, was reinforced.

Even fewer know that it is with this and the previous campaign that the brand established its ideological influence in shaping what is today known as the ‘Italian family breakfast’, a practice that Mulino Bianco orchestrated to establish its leadership in the bakery industry. The aim of this paper is to illustrate this orchestration process showing the ways this iconic brand re-shaped a declining practice into a family food occasion, influencing the current normative way of having breakfast in Italy. The paper advances our understanding of the pervasive influence of brands in family life, showing how they do not simply reshape existing family food practices, rather they can re-create new ones, investing them with symbolic meanings, anchoring them with novel materiality and equipping consumers with new understandings and competences.

### **A framework for studying iconicity over time**

The iconic status of Mulino Bianco has been illustrated by others, showing how it created ‘new sign values for goods, by recombining elements from disparate cultural contexts, which even though they might not be related to any actually existing consumer lifeworld, might be thought to have a potential appeal’ (Arvidsson, 2003: 144). Our study does not aim to replicate what has already been stated, but rather to show how the iconisation process was intertwined with the (re)creation of a family practice. Scholars have been interested in understanding the iconisation of a brand, a process in which its ‘higher cultural, moral and political values’ (Kravets and Orge, 2010: 207) are attached to existing products. They have showed how such values reshape and sustain existing myths which provide ‘collective salves for major contradictions in society’ (Holt, 2006: 372). Inspired by this body of work, we looked at the iconisation process of Mulino Bianco combining a macro understanding of how brands engage with existing myths (see Holt, 2004; 2006) with a micro understanding of how such myths are then translated into the materiality of the brand and its practices (see Brown *et al.*, 2013). In other words, to fully illustrate how Mulino Bianco changed how Italian families consume breakfast, we undertake a socio-historical analysis of the brand taking into account symbolic, material and practice-based concerns.

The symbolic aspect of the brand refers to a set of ideas, images, feelings and emotions that in case of an iconic brand, are part of a myth (Brown *et al.*, 2013). Holt (2006) highlights how an iconic brand does not create a myth, but rather embellish existing myths circulated via other

agents, including the media. As he says, ‘iconic brands play a useful complementary role because commodities materialise myths in a different manner, allowing people to interact around these otherwise ephemeral and experientially distant myths in everyday life’ (Holt, 2006: 374). The iconicity of a brand is established when it materialises expressions resonating with a national myth, which therapeutically solve cultural and social tensions in societies. For example, in his analysis of the iconisation of the whiskey brand Jack Daniel’s, Holt (2006) shows how this brand emerges as symbolic of gunfighter values - the frontier myth attached to a particular ideal of American masculinity already circulated via other influential cultural forms –solving cultural contradictions concerning the coexistence of new masculine identities the 1950s. In our case, Mulino Bianco anchored its iconicity around the myths of tamed nature and rural and familial past, allowing it to reconcile radical cultural changes affecting family life and well as food practice and culinary culture.

The material aspect of a brand refers to ‘its physical make-up, its functional characteristics’ (Ligas and Cotte, 1999: 610). As materiality plays a central role in the way consumers objectify ideas and norms (Woodward, 2007) and negotiate their own identities (Miller, 1987), understanding the material aspects of objects and brands has been considered central for understanding individual agency (Borgerson, 2005). Materiality has also revealed its importance in understanding how objects are designed to embody cultural norms and ideals (Borgerson, 2013). As such, studying materiality involves looking at ‘the material substances and design intentions that go into composing objects’ (Ferreira and Scaraboto 2016: 193) and considering how designers intentionally anticipate future ways of consuming and interacting with objects and brands (Borgerson, 2005; 2013). Given the importance of looking at the way the materiality of a brand is anticipated and produced (Dant, 2008), we look at the process through which objects - from the packaging to the shape and ingredients of biscuits, from the logo to the gadgets and the magazine - have been planned by the company.

The term practice is used here referring to the idea that social life ‘stem(s) from and transpire through the real-time accomplishments of ordinary activities’ (Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017: 110). As such practices are considered mundane and routinized activities constituting the fabric of individual and social life, since a practice is a routinized behaviour shared socially and carried out individually (Warde, 2005). Interacting with objects is a fundamental element of each practice, since ‘consumption is, a moment in almost every practice’ (Warde, 2005:137). As practices are not only the ‘doing’ but also the ‘saying’ around activities, the representations

of ideas and understanding are also a crucial element of a practice (Warde, 2005). Visual and verbal representations are particularly relevant for our study, since Mulino Bianco created a new way of consuming biscuits, transforming the image of the domestic breakfast investing it with new symbolic meanings around family life, but also equipping consumers with competences and materiality to sustain such meanings.

### **Breakfast and family life**

The scant consumer research studies looking at breakfast highlight how this is a practice ‘vulnerable to domination by other practices’ (Veeck *et al.*, 2016: 166). Time and effort dedicated to this eating occasion are currently being reduced as people focus on the day ahead and may be eating ‘on the run’ rather than treating breakfast as a lengthy communal meal confined to the domestic sphere. Overlapping with work and school schedules, which dominate the temporal organization of the morning, breakfast is currently seen as a ‘squeezed practice’ (Le Pape and Plessz, 2017) in various socio-cultural contexts. For example, Marshall’s (2005) study of meals conventions in Scotland show how breakfast is still considered one of the everyday family meals, but that people do not tend to have it together. Also, he highlights how cooked breakfasts have gradually disappeared, being replaced with a combination of uncooked and ready-made items. Similarly, Veeck *et al.*’s (2016) studies of urban families in China show that despite recognising the symbolic significance of eating a cooked meal together in the morning, skipping breakfast or eating some ready-made snacks outside of the home are common patterns amongst their participants. These common changes in diet are also documented by historical analysis of advertising in the US, UK and Australia, showing the gradual substitution of cooked breakfast based on meat with cereals and other convenience products (Davis and Schneider, 2010; Green, 2007). Such a dietary shift, often instigated by global brands like Kellogg’s (Davis and Schneider, 2010; Green, 2007), followed broader food concerns regarding health, novelty and convenience. As documented by Schneider and Davis (2010), if until the 1950s good mothers were represented in cooking breakfast for the entire family, discourses on health and convenience started appearing in the 1950s and dominated the following decades. This trend also encouraged women to adopt a more individualized consumption of convenient food, moving away from the ideal of breakfast as a cooked meal for the family.

