E–MINDFUL
PROJECT

/ Italy

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

By Andrea Pogliano, Antonio Dante Maria Santangelo, Sara Monaci, Simone Persico, Davide Tosco and Massimo Arvat

Executive summary

By J. de Leur – External collaborator for ILO

As of January 1, 2022, Italy is home to over 5 million foreign nationals, over 8% of the total population, a stable and structural presence, as shown, for example, by the high incidence of minors and by data on labor market participation and citizenship acquisitions. On the other hand, recently undocumented migrants arriving through the central mediterranean route have risen, and a considerable number of displaced persons from Ukraine have found protection in the country.

When exploring the narratives surrounding immigration in Italy, this report focuses on dominant perspectives from the mainstream news media, and possible alternative perspectives. The dominant narratives in Italy, heavily influenced by traditional media and political communication, depict immigrants through three frames: "threat", "victim", and "hero". Here, the threat frame encompasses concerns about public order, social cohesion, fiscal issues, and job competition; the victim frame addresses immigrants as victims of humanitarian crises, the global economy, racism, and exclusion; and, the hero frame portrays successful and assimilated immigrants. Whereas the "threat" and the "victim" frame have been competing for space within the public representation of immigration ever since the media started dealing with the phenomenon in the early 1980s, the "hero" frame has always been marginal.

In Italy, the threat frame is almost exclusively the frame of threat to public order. It gained prominence during the 1990s when immigrant crime became a central theme, contributing to moral panic and shaping electoral narratives. The narrative evolved over the years, with the issues of public order and decorum taking precedence, often using military metaphors and fostering a sense of emergency during election campaigns. In comparison to other European countries, the frame of threat to tradition and identity has played a minor role. In opposition, the victim frame in Italy has primarily emphasized humanitarian victimization, often neglecting systemic issues and authentic representation. The media representation of immigrants as victims of racism and discrimination has been sporadic, with racism discussed more as a cultural or extremist issue rather than an institutional problem. The discourse on immigrants as victims of the system of exclusion has remained on the periphery of public debate, addressed mainly by specific publications. The hero frame, portraying immigrants as heroes, is fraught with problematic narratives. It often characterizes immigrants as docile, grateful workers or those who entirely discard their cultural heritage to embrace an undefined Italian identity. These narratives, situated within the metaphor of guests, reinforce the notion that integration is contingent on immigrants conforming to a predetermined role, emphasizing gratitude and cultural assimilation.

As the dominant perspectives prove to be problematic, some alternatives are explored. Some initial examples where the dominant narratives are challenged include photos of the "tragedy of Lampedusa". In 2013, when a migrant boat sank close to shore, many of the bodies, as well as personal items from those who tragically died

in the Mediterranean while trying to reach Italy, could be recovered. This produced a new representation of migrants who arrived by sea, represented not only by images of death, but also by their former lives through their personal belongings such as photographs with family members and friends. These photographs, among other examples, made them much more relatable to the Italian public. Then, six alternative approaches to constructing narratives have been identified:

1. Border and Solidarity Performance: This category includes a number of narratives attempting to illustrate borders as a central element of the phenomenon of immigration. It is the political passage that allows to display immigrants not just as humanitarian victims, like the mainstream does, but also as victims of a violent and unfair system of exclusion.

2. Mutual Acknowledgement and Distance Reduction: This category includes all those narratives that revolve around reducing distances and accepting differences. For example, by redefining the "us natives" versus "them migrants" dichotomy, into an "us the neighborhood" narrative.

3. Change the Identity Marker: Similar to the previous category, it aims to replace identity markers such as "natives" and "migrants" with, for example, "the working class" or "women", uniting all people regardless of cultural or ethnic background under a specific struggle (e.g. class, gender or age).

4. Aiming for Cosmopolitan Values: This category aims at narratives that go even beyond the previous two, redefining everybody to identifiers that we all have in common through narratives such as "we are all immigrants", or "we are all human beings".

5. Utilitarianism: Utilitarian narratives focus on the "utility" of "them" (migrants) for "us" (natives), for the general economy, or more specifically for caretaking or construction activities. These narratives take agency over the dominant "us" versus "them" dichotomy and aim to use it to "their" advantage.

6. Debunking: Possibly the most commonly used mode in recent years, this narrative strategy aims to bring a discourse, often derailed by propaganda, back to a realistic level through rationalisation based on statistics.

Each approach has its strengths and its weaknesses, emphasizing the need for nuanced strategies that consider the diverse concerns and perspectives within society.

The most promising approach to changing negative representations is the one where the confrontational opposition between "us" (good) and "them" (bad) is neutralized or mitigated. Positive narratives about immigration often blur the lines between "us" and "them," emphasizing shared humanity and values. Various narrative models are proposed that play with the different perspectives that exist among the "natives" and

the "immigrants". Examples include initiation rites (the "natives" impose their values on the "immigrants"), contracts (here the "immigrant" is allowed to have their own values, after fulfilling the expectations of the "natives"), a revolt (the values of the "immigrant" are considered better than the values of the "native") , and the vagrant model (the "immigrant" is looking everywhere in society to find a place where their values may fit, but is expelled by the "native" in most occasions).

To build upon the above, a mapping of immigration narratives based on an x-axis of rational/detached to aesthetic/recreational and a y-axis of utopian to utilitarian is presented, leading to four general narrative styles. The rational and utopian "mission" quadrant, the utopian and aesthetic "internal growth" quadrant, aesthetic and utilitarian "melting pot/cultural exchange" quadrant, and finally the utilitarian and rational "information/debunking" quadrant. In order to reach the "movable middle", this report concludes that a variety of narrative approaches will be necessary to appeal to different audiences and shift perceptions, rather than to focus on just one.

In Italy, narratives on migration are usually developed in the political arena, offered to the public through the traditional media and made into topics of conversation on social media. Therefore, the role of Political Social Media Influencers (PSMIs) are of particular interest. These are political opinion leaders who develop the narratives, and through the effective use of social media, influence the public opinion independent of traditional political organizations. Inspired by this, digital methods have been applied with the aim of mapping dominant digital voices and identifying potentially significant narratives within the Italian discussion on immigration. For this, the main social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter) and TikTok have been analyzed, where three categories of dominant positive voices emerged. These categories are "Heroes of the Mediterranean Route", whose stories focus on the successes, or the encountered difficulties, of those who have come to Italy crossing the Mediterranean; "Political Social Media Influencers", refers to online activists who are particularly successful due to their use of humor and irony; and finally "Celebrities", whose narratives generally speak out against racism or discrimination.

Following the above analysis, this report introduces a prototype named "Le origini di Chiara" (Chiara's Origins). This prototype aims to shift perceptions on immigration by retracing the history of the origins of mankind, proving that everybody has a history of migration. The target audience is the "movable middle", also identified as the "disengaged moderates". This group is identified as aged 18-30, with no particularly strong opinions on controversial issues and who are not sure about whether immigration is economically or culturally good or bad for Italy. The narratives of the prototype will be based on this report's outcomes. It will conceive surprising narratives through the use of irony and humor; it will capitalize on influencers to disseminate the message; and, it will avoid the "us" versus "them" juxtaposition, as well as avoid victim narratives. The first ambition is to explore a deconstructed version of the hero narrative that makes the hero "one of us", rather than an exceptionality.

/Chapter One

Presence of foreign nationals in Italy

Migration in Italy, contextual data and legal framework by Ministero del Lavoro

On 1 January 2022 there were 5,030,716 foreign nationals resident in Italy, over 8% of the total population. A total of 3,561,540 commonly residing there are non-EU nationals.