The case of breakfast in Italy differs from the aforementioned trends in which an elaborated combination of freshly cooked food has gradually disappeared and has been substituted by ready-made and branded items. What is today known as the Italian breakfast –biscuits soaked in coffee and milk - is a recent practice established in the late seventies (DOXA-AIDEPI 2015). The origins of the current breakfast can be traced after the second world war when Italians substituted the consumption of cold leftovers of the evening meal (for example, pasta or polenta with herring or cheese) with stale bread soaked in milk, which became the most common option until the late seventies. Also, the time of breakfast changed in that period and from being consumed after a couple of hours of work, to a meal scheduled before the working day (DOXA-AIDEPI 2015). As breakfast was taken during mid-morning there is no evidence that this was considered a family occasion in which food was shared amongst members. In the early 1970s having breakfast was not very common and less than a third of the population practiced it (Maestri, 1994). A rapid change in trends developed in the late 1970s and 1980s, when Italians continued to drink milk and coffee but substituted stale bread with biscuits and zwiebacks (DOXA-AIDEPI 2015). Today 80.2% of the population has breakfast at home (ISTAT 2014), and 6 Italians out of 10 consumers opt for coffee, milk and biscuits (DOXA-AIDEPI 2015). Historians and consumer researchers speculate that such a dietary change has been influenced by the dominant position of Mulino Bianco in the marketplace (Arvidsson, 2003; Dickie, 2007; Mortara and Sinisi, 2016).

The rapid changes of breakfast are particularly interesting if compared with the limited transformation of the other meals. Some argue that working life has affected the structure of the meals, with the decrease of lunch consumed at home, the increased consumption of snacks during the day and the advent of dinner as the only domestic meal of the day (Zamagni 1998; Milani and Pegoraro 2006). However, these studies are based on data representing only a fraction of the working population, mainly living in the North of the country. In fact recent statistics show how consuming lunch at home is still a prevalent practice (reaching an average of 73.4% of population), as it remains the main meal of the day for more than 60% of the population (ISTAT 2015). What is consumed during lunch and dinner seems to indicate a simplification of the structure of the meals with an increased use of pasta and other convenient products (Romani 2006), particularly during the last economic crisis (Cappellini et al. 2014). A comprehensive study looking at changes to the nation's diet is missing, but statistical reports show the constant consumption of vegetables, a decreased consumption of meat, an increased consumption of fish along with more use of ready meals (ISTAT, 2015). Time spent in eating

seems also to show that food occasions are still considered very important events of the day. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2018) in 2015 Italians together with French spent the most amount of time in eating and drinking worldwide (more than two hours a day on average).

### **Documentary evidence**

Analysing an iconic brand from a cultural perspective is an eclectic endeavour (Brown *et al.*, 2013). Our socio-historical investigation explores the first 20 years of Mulino Bianco, focusing on the launch and establishment of the brand through its symbolic, material and practice-based aspects. Our data set consists of:

- I. Documents from the company's archive. This includes interviews and studies on breakfast and breakfast products conducted prior to the creation of the brand. It also included marketing assessments of the ongoing campaigns and the brand image till the late 1990's. These studies were produced by a variety of marketing and research companies consulting for Barilla, such as Young and Rubicam, Delfo, Imago and CER;
- II. Internal documents produced by the company, such as correspondence held between Mulino Bianco's managerial team, meeting reports, and publication mock-ups;
- III. Visual data from Mulino Bianco's advertising campaigns available in the archive;
- IV. Interviews with the consultant that manages the Barilla archive, the manager of the bakery division at the time when Mulino Bianco was launched, as well as with the project manager of the Italian Breakfast campaign.

The process of iconisation is not a continuum, but relies on 'peaks' determined by the capacity of the brand to develop a compelling symbolism in the marketplace (Holt, 2004). Inspired by previous works looking at branding activities over time (Holt 2004; Brown *et al.*, 2013; Kravets and Orge, 2010), we selected three crucial moments in the iconisation process of Mulino Bianco in which the brand reshapes cultural understanding and representations of the practice of breakfast. The selection of these pivotal moments - the launch of the brand (1972-1975), The Happy Valley campaign (1978-1987) and the Family campaign (1990-1995) - emerged from an initial analysis of the archival documentation of the 'evolutionary phases' of the brand (Guidone *et al.*, 1994: 300), previous critical analysis of Mulino Bianco (Arvidsson, 2003; Dickie, 2007) as well as interviews with employees. As we are interested in understanding how the brand established its relationship with breakfast, we do not look at the entire story of the

brand, but we provide an in-depth analysis of the phases in which such a relationship was created. Although we do not replicate a genealogic analysis of a brand's mythology (Holt, 2004), our analysis highlights continuities and discontinuities in the way the brand symbolic aspects have been represented over time and how these were connected with the materiality of the brand and the practice of breakfast. Data were interpreted following an hermeneutic approach (Holt, 2006), iterating between our theoretical framework and the various sets of data and our thematic analysis of the advertising campaigns. In guiding our thematic analysis, we have been influenced by Warde's (1997) seminal work on food dichotomies and media representations (including novelty/tradition, health/indulgence, economy/extravagance and convenience/care) and subsequent studies applying such dichotomies together with analysis of gender and family roles (see for example, Schneider and Davis, 2010). As in other interpretive works that use documents and visual data (Marshall *et al.*, 2014a; Marshall *et al.*, 2014b) our reading of the available material is only one of the possible interpretations, and it illustrates our interest in the evolution of a family practice in relation to a brand's myth.