Almost half (47.6%) of foreign residents are European, and over a quarter, specifically 27.2%, are EU citizens. Asians and Africans follow with similar percentages (22.6% and 22.2% respectively), the majority of the latter from Mediterranean countries (13.3%), while Americans total 7.5%. Somewhat small percentages concern stateless people and citizens of Oceania. There are 198 communities, with the five most populous including 48.4% of all foreign residents: the most numerous are Romanian nationals (1.1 million: 20.8%), followed by Albanians (433,000: 8.4%), Moroccans (429,000: 8.3%), Chinese (330,000: 6.4%) and Ukrainians (236,000: 4.6%).

The number of women is slightly higher (51.2%) similarly to what may be observed in the Italian population (51.3%), but there are significant differences regarding age groups: the average age for foreign nationals is 34.8 years, almost 12 years younger than Italians (46.5 years), and while approximately 9% of the former are above 60, Italians of the same age group are over one third of the total.

On 1 January 2020, second generation minors (born in Italy from foreign parents) exceeded 1 million, of which 22.7% (over 228,000) were granted Italian citizenship. Overall there are approximately 1,300,000 young people, foreign nationals or Italians thanks to acquired citizenship, representing 13% of the underage population residing in Italy.

New Italian citizens

On 1 January 2020 there were 1,470,680 foreign immigrants who had been granted Italian citizenship, 83.3% of whom were from outside the EU. Women amount to 56.3% of the total. Regarding their origins, 18.4% are from Albania and 15.5% from Morocco. The 15-19 years age range features a higher number of "new Italians" than the ranges immediately above and below it. Regarding senior citizens, over 65 years of age, the percentage of women is particularly high; many are most likely the foreign brides of immigrants who then returned with their family to their country of origin.

Education

Foreign nationals enrolled in the Italian education system number 865,388, representing 10.3% of the entire student population. Students from outside the EU amount to 8.2%. Seven out of ten students with foreign citizenship were born in Italy.

Students with foreign citizenships come from almost 200 different countries. As in the past, most of them (44.95%) are still of European origins, followed by students of African (26.9%) and Asian (20.2%) origins. The percentage of students from the Americas (7.9%) and Oceania (0.02%) are far less and decreasing. First among European countries of origin is Romania with over 154,000 students. Overall, students with Romanian and Albanian roots (117,000) represent almost one third of students without Italian citizenship (31.3%). There are over 109,000 students from Morocco (12.6%), making them the largest community from the African continent and the third most numerous in Italy. Among Asian communities the most common citizenship is Chinese with almost 51,000 students (5.9%).

Despite observable improvements, a significant gap still exists between Italian students and those with an immigrant background, for instance relating to regular progress in education and dropout rates. Regarding the former issue, 7.5% of Italian students are late compared to 26.9% of students with foreign citizenship. Furthermore, dropout rates (Early Leaving from Education and Training – ELET) for foreign students amounts to 35.4% compared to a national average of 13.1%, the highest in Europe.

Job Market

According to the 12th Annual Report on "Foreign citizens in the Italian job market" by the Ministry of Work and Social Policies, there are 2.3 million foreign nationals employed in Italy, representing 10% of the working population. The employment rate is 57.8% (58.3% for Italians), unemployment at 14.4% (9% among Italians), idleness rate is at 32.4% (35.9%). The sectors employing the highest number of foreign nationals are agriculture (18.0% of the total workforce), construction (15.5%) and hospitality (15.3%), with the highest percentage of foreign workers active in the services industry at 34.3%.

Workers coming from abroad end up being funneled towards specific sectors and/or tasks, thanks also to their social network, giving rise to the phenomenon better known as "ethnic specialization", which results in communities being differently assimilated by the job market, and in sector-specific ethnic concentrations that can reach very high levels.
Ethnic specialization is evident when analyzing occupational sectors: there are

communities primarily employed in farming, such as the Indian community (43% of the workforce originally from India), others in industry, such as the Senegalese (44.,9%), Chinese (31%) and Moroccan (27.9%) communities. Some communities aremainly working in construction, such as the Albanian (27.5%) and Egyptian (23%) communities, while others focus on trade, such as the Chinese (36%) and Bangladeshi (24.5%) communities. Finally, there are communities primarily employed in public and social services or as carers such as the Filipino (87%) and Ukrainian (77%) communities.

Foreign women are persistently disadvantaged regarding their access to the job market with a reported 45.4% in employment compared to 58.2% among the overall workforce, 71.7% of foreign males and 49.9% of Italian women. While the employment rate for Italian women lags 16.7 percentage points behind the men's, the difference between female and male foreign nationals amounts to 26.3 points and is 4.5 points behind that of Italian women.

In Italy 15.6% of sole proprietorships is foreign: it is a constantly growing phenomenon playing an increasingly important role in the economy of our country. In 2021 there were a total of 484,905 sole proprietorships registered to foreign nationals.

Poverty

According to the latest ISTAT data regarding 2021, poverty affects over four times more foreign nationals than Italians (32.4%, compared to 7.2%). In 2021 entirely foreign families are still in the lead and their condition appears to have worsened compared to the previous year: there were 489,000 foreign families in extreme poverty, 30.6% of the total. Italian families were stable at 5.7% (over 1.3 million families), while mixed families reached 17%.

Unplanned migration flows

Recently the number of undocumented migrants arriving in Italy taking the Central Mediterranean route to Europe, has risen again, resulting in an increase in applications for protection, shelter and assimilation. In 2022 over 105,000 people arrived, a 56% increase compared to the previous year. This is the highest figure since the so-called "migration crisis" of 2015-2016 (180,000) and in 2017 (120,000).

In addition, a considerable number of displaced persons from Ukraine arrived in Italy since the start of the Russian invasion in February 2022. In 2022, over 174,000 displaced persons from Ukraine, mostly women (92,000) and minors (49,000), chose Italy as their destination, partly because it is already home to a substantial Ukrainian diaspora. Displaced persons from Ukraine were granted, as in other EU countries, Temporary Protection and access to facilities and support related to this status. 31 December 2022 In Italy there were 20,089 unaccompanied minors (UMs), a much higher number than that registered during the same time in 2021 (+64%). Such a

significant increase may be partly due to the arrival of a considerable number of UMs from Ukraine. The main countries of origin of UMs are Ukraine (5,042 minors), Egypt (4,899), Tunisia (1,800), Albania (1,347) and Pakistan (1,082).

On 31 December 2022, in reception facilities were registered over 107,000 vulnerable migrants, such as asylum seekers, people qualified for international or special protection or unaccompanied minors. These people were housed in Special Reception Centres managed by local prefectures (72.,000), cared for by the facilities of the system of Reception and Integration run by local councils (33,000), or by so-called "hotspots" present in areas where arrivals take place (2,000). Regarding displaced persons from Ukraine, it must be considered that many have found accommodation outside of public facilities, with relatives and friends or independently.

Legal framework

Within the national legal framework, which has also acknowledged EU guidelines on immigration, integration and asylum, the main reference is "Testo unico delle disposizioni concernenti la disciplina dell'immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero" (TUI, Dlgs 286/1998) (In English: Consolidated Act regarding the regulations on immigration and treatment of foreign nationals), which over the years has been extensively changed and extended. The TUI contains regulations on: entry, stay and removal from the country; work; family rights and safeguarding of minors; health; education; access to housing; participation in public life; and social integration.

The "Nuove norme sulla cittadinanza" (In English: New Regulations on citizenship) (L. 91/1992), deals with the different channels through which foreign nationals may obtain Italian citizenship (such as birth, marriage or residence). Over the years a number of reform proposals have been put forward to Parliament, in particular to facilitate granting Italian citizenship to second generation immigrants, but none of them has been successful.
Despite the lack of an organic set of laws regarding asylum, Italy has acknowledged all EU regulations on international protection by including international protection and subsidiary protection in national legislation. The main legal reference is found in:

- Dlgs. 251/2007 implementing directive 2004/83/CE containing regulations on granting the qualification of refugee, or of person needing international protection, to stateless or foreign citizens, as well as regulations on the content of protection granted;

- Dlgs. 25/2008 implementing directive 2005/85/CE listing regulations for the procedures applied by member States aimed at granting and revoking refugee status;

– Dlgs. 142/2015 implementing EU directive 2013/33 listing regulations regarding reception of applicants for international protection, as well as;

– EU directive 2013/32, featuring common procedures aimed at granting and revoking international protection status".

"Temporary protection", granted for the first time in Italy to displaced persons from Ukraine, is regulated by Dlgs 85/2003, implementing directive 2001/55/CE concerning the granting of temporary protection in case of a large influx of evacuees and cooperation within the Community" and by DPCM 28 March 2022 "Measures for the temporary protection of people arriving from Ukraine because of the war in progress". Italy is one of a few European countries to have produced legislation specifically aimed at unaccompanied minors: L. 47/2007 "Regulations concerning the protection of unaccompanied immigrant minors".

/Chapter Two

Dominant and alternative narratives in Italy

Andrea Pogliano – University of East Piedmont – andrea.pogliano@uniupo.it

This chapter illustrates the dominant narratives and outlines the main alternative narratives regarding immigration in Italy. The first paragraph summarizes dominant narratives referring to mainstream news media, which, with political communication, define the most visible and pervasive, everyday public discourse, dictating election narratives and featuring news attracting huge amounts of coverage and commentary also mirrored on social media. The aim is to go back to the origins of the three images of the migrant as a threat, a victim and a hero, sketched out as starting points in the stocktaking report, and to articulate them - obviously trying to summarize - over approximately forty years of migration narratives in Italy, from when, in the early 80s, journalism and politics started to regularly deal with immigration. The second paragraph will put forward a model of possible alternative representations, with a few references to cinema, awareness campaigns, and other materials useful in creating an analytical framework of the most common narratives found in mainstream journalism. This second paragraph will also establish an ideal connection with the second chapter of this report, written by Antonio Santangelo, leading the attempt to create a model of immigration narratives to a more advanced stage.

Dominant narratives in Italy:
journalism and mainstream political communication

The literature on the **immigration frame** in public discourse starts from the study of how journalism in different countries has represented, and currently represents, the phenomenon of immigration or some of its components (Muslim immigrants for instance, or asylum seekers). In order to discuss the dominant (as in "the most common") discourse on immigration we must inevitably start from mainstream media and in particular from journalism. As highlighted in the stocktaking report, within these narratives the main roles assigned to immigrants are "victim", "threat" and "hero".

As a starting point, the ten immigration topics that were identified by Benson (2013), based on the aforementioned three frames, will serve as a starting point to examine the Italian context.

THREAT FRAME: public order, (crime, invasion, decline, health), social cohesion (identity, traditions), fiscal (abuse of services, cost of hospitality), work (they "steal" jobs, they cause reduction in wages)

VICTIM FRAME: humanitarian (wars and persecutions), global economy (the south of the world bears the brunt of economic deregulation), racism and discrimination; system of exclusion (limited mobility, civic stratification).
HERO FRAME: successful immigrants, good workers, cultural diversity, cultural assimilation, occasional heroes

These ten topics illustrate the base on which the most common immigration narratives have developed and are developing in Europe and North America, and also already tell us what role is reserved for immigrants in these narratives. Thus, it is a useful map, nevertheless the map does not reveal the intensity or the prevalence of the topics over time and in the different dimensions of the state.

If we concentrate on Italy and on the research carried out over the years on journalism and immigration, we can define the different weight of the frames and also of the single topics, and from there put forward a few considerations.

First of all it must be said that the threat and victim frames have been competing for space within the public representation of immigration ever since the media started dealing with the phenomenon of immigration in the early 1980s. The hero frame has always been marginal, its journalistic purpose bound with soft news rather than hard news, and the supporters of this frame, that is news sources, are virtually non-existent. However, the marginality itself of the hero frame can tell us a lot about the representations of immigration, and it will be necessary to go back to it after discussing the two really dominant frames: threat and victim.

Among the four topics Benson associates with the threat frame (public order,

social cohesion, fiscal, work), in Italy it is the topic of threat to public order that has characterized the representation of immigrants as enemies. After a decade (the Eighties) marked by a representation of immigrants that was, all things considered, imbued with solidarity, definitely patronizing, and generally benevolent, the Nineties started with consistent arrivals by sea of the Albanians and with them started the conflict between the victim frame and criminal threat frame which characterized the representation of immigrants during that decade.

1.1.1. The immigrant as a threat frame in Italy is dominated by the issues of public order and urban decorum

Immigrant crime was the undisputed protagonist of news reports (Binotto & Martino, 2004) throughout the Nineties, and the creation of moral panic (Cohen, 1972) based on the crimes committed by Albanians (Maneri, 2001) represents its hype. In addition to criminal deeds, these years were marked by the ideology of decorum (Pitch, 2013; Bukowski, 2019) and an obsession with urban safety. Direct mayoral elections (effective from 1993) transformed local campaigns, and safety and decorum became mainstream motifs, with immigrants as a crucial reference of these electoral narratives. It was the season of mayoral decrees against "windshield cleaners", gatherings, the destitute and the homeless. Journalism went hand in hand and supported occupations and evacuations with a substantial increase of reports on "casbahs", "suqs" and "chinatowns" (Pogliano and Zanini, 2010). Politically the "Lega" imposed its code words (Faloppa, 2011) and a distinction between legal and illegal immigrants became the key for the symbolic exclusion of undesirable immigrants.

The fiscal and job-related threats scarcely featured on Italian media, unlike the British media for instance. The threat to social cohesion and identity was more common, but still much less so than the threat to public order. This narrative, based on the idea of people interpreted as ethnos (with the entire emphasis on traditions) was already present during the Nineties, and was most popular during the time of jihadist attacks first in the U.S. and later in Europe. However in the Italian media, the Islamic theme was above all dealt with in a perspective concerned with security (terrorist threat). The threat to tradition and identity was more an element of political communication used by far-right political parties and rightwing newspapers than a topic embraced by Italian journalism as a whole.

This is where another important difference with other European countries comes to light. If for a long time the cultural/identity theme represented the main issue of the discussion on the threat of immigration by the media of different European countries, for instance in Germany and the Netherlands (Van der Brug et al., 2015),

in Italy it was all considered quite marginal. Crime and (in)security became central again to the Italian public debate with the expansion eastwards of the European Union, and during the first decade of the 2000s Romanians became the main characters of new episodes of moral panic (mainly concerning street crime and rape, just as had happened to the Albanians). The peak of this tension was reached between 2007 and 2008. The assault and murder in Rome of Giovanna Reggiani by a Romanian immigrant on 30 October 2007 was one of the news items most covered by the media in those years, significantly influencing - according to many observers - the political elections of 2008. Following Gargiulo (2022, p. 44):

Thus, the (new) "season of decrees" started, officially - in terms of media visibility - in November 2007, when the mayor of Cittadella (PD), Massimo Bitonci, issued a decree restricting requisites for enrolment in the registry office. His initiative set a trend and was widely copied by many local administrations, especially in the North-East. The implementation of this provision was facilitated in the following year: the first part of the security Package (a legislative decree developed and signed by Roberto Maroni, the League party Minister of the Interior of the time) introduced within the Italian judicial system the legal notion of urban security, and modified art. 54 of the TUEL, extending mayoral legislative power beyond emergency situations.