### **Launching the brand and a practice: the creation of the Mulino Bianco's myth**

In 1971 Barilla, the Italian family-owned company producing pasta, faced financial difficulties and was acquired by the American multinational W. R. Grace and Company, but it was then re-acquired by the Barilla family a few years later (Sutton, 1991). Grace decided to diversify the production of the company, identifying new products to launch in the Italian market. After exploratory studies on other products, marketing research conducted with consumers supported the idea of producing biscuits and shortbreads, an existing market with few competitors and with a narrow target. Previous advertising shows how biscuits had a long tradition of being perceived as food for children, toddlers and adults in recovery (Pannella, 2013:67) but marketing research show that a repositioning of the products was possible, turning biscuits into a product for the family<sup>[1]</sup>. As consumers could not see Barilla as a believable brand to make biscuits, Mulino Bianco, a new brand producing biscuits was launched in 1975. The brand was created with the support of Motivational Research, and the sociologist Francesco Alberoni, the first person to have introduced Motivation Research in Italy, had a prominent role in planning the symbolic elements of Mulino Bianco (Arvidsson 2003), while the material aspects of the product were decided by the marketing division of Barilla (Anceschi and Bucchetti, 1998).



Alberoni suggested that ‘in times of economic recession and political crisis the only way out is new needs, feelings and values’ (Maestri and D’Angelo, 1995: 111). In the late seventies the Italian political and cultural context was characterised by internal terrorism and political instability and ‘Italians nurtured a latent desire to abandon the values of industrial modernity’ (Arvidsson, 2003: 110). Accordingly, the brand was created around a new ideal of life, entrenched with nostalgia: an idealised farming arcadia of slow-paced and communal living. Visually the brand was represented as a little white mill in the countryside, an imaginary world that had never existed but felt nevertheless lost. This idea of going back to a nostalgic and imagined rural past has been central to the reshaping of the image of the current Italian food (Dickie, 2007), but Mulino Bianco was one of the first to intersect and develop such new sensibilities amongst consumers creating a coherent branding process around the myth of tamed nature. Other brands have attempted to link their biscuits with the past and nature. Fifteen years before the launch of Mulino Bianco, Lazzaroni, a leader in the market, advertised its biscuits recalling that “here the pleasant and healthy way to find the sweet things of your childhood- tasting Lazzaroni biscuits now, as yesterday, the first ones in quality and deliciousness! Thousands of kilos of genuine butter from our Alps! Thousands of fresh eggs everyday!” (Panella, 2013:120). Mulino Bianco pushed the concept of nature and the past in a slightly different direction, as the old mill was a place in people’s memories, a link to an imagined past that the initial marketing research located just before the Second World War, in an undetermined countryside in which farming and artisan labour have tamed nature (Rossi 1994).

The first advertising campaign, broadcast on television in 1976, showed this connection between consumers’ memories and a tamed nature. The opening scene was an urban upper-class living room in which a little girl asked her mother to recite a nursery rhyme from her own childhood. The flashback into the mother’s memories was visually represented with a girl in a white dress and a straw hat and a wild dandelion in her hands, reciting a rhyme about farm animals, the only changing element between advertisements. The male voice-over invited the viewers to take a leap into their own memories, asking ‘Do you remember when biscuits tasted of butter, milk and wheat? Tomorrow morning search for them at the Mulino Bianco’. The question, posed directly to adult consumers and indeed mothers, was purely rhetorical, since those biscuits had never existed, but located the brand within an imaginary tradition. The reference to search for these biscuits in the morning was an attempt to reposition the product as a breakfast item.

The last line of the advert, 'Eat healthy, go back to nature', which was a constant element across all campaigns, was a statement addressing middle-class mothers and their own childhood memories which could be re-enacted with these new products. This link between past and nature was then strengthened in the 1977 advertisement set in an old farmhouse at dawn, where mundane moments of archaic, rural life were represented. Despite Mulino Bianco being a new brand, the stress in these two campaigns was not on the products, briefly featured at the very end of the adverts, but on the ideals of going back to 'tradition', framed as an imagined one from nursery rhymes to dream-like scenes of rural family life. Despite being a new and arguably unhealthy convenience product, the narrative emphasises tradition, care and health (Warde, 1997). This is an interesting way of twisting the well-documented food dichotomy of novelty-tradition, which we speculate could be attributed to the suspicious attitude that Italian women used to have toward industrial and ready-made products, considering them 'tasteless, fake, artificial and even poisonous' (Arvidsson, 2000: 256).

### *The Material*

The brand materialised its ideals of returning to a rural past through different elements: the logo, the packaging and the products. Gio Ponti, an acclaimed designer and architect, was employed to coordinate the brand image, from the logo to the shape of the biscuits. The idea of the mill was taken from a previous Barilla printed advertisement promoting flour 'fresh from the mill', which was welcomed by consumers. Combined with the colour of purity, the white mill became the imaginary locus of the brand (Maestri and D'Angelo, 1995), or, in other terms, the arcadia (Brown *et al.*, 2003), that sheltered this rural myth. The logo mirrored this old-fashioned aura: a naïve drawing of a white mill in a hilly countryside, framed with garlands of wheat and flowers (Figure 1). Graphically, the ears of wheat and flowers were inspired by bucolic prints of the beginning of the last century and the mill was inspired by the American brand, Pepperidge Farm (Maestri and D'Angelo 1995).

Once the logo was created, the packaging was designed. Along with common rigid boxes, the marketing team opted for soft bags in yellow paper, recalling the bags once used by bakers. The form of the biscuits was also a marketing decision. Gio Ponti created biscuits with irregular shapes, mimicking domestic ones, with simple forms and rudimental decorations. Decorative elements were inspired by symbolic figures used in artisan breads popular before the Second

World War (Rossi, 1994). The implementation of this idea of creating irregular biscuits on an industrial scale was particularly challenging, but was pursued, since irregular biscuits sold in bags represented a clear difference in a market dominated by biscuits with rectangular shapes into rigid boxes (Rossi, 1994).

The recipes of the biscuits were the last piece of the creation. Mulino Bianco invested in designing premium biscuits by using ingredients such as whole eggs and real milk – rare ingredients in the market of the time – whose irregular shapes and packaging alluded to a broader notion of ‘genuine’, which encompassed the pristine lifestyle and values of rural communities. The recipes of the biscuits, created with George Maxwell, an English technician and baker, aimed to recall home-made biscuits with rudimentary shape but with a distinct flavour of milk and eggs (Maestri and D’Angelo, 1995).