In those years, within the dimension of mainstream public television, it was almost impossible to deal with the issue of immigration without ending up talking about crimes committed by Romanians and "Islamic terrorism", the percentage of immigrants in jails, and of suburbs "under siege by Africans". Even as the intensity of the media and political obsession for security started to wane, as in the 2010s, the issue had gone so deep that even the discussion on reforming legislation regulating citizenship in 2017 was suddenly diverted on the risks for national security and the risks of radicalisation and terrorism (Maneri et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the threat frame in Italy is almost exclusively the frame of threat to public order, fuelled by military metaphors (alarms, invasions), and by a constant production of emergencies, to the rhythm of the many national and local electoral campaigns (Maneri and Quassoli, 2018).

1.1.2. The victim of racism and humanitarian victim frames mark past and present of the communication in defense of immigrants

Within the Italian public debate only the victim frame contrasts the threat frame. This is empirical evidence requiring reflection. As a matter of fact, the voice of immigrants is still under-represented, if not completely silenced, in the media and political mainstream, unlike in other countries with a more relevant colonial history. In these countries, the arrival of non-Europeans started earlier and politically active immigrant communities have been in existence for some time, exactly because of their colonial past, all of which has produced more activism. The Italian mainstream public arena is almost devoid of immigrants and people of African descent, who are rarely and briefly present essentially for two reasons: artistic or sporting achievements, or a history of political militancy or activism in movements, which immediately labels them as "leftwing" immigrants, sent to exclusively discuss the issue of integration. This is what happened, in the most striking case to occur in recent years, to Cecile Kyenge, the first black minister of the Italian Republic. It is what happened and happens to many immigrants or children of immigrants who find a temporary space on the media (often as bloggers of online national daily news outlets) or in local institutions. Currently this space is held in Parliament by Aboubakar Soumahoro, who once more is "the only black person in the room". The ghettoization of these voices is, in summary, a narrative ghettoization: independent of merit and varied skills (Kyenge was after all a physician) when granted, the room for words and action is limited by the semantics of hospitality and by integration between natives and immigrants (Pogliano and Premazzi, 2014). The only, recent exception is due to the establishment of networks and second-generation immigrant organizations who are, among other things, reformulating the discourse on racism, appropriating the right to talk about racism with a different approach from how native Italians would do, however well meaning. On the back of the Black Lives Matter movement, active organizations of children of immigrants, mostly of African descent, have been fighting to reform the legislation on citizenship since the early 2000s, and are attempting to conquer an autonomous space for discussion and to define its boundaries, without these being set around them by others. Although this is a very important new phenomenon, it still remains almost invisible in Italy.

In the absence of a significant presence of immigrants and children of immigrants in the media and in politics, the discourse that is put forward as an alternative to the threat frame is above all a humanitarian discourse in which "we" talk about "them" as victims. The question we need to answer is this: what are immigrants victims of when we speak about them as victims?

As we have seen, Benson (2013) identified four topics: the humanitarian victim, the victim of the global economy, the victim of racism and discrimination, and the victim of the system of exclusion. What we see in Italy is this:

- between the 1980s and the 1990s immigrants seen as victims were represented as humanitarian victims (a generic poor person from the Third World, whose poverty was not rooted in colonialism or exploitation by the capitalist system, but understood as endogenous, the result of under-development and congenital backwardness) and, for a brief, intense period, as victims of racism and discrimination. The first national demonstration against racism occurred in 1989, after the murder of South-African immigrant seasonal worker Jarry Essan Masslo, in Villa Literno. Although intertwined with the issue of work exploitation, racism soon stood out as a phenomenon relegated to the psycho-social theme of cultural racism, which disappeared just as it had appeared, or as an alternative to the world of extremism and the assaults perpetrated by extremists. Basically, institutional and structural racism never surfaced, and racism was controlled and then denied, among single news stories and debatable opinion polls (Pogliano and Zanini, 2010; Pogliano, 2019).

- Between the Nineties and the early 2000s the theme of immigrants as victims of the system of exclusion emerged almost exclusively in reference to the Centres (CPTs, then CIEs, then CPRs) and to the attempt to define the movement of people as a criminal offense. However, the system of exclusion theme, so common in scientific literature (anthropological, sociological as well as judicial) has remained on the outskirts of public debate, except for reports by magazines and newspapers such as L'Espresso, il Manifesto and l'Avvenire.

-The victim of the global economy, is basically embraced exclusively by those holding marxist views, and although always present in newspapers such as il Manifesto, it is mainly excluded from the wider public debate.

- From the early 2010s, so for more than a decade by now, regarding immigration the victim space has been almost monopolized by the immigrant by sea, seen as a humanitarian victim. Within this already narrow and restricted space where NGOs act as news sources, immigrants are reduced to their suffering bodies (Fassin, 2012; Fassin, 2013), and the political agenda is to define as victims only those obviously fleeing from a war (just look at the discussions on displaced persons from Ukraine and before them Syrian asylum seekers, compared to immigrants from Eritrea, for instance) and who look vulnerable and frail (children, sick men and pregnant women), as right-wing leaders like to remind us during every election campaign.

In conclusion, it seems that in our public discourse, a security-centered narrative of immigrants as a threat to public order and urban decorum is almost exclusively contrasted by a narrative entirely focused on asylum seekers, swinging between humanitarian victimization and the constant doubt of not being sufficiently frail to deserve the role of victim. It seems the mainstream has almost entirely removed any critique to past and current systems of exploitation, exclusion and violence, and that the only alternative that could appear is a return of a focus on racism, this time in its institutional and structural version, told by people of African descent supported by an international network established following the Black Lives Matter movement, represented in Italy by movements of second generation immigrants

such as Italiani Senza Cittadinanza and Dalla Parte Giusta della Storia. We do not know how much these movements will be able to change the dominant narrative.

1.1.3. The immigrant as a hero frame tells us something about how integration is understood by Italian media

Soft news about immigrants as heroes of the narrative, beyond its questionable ability to reformulate the general narrative, because of its exceptionality (as remarked in the stocktaking report), has always been formulated, also in Italy, along two very problematic narrative threads: that of the good worker, docile and grateful, and that of the immigrant who radically divests himself of his own culture to embrace an undefined Italian-ness. Stories of immigrants working hard, sweating, thanking us, paying their taxes, never raising their heads and – just to be sure they are fully acceptable – only taking on jobs that Italians do not want to do. But also portraits of immigrants speaking dialect, supporting an Italian soccer team, going to school with "our" children, who love pizza and do everything to be Italian. These tales fit inside the metaphor of the guest. To be welcome, guests must behave well, be thankful for the hospitality, not create problems, and love what they find "in our home" so much that they can't wait to emulate us.

Together with those of the successful immigrant (the only kind that can afford to be a little rebellious, but not too much), these narratives are the only ones used by the media to talk about integrated immigrants (Pogliano 2019). This is the most interesting and at the same time disturbing element of the hero immigrant frame: the discourse structuring its character and relegating the issue of integration to the immigrants' ability to interpret the role they have been assigned. Thus, integration is understood as a rite of passage, where immigrants are committed to overcome certain limits (regarding income, popularity, cultural adaptation and concurrently a refusal of their origins, in a kind of "civilizing" ritual). There's more: immigrants put forward by the media as integrated are harmless immigrants. The narratives they are part of is perfectly complementary to that which - in the face of a crime or a violent act, or even just the ostentation of a different culture - brings to the formulation of hyperbolic generalizations on the unlikely possibility that immigrants can truly be integrated in Italy. In the production and reproduction of this frame we can easily find the logics of merit and award associated with integration, perfectly in line with political proposals such as the point-based residency permit or the threat of revoking citizenship included in security legislation.

1.2. Alternative narratives to the mainstream

1.2.1. Mainstream alternatives to the mainstream

The pun in the title takes stock of those rare experiences when an event and its first representation created an opportunity to break with dominant representations. They were important events exactly because they provided the possibility to leave the expected narrative, that which the media have encouraged us to cultivate. The first example dates back to 4 October 2013 and was summarized by these pages from La Stampa and by the images chosen to illustrate the so-called "tragedy of Lampedusa", that is, the shipwreck of a boat carrying immigrants where almost 400 people lost their lives.

By chance the boat sank close to the coast and not offshore, which made it possible to recover the bodies and the immigrants' personal belongings, producing something unexpected in the representations of immigrant arrivals by sea: the presence of death and the presence of photographs of the deceased with their relatives and friends before they set off. Death and self-representations by the immigrants emerged as disruptive new elements, able to tear apart canonical representations, those of the arrival of desperate people, emergency services and landings. It was this sudden, surreal overturning that made it possible for politics to move forward by proposing and obtaining funding for the Mare Nostrum operation, which saw the Italian navy working, for approximately one year, on saving lives close to the shores of Libya. A different case but very similar if we follow the thread outlined above, was that of the image of Alan Kurdi on Bodrum beach. That image was also able to tear the veil, to temporarily silence well-honed narratives and to bring politics and civil society to make a new effort (it was then that the Refugee Welcome movement was founded, which is still active today). Can we talk about these cases as triggers for new narratives or as new narratives in themselves? Certainly those images convey new narratives, or rather, grafts of narratives we are used to seeing "elsewhere" in a new context, that of immigration narratives. The narratives by youths representing themselves with selfies, of loved ones, of self performance in exotic but familiar contexts that we can see in the photos published by La Stampa, are entirely new in the context of asylum seeker landings; a picture of a white child on a beach

reminding us of the approaching summer holidays and at the same time of the astonishment and horror of a post-tsunami image is completely unknown within immigration narratives. Death, always evoked but also always removed, reduced to figures fleetingly read out during the news, is an unexpected and awkward presence. These are images but at the same time they are already narratives, able to silence all the others, at least for a while, and make room for consensual action

The photographs by Cesar Dezfuli that won him the Sony World Photography Award in 2020 do something quite similar. They take the expected image of the "desperate" immigrant, exhausted, just saved at sea and compare it to a picture of the same person, taken a few months later. It is the same person but yet it is not, no longer alien to us, becoming similar to us. It is a break through the fourth wall, narrating the possibilities beyond the stereotype of the desperate immigrant. The series of crisp photographs strongly convey the idea of the narrative project. Below are a couple of diptychs among the many included in the project.

Interpretation remains doubtful, some see this narrative passage from desperation to hope as a "thanks to us", others as a "despite us". But photography is silent and cannot, nor should it, be closed to interpretation, despite the significantly different readings.

1.2.2. Six "alternative" approaches

Among the many alternative narratives or counter-narratives that have been tried in Italy in recent years by associations, local institutions, activists and movements, groups and networks, film directors and scriptwriters, we can analytically try to make some order by flagging six routes that have been tested by some communication products which represent some examples, and briefly discuss their strengths and weaknesses.

a) The border and solidarity performance

This category includes a number of narratives attempting to illustrate borders as a central element of the phenomenon of immigration. It is the political passage that allows to display immigrants not just as humanitarian victims, like the mainstream

does, but victims of a violent and unfair system of exclusion. To this context belong a number of photographic projects on the Balkan route, films such as the first few by Andrea Segre ("Mare chiuso", "Come un uomo sulla terra") and the more recent "L'ordine delle cose". But also films representing the topic of solidarity and of the criminalization of solidarity (through a specific offense). Among them, "Juventa" by Michele Cinque and "Io sto con la sposa" by Gabriele Del Grande, Khaled Soliman Al Nassiry and Antonio Augugliaro. They are important films but carry two risks. The former risk confirming an imagined reality where immigrants coincide with the image of those "few" attempting to cross borders without a permit (but with a legal possibility of applying for asylum), thus confirming the distorted image put forward by mainstream media which takes that 10% and transforms it into 100% of immigrants. The latter carry the risk of self-satisfaction and of polarization (we are good, you are bad), of talking only to those who are already active, according to critiques always aimed also towards solidarity campaigns and initiatives of communication activism such as, for example, the "Io accolgo" (in English: "I welcome") campaign, promoted among others by CARITAS, ARCI, CGIL in 2018, which not by chance followed in the footsteps of the "Io non ho paura" (In English: "I'm not scared") campaign, both launched when the Ministry of the Interior was in the hands of a member of a very decisive anti-immigrant party, and after the issuing of the "security decrees" (Maroni first, Salvini later). These narratives have an enemy and suggest resistance, but are also often too self-satisfied to expand their audience and convince those sitting on the fence. They appear to be saying: we are better than you and we'll show you. With all the reasons and best intentions, they are maybe not very useful to shift the movable middle and introduce a really new narrative in a context already polarized between sovereign closure and supportive-humanitarian efforts. However they have the merit of placing the violence of the exclusion system center stage and of trying to say: it is not normal, it is politics, and politics can be changed when the level of violence becomes unacceptable.

b) mutual acknowledgement and distance reduction

This category includes all those communication pieces revolving around meeting, gradually knowing, distance reduction and acceptance of differences. The series "Bangla", by Phaim Bhuiyan and Emanuele Scaringi is a good example, but also "Io sono Li", by Andrea Segre, or web series "Cultural Shock" by Davide Tosco and Massimo Arvat. The example set and celebrated by Mimmo Lucano in Riace falls into this approach, as do the latest campaigns created by children of immigrants collective "Dalla Parte Giusta della Storia" (in English: "On the right side of history"). These are all different examples but they all carry the concept of redefining "us natives" and "you immigrants", according to a new definition of border. Here, the issue of context is paramount, the neighborhood in Chioggia in "Io sono Li", Lucano's Riace, etc. As a matter of fact the political equivalents of this narration are the campaigns lead by local administrations to promote, for example, social cohesion in a neighborhood where cohabitation is perceived as difficult. This is indeed the idea: we are talking about "us the neighborhood", not of a conflict between "us natives" and "them immigrants", so much so that even the word integration is replaced,

believed to carry too many connotations linked to the issue of immigration, after years of use in media and politics following that direction.

c) Change the identity marker

This third category is very similar to the previous one, but instead of resetting the "us-them" paradigm on an intimate basis (a meeting between two people who discover similarities within their differences) or on a community basis (us as neighborhood, us of Riace, etc.), other identity markers are replaced (class, gender or generation, for instance). This is what Aboubakar Soumahoro does when talking about those working in the fields enduring exploitation, and in general what is done within a class struggle culture when class unites people beyond origins or skin color. It is also what is done recounting the fight to reform citizenship legislation as a battle fought by young people, all of them, so that the world of elders cannot impose outdated or easily overcome distinctions. But it also is the feminist struggle including immigrant women, for example "housemaids and carers" within a wider patriarchal narrative, maybe interweaving it with social class issues, in an inter-segment perspective. Its limitation is that it tends to lend itself to specific struggles, although a classist discourse including almost every immigration influx, on the model outlined by intellectuals such as Wallerstein or Mezzadra in Italy, may still be effectively produced.

d) Aiming for cosmopolitan values

It is the model of "the DNA Journey" project recalled in the stocktaking report, which in Italy references a few advertising ideas by Oliviero Toscani, and in general humanist photography as championed most recently by Salgado, and many other projects of literary humanism. We are all immigrants, we are all human beings, diversity and exchange have always been mankind's strength, etc. It redefines the "us" at an absolutely general level. It is a step back compared to points b) and c), very impressive, but it also risks not influencing a movable middle that has reasons to feel doubtful about immigration flows (specific economic, cultural fears, social downgrading...) and that within a discourse at such a general level might not find mirrors to reflect itself in and challenge certain ideas, but maybe not even a tow to completely remove those doubts. Another potential risk is not considering society (power, racial, economic, gender, generational relationships, etc) and moving the discourse beyond the struggles and social-political movements. After Black Lives Matter it can also seem - certainly to Black activists - as a blind and hypocritical message, unless adequate countermeasures are taken to develop the narrative.