#### *The repositioning of a product and a practice*

The initial marketing campaigns aimed at re-positioning the product and reshaping the cultural understanding of the practice of breakfast. If brands like Kellogg’s had to convince mothers to substitute a cooked meal with cereals, emphasising the healthy, convenient and economic qualities of the ready-made products (Schneider and Davis, 2010), Mulino Bianco had first to re-create a declining practice. Less than a third of the population reported having breakfast in the morning (Maestri and D’Angelo, 1995) - thus the common stale bread soaked in milk and coffee, did not retain a strong symbolic meaning amongst families<sup>[2]</sup>. However consumption of milk and coffee was growing. Milk consumption per person had reached 72 lt per person in 1971-1973, but it was barely 50 lt per person 20 years before. During the same span of time, yearly coffee consumption rose from 1.3kg to 3.3kg per person (Zamagni, 1998: 189).

In 1971, internal research on how Italians had breakfast reported that the organisation of working life was an obstacle to the development of this practice.

‘This weakening of the importance of having breakfast seems to be directly proportional with the degree of personal participation to the rhythm of modern life (big cities, distance from the workplace, different working hours, non-domestic female activities).’

The same report documented how Italian housewives considered breakfast something between a habit passively adopted and a nutritional need to be satisfied. Therefore, breakfast did not receive much consideration from mothers who believed that ‘dinner and lunch were the only real meals’<sup>[3]</sup>. Reintegrating breakfast into the family routine implied restating a practice that was not easily reconcilable with schooling and working life (Veeck *et al.*, 2016), and as such women needed some ‘incentives’.<sup>[4]</sup> Breakfast with biscuits was then framed as a reassuring practice in which mothering could be performed with no extra domestic labour and without compromising care (Warde, 1997), a crucial element for Italian mothers in their role of feeding the family (Saraceno, 2004). Also, Mulino Bianco created a narrative in which hedonism and health could be concealable in the new breakfast, a mundane and ordinary family occasion in which women could be reassured that there was no transgression in substituting stale bread with biscuits. Italians had strong feelings against industrial confectionery products, which were thought of as unhealthy and relegated to special occasions, such as the reception of guests (Maestri and D’Angelo, 1995). As the brand reconciled the food dichotomy of health and indulgence (Warde, 1997), it became ‘the point of explosion’, in Alberoni’s terms, between children and adult’s morality around the consumption of sweets.<sup>[6]</sup> Repositioned as a measured transgression, Mulino Bianco biscuits were then associated with breakfast, a vanishing practice whose symbolic elements had yet to be established.

### **Articulating the brand and breakfast: The happy valley campaign (1978-1987)**

The steady growth in market shares reached its high point in the 1980s, confirming the success of the brand’s launch as well as overcoming well-established competitors. As documented by internal market reports, such an increase paralleled with a rising penetration of biscuits in the consumption patterns of Italian families, showed how the practice of breakfast had changed. In 1980, 83% of Italian families consumed biscuits, after a yearly average growth of 12% in the previous five years. The increase in the amount consumed was equally striking: in 1980, Italians consumed 53% more biscuits than in 1976, almost 8.5 kg per family. The success, which in 1986 saw Mulino Bianco at 22% of market share, was supported by the heavy use of advertising. In fact, in the late 1980 the brand accounted for 30% of all advertising on biscuits, and its advertising sale-ratio for all its products was 5-6% (Sutton, 1991). Mulino Bianco’s advertising effort of the 1980s was monopolised by ‘Happy Valley’, a nine year-long campaign which started in 1978. Developed by the advertising agency Troost Campbell-Edward, it

consolidated the brand's myth of nature, nostalgic peasant past and its romantic traditions. Such a myth echoed a new sensibility of the time, in which rural past was rediscovered through the celebration of culinary traditions (for example, in 1986 the Slow food movement was formally created). Such a sensibility was also evident in the growing production of films, books and music in which the past and nature were both celebrated as synonym of purity and happiness (Bondanella, 2009).

In the Happy Valley campaign, each TV advertisement was introduced through a spelling book, where each letter was used to present the names of the featured biscuit. The drawing of the white mill fades from the pages of the book into the scenes of a farm and farmers, vaguely located in a countryside of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The scenes portrayed were an idealization of the past peasant life in which the labour of the farmers, who did not indulge themselves in the hedonic consumption of eating biscuits, was romanticised. The principles of tradition and care (Warde, 1997) characterising the launch of the brand were celebrated in this campaign featuring peasants' dedication to preparing ingredients that would then be used in Mulino Bianco biscuits. Health and its link to a genuine past were also emphasised in the campaign with the final message 'Eat well, go back to nature'. This statement 'was risky because Italians had never ate those good biscuits that tasted of butter, milk and wheat' (Maestri and D'Angelo, 1995: 167), but the fact that nobody had never experienced this idyllic past didn't prevent consumers from feeling a genuine nostalgia. The voice over connects the scene with the morning practices with the closing line 'tomorrow morning at breakfast...', re-emphasising the link between the product and breakfast. An unplanned theme emerging in this campaign was the ideal of family life. As scenes alluded to the communal and cooperative living of rural households, marketing studies documented how consumers overlapped the myth of the rural past with the archetype of an ideal family, which was described as 'a family that protects, helps, treats well, an honest nurturing-mother, intact, pure, omnipotent, that thinks about everything and that avoid the fight with everyday life.'<sup>[7]</sup>

### *The materiality of a new practice: magazines and gadgets*

Although already identifiable in the advertisements, the theme of family life was considerably extended in this campaign through the launch of a series of promotional items and a free magazine, strengthening the link between the brand and the practice of having breakfast. Between 1978 and 1996, Mulino Bianco designed more than 650 series of promotional items,

which evolved in line with the brand's imagery (Ganapini and Gonizzi 1994: 314). Even if other brands already used consumer promotions, Mulino Bianco was the first Italian brand to develop memorabilia consistent with the brand's myth.<sup>[8]</sup>