e) Utilitarianism

This category includes attempts to convince the undecided that we need immigrants to pay for "our" pensions, to fuel "our" economy and guarantee "our" services. It is a brutal return to us-them, or the acceptance of that boundary used as a means for communication purposes and with an aim. Maybe its most convincing and powerful expression was the "24h without us" immigrant strike carried out on 1 March 2010. Seen as a kind of revendication by immigrants themselves, it certainly

takes on a different value, and maybe is the only possible way so that all (or almost all) immigrants may express themselves through a generic "us" just like our media and politicians have done so often and with such nonchalance. It is the overturning of that "them" into an "us" that carries strength; a collective taking the stand and throwing down the gauntlet. But outside of that context, when used by natives, it is a surrender to utilitaristic reasoning, transforming immigrants into sheer workforce and numbers at the Treasury.

f) Debunking

Finally, debunking. It has maybe been the most commonly used mode in recent years especially on social media, extensively used by journalists themselves, who with a critical eye to part of their profession and to politics, tried to bring back to a realistic level a discourse often derailed by propaganda. Currently debunking is badly mistreated, both because a number of studies have shown it to be scarcely effective, and because a vision of communication has established itself (also as a result of numerous studies on the perception and shaping of political opinions) that criticizes the hyper-rational approach, unable to speak to values and identities and to move feelings. Admittedly, all the above-mentioned approaches play on feelings or on identity more than logic and rationality, evoking alternative communities or presenting struggles and battles. Debunking is the spawn of an optimistic idea of the public sphere, reaching us from the early 20th century. Furthermore, debunking is sometimes also counterproductive. For instance, the well-known attempt to debunk those stating that "they're all coming here", painstakingly presenting the real data on immigration (how many emigrate to countries bordering with their own continents, etc.) has not influenced in any way the feeling of many that there already are too many of them. Who decides that 10% of immigrants within the national population is a small percentage? Obviously everyone and nobody.

/Chapter Three

The sense of positive narratives on immigrant

Antonio Dante Maria Santangelo - Università degli Studi di Torino – antonio. santangelo@unito.it

To make sense of the positive narratives on immigration we have to start from the negative ones. To this effect, the book "Destination Italy. Representing Migration in Contemporary Media and Narrative" (Bond, Bonsaver & Faloppa, 2015), maintains that immigrants cause fear because they are perceived as "aliens".

The character of the alien was well examined by Ferraro and Brugo in "Comunque umani" (in English: "Nonetheless Human") (2008), a book about the history of the representation of monsters in our culture. Here it is claimed that the latter are symbolic tools our societies use to talk about the conflict between good and evil and, consequently, to better define their own identities. To this end, Ferraro and Brugo start from fairy tales and emphasize that we are used to listening to tales of monsters where individuals living in a "here", where a certain kind of positive values are cultivated, are set against beings belonging to an "elsewhere", ruled by different values of a negative sign. If the latter were to prevail, the first would be destroyed, or reduced to a minority and this is scary. So, monstrous is everything which incarnates different and opposite values coming from elsewhere, which is to say the land of the others.

Still according to Ferraro and Brugo, in the history of the representation of aliens, as of orcs and other monsters, it is possible to identify a clear-cut route, which from the most distant past folklore, reaches our time, generating four types of narrative, the first more ancient (but still in existence and prosperous) and the latter more modern:

1. Evil is elsewhere, and good rules here: outside, in the woods, in exotic and faraway places, there are terrible creatures who try to enter into the world of the "good" and it is necessary to fight in order to keep them out, possibly by fortifying borders and making a distinction between here and elsewhere clear (as we know, this narrative is extensively used by rightwing parties during election campaigns, but also afterwards, to communicate in a simple way a vision of the world that obviously is perceived as common to many people). Monsters are often, as in the War of the Worlds by H.G. Wells, creatures whose reasoning we cannot understand because it is impossible to communicate with them, but who draw from this "unfathomable" thinking their evil desire to exterminate;

2. From elsewhere Evil arrives here: monsters and aliens have managed to enter and from elsewhere they have moved here, as in Bram Stoker's "Dracula" (the ante litteram immigrant tale). Once again the baddies are those whose point of view we cannot understand – "Dracula", for instance, is an epistolary novel built on the letters written by human characters, where the only one who does not express himself directly is the vampire –, while the goodies are those whose motivations to fight them are totally clear and shared, to the point that as they get to know each other, they motivate each other, drawing strength from their acquaintance (often in these tales the locations where immigrants arrive here are small "elsewheres", dangerous and disreputable, just like the neighborhoods mainly inhabited by immigrants are often represented within immigration narratives);

3. From a place inside the "here" Evil moves inside its inhabitants, who are nonetheless able to expel it: like in the "Alien" (1979-2012) sci-fi saga, the monster sneaks inside the spaceship acting as a home for the characters, and from there enters their bodies. Incommunicability remains and its modus operandi is still mechanically aimed at

destroying those living here. The heroes are those who manage to eradicate it from within themselves and to "throw it out", out of their own life. What matters is their willpower, what is within their minds, their free will, the faculty of choosing good and virtue and to impose them on everything which, coming from elsewhere, could subjugate them (to draw another comparison with immigration, in some news reports about rape suffered by immigrants - one of the most dramatic moments when the monster enters their body - victims must undertake a long and difficult route of psychological rehabilitation to retake control of themselves and of their lives);

4. Evil is here and inside the way of seeing the world of its inhabitants, and it cannot be eradicated: as in "The Village" (Shyamalan, 2004), it is obvious that evil is a cultural construct of those living here, projecting elsewhere everything they find scary. This mechanism, typical of our way of dealing with the world, cannot be eliminated, but we can decide how we define what is alien and monstrous, changing the boundaries between "us" (goodies) and "them" (baddies) (as in all critical tales on immigration where the attempt is to show that it was us, we forced people to emigrate, we provoked hatred towards us with colonialism, we are scared of people who actually have no interest in harming us, etcetera: often this kind of tale highlights the fact that evil is what we want to recognize as such, and that if we decide to assign the role of monster to someone they will probably become one, because we will act in such a way as to only see in them what we deem monstrous).

As we can sense, the latter way of constructing tales of monsters illustrated by Ferraro and Brugo is the most promising to changing the negative representation of immigrants. In fact, in positive narratives about immigration the confrontational opposition between us (good)/them (bad) is neutralized or mitigated, as in the famous image created by Oliviero Toscani for a Benetton communication campaign aimed at promoting integration (see figure 1)
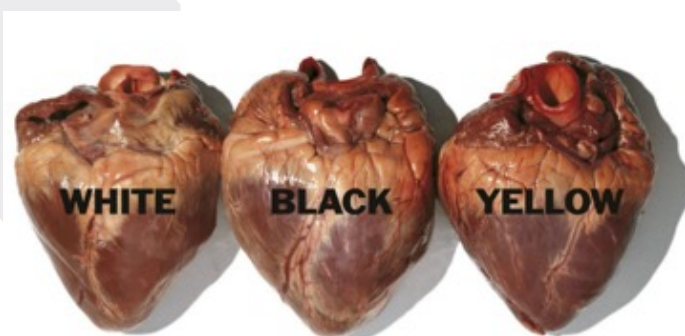

Figure 1 - All different but all the same

The rhetorical mechanism behind this image is very well known in semiotics, where it is common knowledge that the sense of things does not depend on the way they appear as much as it does on how they are interpreted, that is, on how we connect them to meanings which are not physically visible on their surface, because they remind us of them through some interpretation code that makes us see them

as such. We also usually classify things themselves through these interpretive mechanisms, establishing similarities and differences. So, as claimed by Toscani, people may have different skin colors and look dissimilar, but are actually the same in many ways, also in the most physical. Naturally the range of affinities that can bring us to understand that those who appear different actually are like us is very wide, stretching from the most "somatic" considerations to socio-economic ones, all the way to more abstract issues linked to value, as we can clearly see in the "Don't put people in boxes" communication campaign [1].