By collecting 'points' printed on each pack, consumers could save for promotional items including tableware sets, various types of bowls, jugs and cookbooks. The most successful one, *il cocchio* (Figure 2), launched in 1978 and was produced for the entire duration of the campaign. According to the Mulino Bianco website, more than 20 million Italians received *il cocchio* in their homes (between 1978 and 1986 the entire population was around 56 million). This ceramic bowl - moulded on a farmer's bowl of 1919, used to soak stale bread- reproduced an advertising prop appearing in a previous campaign. Closer to a soup bowl than to what was then considered a coffee mug, *il cocchio* was a materialisation of the newly reshaped practice of breakfast. Without any handles, it was designed to be held with both hands, a childish gesture which suggested that breakfast at home was a safe and intimate moment.

Women were the main target of the products whose simple and rustic design provided branded tools that could be used during the reinvented practice of breakfast. The strong association between these items and an imagined rural past was aimed at reconciling two openly contradictory themes: going back in time and implementing a new eating habit which *de facto* deviated from the eating choices of past. As the brand positioned itself as a reassuring return to an undetermined yesterday, familiar gender roles were not jeopardised. Women, and indeed mothers, were often directly addressed in their roles of feeding the family. For example, in one of promotions, the cookbook 'Traditional recipes on the table: Rediscovering the dishes of the past' (1986: 3) – mothers were invited to display that book on the shelves of their kitchen and to open it every time they were asking themselves 'what shall I prepare today for my family?'. Interestingly, in the cookbooks the brand's dichotomy of convenience and care (Warde, 1997) was reproduced, as there was no mention of biscuits or other ready-made products, but mothers were encouraged to create 'happy family occasions' cooking 'simplified' versions of 'traditional' dishes (1986:3).

A similar narrative is present in the NaturAmica (Friend Nature) a free magazine, distributed via post since 1980 to those who had registered to receive the promotional items. NaturAmica aligned the reader with the central themes of Mulino Bianco, such as domestic care, environmental concern and an idealization of the countryside. The magazine was aimed at a

middle-class female readership, providing 'traditional' recipes, gardening tips and ideas for interior design, while presenting new branded collectibles. The opening letter of the first issues said that *Naturamica* is a magazine that 'wants to go back to natural flavours, to the healthy and simple things of the past, against the growing pollution, the difficult ecologic and biologic balance, the damages of the sedentary life and of a wrong nutrition'. The magazine intersected homemade foods with Mulino Bianco items, making ready-made food complimentary and non-contradictory with home-made food. In doing so, it perpetuates the overall narrative bringing together care and convenience, health and indulgence (Warde, 1997). For example, the January issue 1986 promoted homemade jams and preserves, offering housewives free labels for their jars, while presenting the new collectible Mulino Bianco sugar pot.

Children were also recognised as crucial consumers to be rewarded for their loyalty. Between 1982 and 1990 snacks started to be sold in family packs, each one of them contained *sorpresine* (little surprises), smaller collectable items such as puzzles and colourful stationary, packed in retro-style matchboxes. *Sorpresine* provided children with the immediate reward of something to play with without needing mothers' intervention. These promotional items boosted the sale of Mulino Bianco snacks, so that in 1981 sales boomed from 28 tons in January to 49 tons at the end of the year, gaining 60% of the market share of snacks.<sup>[9]</sup> Although the inclusion of toys in packets of food was not new in the Italian market, this was considerable shift for the brand, since it then started positioning itself as a brand providing leisure to children, associating food with toys (see Elliott, 2007).

### *Legitimising breakfast*

The main aim of Mulino Bianco during these years was to create new cultural meanings legitimising the newly established practice of breakfast. This was partly achieved with the aggressive distribution of gadgets and souvenirs aimed at providing objects that could support the consumption of biscuits in the morning. Internal marketing research showed the company's concern that consuming biscuits in the morning could have been a temporary trend.<sup>[10]</sup> Lacking any strong symbolic meanings, breakfast remained an 'overlooked and nutritionally insufficient meal'.<sup>[11]</sup> The company unsuccessfully tried to identify complementary products, which consumed together with biscuits could 'conciliate nutritional values with pleasure, communicating love, care, like if home-made, while providing a functional rule'.<sup>[12]</sup> Making

sure that this practice did not jeopardize the rhythm of everyday life, or create additional domestic labour for women was also an important feature<sup>[13]</sup>. We could not trace a systematic overview of the brand's effort to legitimise breakfast outside of advertising campaigns, however in the company's archive there is a small collection of leaflets and brochures distributed in popular magazines. Among those is "Breakfast: how to change it", a brochure distributed with the issue n.9 (1989) of the lifestyle magazine *Starebene*, whose readership is mainly constituted of middle class women, aged between 35-45, living in urban areas. This brochure provided tips on what to prepare breakfast and how to organize it, emphasizing the importance of eating something – with preference given to bakery products- along with coffee or milk. Although Mulino Bianco wasn't explicitly mentioned, it was featured in the brochure with a double advertisement on the front and back cover.

### **Cementing the articulation: The family campaign (1990-1995)**

By 1987, Mulino Bianco was the only biscuit brand that could be recalled by almost 46% of biscuit consumers, against the 18% of its closest competitor<sup>[14]</sup>, and by 1991 an internal report declared it had a market-share of 32.2%. However, the company feared that 'one day the consumer could wake up and realize that the sweet and pretty mill is in fact an industrial 'monster' that invades and saturates the market, becoming a monopoly'.<sup>[15]</sup> Marketing research in fact suggested that the myth of the nostalgic countryside was fading away, since it located consumers' fantasies in a distant and unachievable past far removed from the current lives of many consumers.<sup>[16]</sup>

Italian society had indeed changed. In the second half of the 1980's consumption had become a central element of a new cultural and social order, once heavily centred around religion and politics (Arvidsson, 2003: 133). Italians became more focused on their own individual identities and hence consumption become a central element of this period (Ginsborg, 2003). Such changes in consumption happened at the same time as certain family trends and institutions changed. Divorce became more common after it was legalised in 1978 (27,682 cases in 1990 compared to 16.857 in 1986) (Istat) and fertility decreased considerably. (Golini and Silvestrini, 1995 in Ginsborg, 1998). Nevertheless, families were celebrated as cores of Italian society through Italian television. Private television channels mixed advertising with formats largely imported from the USA (Ginsborg, 2003), with sit-coms helping to authorize



the emerging consumer culture and notably the portrayals were generally centred around nuclear families (Mazzoleni, 2000).

Considering these cultural and social changes, the myth of rural mill was inadequate to reconcile the tensions of the new-born Italian consumer culture. The myth of nature encased in the rural arcadia was not able to address social insecurities such as those emerging from the environmental crisis of the late 1980s. Marketing research also suggested the need to strengthen the association with the family, not based on the mother-child connection but on the middle-class nuclear family raising children and being simultaneously committed to paid employment. After two minor trials, in 1990 the agency Armando Testa released the family campaign, under the direction of the Oscar winner, Giuseppe Tornatore, and with the music of Ennio Morricone, the creator of soundtracks used in spaghetti western films. The 5-year campaign, which according to the historian Dickie, was 'the most successful campaign in the history of Italian television' (2017: 3), featured the everyday life of a middle-class family relocating from the city to the countryside (Figure 3). The picturesque Tuscan countryside was selected to materialise the second-home aspiration of millions of urban consumers (Dickie, 2007) and a XIII century mill was purchased and painted in white. The campaign was organised in a series of mini-episodes narrating the adventures of a 'modern family who leave the city and choose to live healthy by going back to nature' (Dickie 2007: 3). This narrative encapsulates the two main myths of the brand: tamed nature and familial and rural past. Both these myths have been substantially reshaped without compromising the overall image of the brand of 'going back to nature'.

The 'modern family' as the company defines it, is constituted by young, healthy and good-looking parents without any strong Italian feature, and the children, a boy and a girl, blonde and brown-haired, reproducing the same colour combination as their parents. The cameo appearance of the grandfather ensured a link with tradition without overshadowing its modernity. The father, a journalist, and the mother, a teacher, are portrayed at work only in the first episode in which all actors, including the grandfather, confess their dreams of wanting to leave in the countryside. The subsequent episodes portrayed the family appreciating the natural beauty of the countryside organising family parties in the garden, riding bicycles, running across fields and purchasing vegetables in the local market. Their experience of nature and family life is a leisured one: there is no domestic work of labour in the field that needs to be

done. As such the representation of the mill, and indeed of the past is not a threatening one because it promised a better quality of life closer to ‘tradition’ without giving up the benefits of capitalist economy. While the strap line says ‘Eat well, go back to nature’, the advert showed that being closer to nature didn’t mean going back to an agricultural lifestyle. Instead, nature was a middle-class retreat orientated around aesthetic and leisure concerns. Nature had become hypernature, expression of the way industry chooses and processes ingredients, maximizing their benefits.<sup>[17]</sup>

The emancipating role of the mother is central in this campaign and indeed in line with other food advertising of the time (Davis *et al.*, 2016). She is portrayed as the one who is responsible for feeding the family and her everyday tasks are portrayed as effortless since they are mediated by the brand and its ready-made products. Her work of feeding the family with ready-made products is not seen as a contradiction within the narrative, since it represents the overall image of the brand reconciling food contradictions, such as convenience and care, health and indulgence (Warde, 1997). This conciliatory role is indeed central for the legitimisation of a new family practice, in which the mother, as the main actor of the practice, is portrayed as someone who takes care of the family without increasing the domestic labour for herself. In line with advertising of the time, she is portrayed as both a producer and direct consumer of the food she serves (Davis *et al.*, 2016), partly reclaiming her hedonic place in the family. The father, a peripheral figure in the preparation of food, is portrayed as the main breadwinner, who, often away for work, reappears to spend leisure time with the children. This figure echoes what has been called the emotionally engaged father (Marshall *et al.*, 2014a), a fathering role typical of the 1980s advertising in the UK and Australia, who provides support for the children but is not involved in domestic labour.

### *Materiality*

The use of promotional consumer items to be earned by collecting points was also continued and expanded in this campaign. Along with tableware the new series included electric appliances such as a little oven for warming up Mulino Bianco pastries, and an espresso machine. Through such gadgets, Italian women were provided the tools for the execution of the practice of breakfast, in which Mulino Bianco products played an essential part of the morning food occasion. Other gadgets were also introduced in 1988 showing the

materialisation of the mill. A series of mill-shaped goods, including a radio, an alarm and a stationary container helped to move Mulino Bianco from the kitchen to children's bedrooms.

Another partly unplanned, material consequence of this campaign was consumers' interest in the mill, the building located in south Tuscany. The mill started to develop a tourism of its own, attracting curious consumers. The sociologist Omar Calabrese describes the phenomenon in these terms: 'white exactly like in the advert, it is surrounded by fields, it really has its little spinning wheel. And hundreds of people observe it in religious silence (Calabrese, 1994)'. More recently, the historian Dickie interviewed the owner of the building who remembered the phenomenon as 'real processions. Hundreds of people come to visit the mill at weekends. Most of them were disappointed because obviously it wasn't like it was on television. Only the kids were happy: ran around enthusiastically amid all the plasterboard and polystyrene' (Dickie 2007: 3). The mill, now accessible as a tourist destination gave consumers a chance to experience the middle-class and familial dream of 'going back to nature'.