From this point of view, there is a very interesting sequence in the movie "L'ordine delle cose" (in English: "The order of things") (Segre, 2017), because it outlines an immigrant character that recurs very often in the pro-integration discourse. We see the lead, an Italian policeman working to stop illegal landings in Italy, inside a Libyan jail, approached by an inmate who understands that he is on her side because he works hard promoting respect for human rights. Until that moment the man's idea was, in very general terms, that we must all be the same to see our "humanity" respected (a concept similar to Toscani's), but the woman manages to make him understand that she has a degree, that her husband is a Mathematics lecturer at Helsinki university, that they both dream of visiting Rome, of traveling as free people, and it becomes obvious that there are many more points in common between them than a simple and vague belonging to the human race (the cultivated, "quality" immigrant is always highly thought-of).

Aboubakar Soumahoro followed a similar line replying to provocations by right-wing newspapers who labeled him "the Ivorian" during an election campaign which saw him running for the center-left. He replied that he was Italian of Ivorian origins, had a degree, was a unionist and defender of everybody's civil rights, regardless of the color of their skin, origins, sexual orientation and religious faith [2]. Basically he maintains that in this light he is the same as us, and we must fight together against those who would deny it. In this way he also proposes we acknowledge we are different from other (right wing) people who maybe on the surface appear to be more similar to us, but actually are not like us at all, because they oppose our fulfillment as human beings.

Social media are full of Facebook pages, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter) and Tik Tok profiles that make this kind of case. We can see this from the many examples reported by Monaci and Persico's study for the E-mindful project, on the courage raised by episodes reported in the news of patients refusing doctors of color and insulting them because of the color of their skin [3]; black activists, widely appreciated for the work in protecting the vulnerable, whether Italian or foreign, but

1 New Hope Church. (2017, May 22). Don't Put People in Boxes [video].
YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRwt25M5nGw

2 Evi, E. [@eleonora.evi]. (2022, August 12). Il suo nome è Aboubakar Soumahoro ed è un gran iatliano [post].
Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/ChKlH7pMUUL/

3 Scanzi, A. (2022, August 18). Questo paese si avvicina a tappe forzate verso l'abisso morale più totale [post].
Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/100044294836323/posts/660693572083798

forced to relocate because of ongoing threats to their families [4]; athletes mistakenly treated like criminals by the police, obviously because of prejudice[5] , or belittled like Paola Egonu[6] ; or once more, Italians reminding everyone that there was a time when we were the immigrants [7]; or finally, African workers who proudly protest their full ability to be productive and carry out all the duties expected of a worker [8].

What the examples we have reported show is that the concepts of "us" and "them" can be blurred, defined case by case: as in when us whites and them blacks actually is a wider "us" against other "them" who are the true baddies of the situation (evil institutions for instance). In fact, within the discourse on the us/them opposition, a third character often appears, which we do not naturally acknowledge as such, but that any narrative theorist would identify as indeed a character (that is, an entity imbued with a form of rationality, or at least some kind of logic - something you can understand the workings of - and agentive power): the context. Within immigration narratives this can be unfavorable both to the subjects constituting "us" and those making up "them". It can be represented by "evil" institutions, as stated above, by an unfair economic system, climate crisis, colonialism, war, etc. Before these entities, who treat everyone in the same way, that is, badly, everyone is the same and there is a tendency towards cooperation.

When "us" and "them" are brought together against an unfavorable external context, the resulting narratives can outline them in a number of ways, according to the possibilities of combination made possible by the model used by Greimas in "Semiotics and social sciences" (1976) to talk of the discourses on "collective actants", that is, on the narrative roles covered by several characters together, within discourses that see them involved in an attempt to "make society". Us and them are a "partitive whole" if, despite standing together and maybe fighting a common foe, we maintain our different identities. We are an "integral whole" if we consider ourselves equal. Taken individually, both us and them can feel "split". separated from what we would like to be (maybe in the name of something we feel we should do or be), and we are thus a "partitive unit", or we can feel we are exactly like we wish to be, thus an "integral unit". For instance, in "Terraferma" (in English: "Mainland") (Crialese, 2011), the grandfather fisherman saves the shipwrecked immigrants and is an integral unit with his own values, given that as soon as he sees them in the water he says he has never abandoned anyone at sea. Soon after he calls a meeting with all the other fishermen to share the sense of his actions and we can see the elders are all with him, so their subgroup is an integral totality, but the young people do not agree, fearing retaliation from the government, showing that their society actually is a partitive whole, at least concerning the reception of struggling foreigners. The situation is also difficult in the protagonists' home. The

4 Fanpage.it (2022, May 30). Mi sento un corpo estraneo, mi chiedono sempre il permesso di soggiorno [post]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/169992733022409/posts/7920866861268252

5 La Repubblica [@larepubblica]. (2022, July 25). La denuncia dell'ex giocatore di basket Joseph Blair, fermato dalla polizia a Pesaro insieme ai figli [post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/tv/CgbszK9Ngt2/

6 Tosa, L. (2022, July 15). Nel giorno in cui ha trascinato le azzurre in semifinale di Nations League con 36 punti [post]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/100044563983825/posts/603245331170928

7 Vegna, S. (2022, July 17). Buongiorno cosi [post]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/100044274707712/posts/599292678223217

8 Tik Tok. [@annahanane5]. (2022, August 13). https://www.tiktok.com/@annahanane5/video-71313816998244471301?is_copy_url=1&is_from_webapp=v1

grandson does not really know where to stand, and listening to the other fishermen in his age group, when he comes across another group of shipwrecked immigrants but alone, he leaves them at sea, although with conflicting feelings, becoming a partitive unit compared to the reconciled self-image he had beforehand. Only at the end, as he understands that the world is bitter and mean to him as it is to immigrants, will he set sail with them, seeking a better future. In that moment an integral unit and whole come to be. Obviously, being a partitive or integral whole, a partitive or integral unit, depends on there being one or two, potentially conflicting sets of values at stake.

It is interesting to also consider how narrative roles are distributed within tales where partitive and integral units and wholes are constituted. To understand this it is necessary to use a narrative model Ferraro defines as "alpha", that is, concentrating on building the characters' identity (Ferraro, 2019). Within them sending instance and perspective one both operate. The latter relates to the individual values of the different characters, while the former concerns the values of other people, of those external subjects or entities who would like to impose a "destiny" on individuals. To be clear, in the relationship between parents and children, the perspective instance belongs to the latter, and the sending instance to the former. Obviously, the identities of both are at stake in the relationship established between the respective instances: being a good son consists of subscribing to the value model suggested by its sending instance, but often young people distance themselves from it, propounding a different view of things. But by doing this they know they will assume a different identity, as is well known since the days of Romeo and Juliet.

The word "instance" is particularly significant within immigration narratives, as immigrants bring their own instances – that is their values – to those tasked with receiving them who also have their own values and often sit in judgment of theirs. Very particular and different narrative structures are generated by the meeting and crossbreeding of these instances. The one concerning initiation rites is the most commonly recurring, featuring universal mechanisms well described by Propp (1928) in his compositional table regarding Russian fables about magic, or by Vogler (1992) in his "The Writer's Journey". It extensively recurs in immigration stories: the character playing the role of Sender – that is, us living in the societies immigrants are heading for, the above mentioned "here" – imposes the values of his sending instance, stating that whoever wants to be part of his world must prove he is able to bear it (this being his "destiny"). At the end of a series of tests, he will judge the applicants for citizenship. Usually these tests consist of showing the ability to keep evil outside (leaving it in the elsewhere). An evil incarnated by values logically opposite to those established "here" under the rule of the Sender himself. So, if for "us" as Senders it is fundamental to work a lot, "them" immigrants must prove they are able to do the same, because loafers must stay away; if for us it is important to be wealthy, it must be for them too; if we have to be nonreligious, democratic, liberal, etc, those aspiring to live with us must prove they know how to be so. Thus, the identity of immigrants depends on the fact that we, as their Senders, recognize their ability to live according to our values. If this happens, our society becomes an integral whole.