#### *The invention of Italian (family) breakfast*

According to a 3SC market research run in 1990, 86% of Italians believed that having breakfast based on cereals, fruit and yoghurt was a sign of cultural modernity, associated with North European countries. Despite considering breakfast to be a healthy practice, the research showed that only a small proportion of informants had yoghurts in the morning while most of them had coffee and milk with bakery products, a breakfast model they did not believe to be correct nor nutritious. Mulino Bianco's efforts were directed towards nutritionally legitimising the existing practice of breakfast. While the symbolic value of a family breakfast had already been established, Mulino Bianco had to work harder to nutritionally defend a 'traditional' practice that was only 15 years old.<sup>[18]</sup>

This validation process took two steps: naming the practice and supporting it on a scientific level. After considering the option of 'Mediterranean Breakfast', the label 'Italian Breakfast' was chosen to define a practice seen as both modern and contemporary. For example, it was noted that this type of breakfast doesn't mandate family members to sit down at a table, or to spend a long time in the kitchen preparing it: 'It is also positive that it asks the cooperation of all family members: while one is in the bathroom the other gets the coffee ready and children take their own cups'.<sup>[19]</sup> Thus, advertising explicitly referred to 'Italian Breakfast', connecting

the practice with a 'modern' family and a morning family food occasions that did not require the demanding rituals of the other meals of the day. Centered around the figure of the mother feeding the family without cooking, a 'modern' lifestyle was enacted without jeopardising gender roles in the household. The second step was to instate a Public Relations campaign supported by a scientific authority, rehabilitating Italian Breakfast within the media as well as schools with *ad hoc* projects. The data available in the archive do not allow us to trace a very systematic overview, however, internal correspondence held among company members witnesses how Media Italia, a PR company, was chosen to run the breakfast campaign. Media Italia had already worked with nutritional trends, such as the rehabilitation of the reputation of sweet snacks and sugar in public opinion. During the campaign on sugar, Media Italia had established SISA (Italian Society for Nutritional Studies), a scientific committee dedicated to the research on food products. SISA generated Fo.Sa.N, Fund for the Study of Food and nutrition, a pool of nutritionists created to guarantee the scientific claims supporting the nutritional properties of bakery products.

An internal report shows that the budget Mulino Bianco destined for the first two years of the Italian Breakfast campaign was of 1.500.000.000 Lire per year, starting in 1991. A significant percentage of the budget went to Fo.Sa.N., appointed to organise scientific meetings as well as presenting existing research on breakfast. Before the breakfast project Fo.Sa.N had already partnered with Mulino Bianco in promoting the habits of snacking amongst children. Fo.Sa.N. started to focus on breakfast only in 1992, an attention culminating with a dedicated meeting in 1996, held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June Cassano D'Adda: *Have Italians added a meal at the table?* The engagement with the scientific community paired with a consistent promotion of Italian Breakfast on different media. In 1995, Mulino Bianco distributed to the media a brochure named 'Italian Breakfast: the right way to start your day' to the media which illustrated the nutritional values for every Mulino Bianco item, suggesting that they all were 'ideal products' that, paired with coffee and milk, make an Italian Breakfast healthy, various and pleasurable. The brand also partnered with women's magazine, such as *Donna Moderna* (Modern Woman) and *Famiglia Cristiana* (Christian Family), belonging respectively to Arnoldo Mondadori Group and to the Vatican publishing company, San Paolo. In *Donna Moderna's* issue of the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 1993, the editorial 'Never without breakfast', overviewed national and international breakfast habits, closing with the words 'Yes to breakfast, but to the Italian one'. The same issue featured a questionnaire on breakfast run by GPF & Associates, where the connection with the brand was revealed by Mulino Bianco coupons being rewarded to the

readers who completed it. After 1996, the brand interrupted the 'Italian Breakfast' project, retaining a loose connection with this meal. We speculate that this decision was taken as the articulation of Mulino Bianco as the family breakfast brand had already been cemented in the previous 20 years.

## **Discussion**

Through its creation of a set of practices and material items invested with symbolic values and anchored in an imagined past, Mulino Bianco played a crucial role in re-presenting breakfast to Italian consumers. However as shown by Trevor-Roper (1983) with his historical analysis of the invention of the kilt in Scotland, traditions are not invented by a single actor in a short period of time, but they emerge from a long process in which various actors and forces operate. Considering the data presented here, we do not claim that the brand has invented a tradition from scratch. Our analysis has a more modest aim, to show the iconisation process of Mulino Bianco and its implications for the reshaping of breakfast and the conceptualisation of family food practices. The analysis shows how the reshaping of breakfast was a complex process articulating the relationship between the practice of eating breakfast and the brand, which operated at the symbolic, material and practice levels. It is only through the consideration of these three aspects and their connections that we can understand how the relationship between Mulino Bianco and family breakfast was launched, articulated and then cemented in Italy.

Symbolically, the iconisation process operated similarly to other brands (see Holt. 2004; 2006), as Mulino Bianco responded to anxieties and contradictions of Italian society with the myth of the tamed nature and the rural past, addressing concerns over industrial progress, and later on with the myth of a familial rural past, in which solidarity, love and intimacy were narrated. This, in sharp contrast with the growing numbers of divorces and the decline of births, provided an answer to fears about the declining status of the family as an institution. The image of the 'modern family' became a reassuring one since it reconciled the neoliberal aspirations of the time orientated around individual success with patriarchal values concerning family and gender roles. As others have shown, brands are 'symbolic devices' creating imagined communities around shared understanding of collective and transnational worlds (Cayla and Eckhardt 2008: 225). In our case the brand frames itself in an undetermined time and space, labeled as a very national rather than transnational rural world, whose consumption creates a new understanding of family life in Italy. As a symbolic device reconciling tradition with

modernity, Mulino Bianco does not only solve social and cultural anxieties, but also creates a past and present around undetermined ideas and ideals of Italianess which were able to address an heterogeneous collectivity of consumers. Mulino Bianco succeeded in creating a new and idealized lifestyle *ex novo* (Arvidsson, 2003; Dickie, 2007) using ideals and images from other cultural contexts. As previously noted, the launch of the brand and the promotional campaigns were created by the most influential Italian sociologist, marketing firms, film and music directors of the time, as they were able to bring to the brand some of the ideas and images circulating in the cultural industries. As such, Mulino Bianco is an example of what Holt (2004) has called a 'parasite', since intercepted and developed current sensibilities and myths attaching them to its own products.

However, it would be misleading to think that the relationship between the brand and breakfast as a family practice was articulated only at symbolic level. Our analysis shows how such an articulation was crucially planned with a coherent representation of the symbolic via the material, aimed at bringing about new ways of consuming and interacting with the brand (Borgerson, 2013). The biscuits and the packaging provided a coherent materialisation of a rural and reassuring past, in which convenience and novelty were downplayed, while tradition and care (Warde, 1997) were emphasised. The collection of novel promotional items did not simply represent a coherent manifestation of brand and its rural past in consumers' kitchens, but it provided a new source of socially legitimate leisure for mothers via a new practice of collecting points and then displaying their rewards. If previously the link between food and toys was used by brands to target children (Elliott, 2007), Mulino Bianco helped to promote the collection of novelty consumer items as a family practice. This extended the brand's playfulness to mothers, providing a source of leisure while practicing their newly introduced domestic task of feeding the family at breakfast. Therefore, promotional items and gadgets were not simply a reward for women's loyalty to the brand, but became a way for the brand to solve the dichotomy *labour* versus *leisure*. This dichotomy has not been previously observed in studies looking at the representations of food for women (Warde, 1997; Schenider and Davis, 2010; Davis *et al.*, 2016), but it is the one that can capture the crucial aspect of food as domestic and material labour. This new dichotomy illustrates the success of the brand in convincing mothers to add additional labour to their everyday lives. This new labour is not presented as a source of enjoyment in itself, but rather it is the brand and its novelty items that promises a source of well-earned leisure, helping to mitigate potential resistance to introducing a new food occasion into the family routine.

Our analysis shows that providing new materiality to Italian mothers was also a way of introducing a new understanding and competence to revamp a declining practice. These reflect an ideological conceptualization of family life and its everyday manifestation via certain consumption practices. While brands targeting breakfast in other cultural contexts had to reshape habits and beliefs around an already well-established eating occasion (Schneider and Davis, 2010), Mulino Bianco had to first convince Italian consumers of the importance of introducing such a domestic practice, which did not exhibit any strong symbolic meaning. Reassuring consumers via magazines that introducing breakfast into the family routine was a sign of modernity and competent mothering, whilst simultaneously incentivizing it via gadgets and other promotional items, Mulino Bianco did not simply rehabilitate a declining practice, but gave it a moral status, elevating it as a food occasion for the family and a leisure practice for mothers and children. Strategically the brand acknowledged breakfast's ancillary role amongst other domestic food meals (Le Pape and Plessz, 2017) and, consequentially, put forward a new understanding of the practice while respecting the existing hierarchy of the meals and their significance for doing family.

While other meals required women's intensive labour and sacrifice (Moisio *et al.*, 2004), Mulino Bianco created a new food occasion for the household, in which caring for the family (DeVault, 1991) and therefore being a good mother was achieved without demanding culinary skills or new competences in managing the family time schedules. As such the introduction of a new family practice did not jeopardize the existing cosmology of food in the family, but rather reinforced it, since it made breakfast a practice in which convenience and care could be brought together. In this way breakfast became a household occasion in which the 'good' middle class family could be practiced and displayed through a brand combining labour and leisure and care and convenience. Speaking directly to mothers the brand was underpinned by a 'traditional' understanding of their roles of feeding the family in an Italian context, without aggravating it with additional tasks, anxieties and responsibilities. On the contrary, Mulino Bianco provided solutions for 'modern families' and indeed modern mothers and their desires to care for their families with the help of the market. Resonating with consumers' sensibilities on health (Schneider and Davis, 2010), the brand labelled this new practice, as the 'Italian breakfast', reconciling contradictory food discourses including health, care and convenience. The label 'Italian' provides a cultural legitimisation of a new family practice, reconciling culinary norms with modernity and marketplace with family life.

## Conclusion

This article has examined how Mulino Bianco, an iconic Italian bakery brand has reshaped the symbolic and material aspects of breakfast in Italy, transforming a declining practice into an everyday taken-for-granted family occasion. Methodologically the paper has demonstrated the importance of archival research in order to fully understand the ideological authority of brands and their symbolic and material influence in reshaping mundane family practices. In looking at the symbolic, material and practice-based aspects of the iconisation process of Mulino Bianco, this paper demonstrates the importance of looking at how the iconisation process might be intertwined with specific practices. Finally, the paper advanced our understanding of the pervasive role of brands within family life, showing how they do not simply offer an alternative range of choices for purchasing goods for existing family food practices. Rather, this paper has illustrated how brands can re-create family practices, investing them with new meanings and novel materiality and providing consumers with new incentives to consume.

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[1] Interview with Dr. Andrea Allodi, Director of the Bakery Department when MB was created (8/05/2017).

[2] “Italian breakfast” (1971) case study

[3] *Ibidem*.

[4] Report on Breakfast after 30 non-directive interviews, Delfo, 1979

[6] Handnote on “The reasons for Mulino Bianco success” 1976-1984, Young and Rubicam (1984)

[7] Study on brand image, CER, (1982)

[8] Interview with Dr. Gonizzi, Creator of the Barilla Archive and Dr. Allodi, head of the bakery department at the time of the Mulino Bianco launch (8/05/2017).

[9] Interview with Dr. Gonizzi, Creator of the Barilla Archive and Dr. Allodi, head of the bakery department at the time of the Mulino Bianco launch (8/05/2017).

[10] According to the Delfo report on breakfast (1979), Italians thought of it as a chance to gather the family, but everyday life lead to them skipping breakfast or dealing with burnt toast.

[11] “Conceptual Definition of a Barilla Product for Breakfast”, Leader (1980)

[12] Imago market research, 1986

[13] *Ibidem*.

[14] Study on brand awareness, Doxa (1987).

[15] “MB’s reasons for success”, Young and Rubicam (1984)

[16] “The new Image of MB”, Imago (1986)

[17] Final synthesis of consultants’ considerations over the new communication project for MB, Young and Rubicam, 17/6/1986

[18] Internal document, 8<sup>th</sup> July 1991

[19] Internal document, 12<sup>th</sup> February 1991