Obviously in this narrative model there's no room for the immigrants' perspective instance, as they must somehow abandon their "perspective" and embrace ours. This is particularly clear in the many tales circulating on social media regarding immigrants successful in sports [9]. None of them are represented as someone with different desires or values apart from the will to become someone in their own field. It is taken for granted that this, which is a value we judge positively, is the core of the entire story.

But obviously there are many more ways to build a story. One is based on contract, so that the hero is allowed a perspective instance different from the destination one. So he agrees to take the "trip" that will lead him to fulfill the expectations and values of the Sender because he wants the latter to give him in exchange what he wants and which embodies his individual values. Within narratives regarding sports champions for instance, we are reminded of the story of Cassius Clay, who later became Muhammad Alì, who had never been a problem until he showed everyone that his perspective on the world, his values, prevented him from going to war for that same Sender, American society, who until then had bestowed every honor on him. In that moment everybody understood that he too had a perspective instance that required to be acknowledged, and that his entire identity as a person depended on that acknowledgement. It would be interesting if the tales of successful immigrants in contemporary sports were told in the same way, talking about what their perspective instances are, and showing them even when they are based on different values from our own. This is done in the world of soccer when it's Ramadan and a champion is Muslim. It is worth noting that this examination primarily pertains to matters of tradition and custom, and the discourse seldom extends to encompass more politically charged contexts.

Among the stories of conflicts between alternative views of the world, there are also some where those animated by a perspective instance they hold to be right, revolt against those holding a wrong sending instance. For instance, in "Avatar" (Cameron, 2009), on the issue of colonization, not far removed from that of immigration narratives, natives, attacked by humans, predators of their natural resources, revolt with the help of all those humans who do not accept the values of the sending instance ruling their society. In the end they impose their "alien" perspective instance, not by chance based on the motto "I see you", which basically means "I can enter into your perspective" (notice here how the alien character we wrote about at the beginning of this essay is overturned). The viewer is made to side with the revolutionaries because their way of being and interpreting reality is better than that held by the society they are fighting, which sadly is a lot like our own. In

9 Calciatori Brutti [@calciatoribrutti]. (2022, March 21). Moustaphá Cisse, classe 2003, ieri ha tenuto l'Atalanta in corsa per la Champions League, ma fino a pochi mesi fa giocava in seconda categoria [post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CbXGpWDgt34/; Cronache di spogliatoio [@cronache_di_spogliatoio]. (2022, July 1). Arriva dal Mali, ha 23 anni e, al contrario di tanti ragazzi che sono alla ricerca di un sogno, fortunatamente la sua storia ha avuto un grandioso lieto fine [post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cfdt2qlN4aJ/; Cronache di spogliatoio [@cronache_di_spogliatoio]. (2022, March 24). Tra le cose più belle che lo sport ci regala ogni giorno ci sono proprio le storie che riesce a raccontare [post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cbe_zddt0nx/; Mam Africa Onlus (2022, August 23). Salvini se ne faccia una ragione, Meloni se ne faccia una ragione, l'Italia è colore. [post]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/130511460308281/posts/8806092069416800

a certain sense, the events of "Black Lives Matter" work in the same way, just like those of the "Me Too Movement". In cases where these movements are represented in a positive way, we talk of better people than ourselves, animated by entirely legitimate values and more embraceable than our own, or at least of those we have set at the heart of certain perverse mechanisms of our society, which they fight.

Unfortunately we know how difficult it is to recount these kinds of stories in our society, where nobody imagines they can start a revolution. Specifically, as written by Mark Fisher in many of his books, within the most fitting context of discourses on revolution, that is, the fight against capitalism, we cannot even imagine what there would be beyond it, which works as a sort of reality principle even preventing us from dreaming up alternative worlds. Movements such as Black Lives Matter or Me Too are talked about and supported because they fight for rights, not to eradicate capitalism. Just like what happens for many discourses by the "moderate left", these circulate because in the end they do not challenge the status quo. Quite of another caliber were those made in the 60s and 70s, which today we no longer hear. But within immigration narratives, we can at times find some truly revolutionary tales, as in the film "Athena" (Gavras, 2022), where the inhabitants of a Paris suburb rebel and destroy everything after one of them is killed by the police.

Finally there is one last narrative model deriving from the system of relationships that may be established between the sending and perspective instances supporting alpha class stories: the model concerning vagrants. These are characters who, with their peculiar view of things, come from the outskirts or from elsewhere and would like to install themselves in the center of here, where they find a number of existential niches, which they try to access. They don't really know in which one they would like to live so they try many, moving from one to another. But unfortunately they can't manage to find one that can give total sense to their existence, on the contrary, they are literally rejected and expelled from many of them. So in the end they find themselves homeless and on the road. The symbol of all this is "La vie d'Adéle" (in English: "Blue is the Warmest Color") (Kechiche, 2013), once again a film quite sensitive to immigration issues, as its director is a North African living in France. It tells the story of a girl from the suburbs, of humble origins, who goes to school in the center of town and learns the literature of the wealthy, all revolving around the search for freedom, experimentation and trust in social mobility. Charmed by all this she starts looking for herself, experimenting with heterosexual love with lower middle class boys like herself, and above all entertaining a homosexual relationship with a young, upper middle class artist, with whom she goes to live with, oblivious to other people's judgment. But unfortunately that is not her world and she is soon expelled from it, because her ambitions (she wants to be a primary school teacher and does not desire recognition as a great intellectual) do not measure up. So she ends up in a limbo, where the only person who tries to befriend her is a Maghrebi immigrant who, like her, wants to be part of that world but cannot manage to.

When telling all these stories it is also necessary to choose the enunciation logics to be used, that is, the point of view to take on:

- us in their place: as in "Tolo Tolo" (Zalone, 2020), posing the question of how it would be if we were the immigrants and if we experienced what they do;

- we learn from them: morally, culturally, because of experience, immigrants have a lot to teach us, so we must look at them humbly and learn their culture. It is the attitude typical of anthropologists;

- they let us into their way of seeing things: as "Anna Mouzoun"[10], who lets immigrants speak to show us how they see the world;

- we look at them with critical and objective detachment: as in those documentaries aimed at simply showing us the hard life of immigrants, without pietism or hypocrisy;

- they look at us with ironic detachment: like Khaby Lane, who shows us the absurdities of our culture from his "other" point of view, that of an immigrant[11] ;

- We look at each other (meeting of differences) as equals: like in "Bangla" (Bhuiyan, 2019), where the characters remain well aware of their differences and observe each other anchored to them, even if to start a dialogue. Or like what happens in "Cultural Shock"[12].

If we wish to cross the narrative and enunciation models seen until now, we could create a map, along the lines of the one drawn by Semprini (1996), derived from the studies conducted by Floch (1990). We can put on the x-axis the opposition between rational and detached - but also at times ironic - forms of enunciation, aimed at unmasking an objective reality to be understood and confronted, and aesthetical and sometimes recreational forms of enunciation, aimed at enchanting, at the pleasure of discovering the subjective vision of a different culture and at embracing it. On the y-axis we can juxtapose utopian narratives, centered on existential values, and practical narratives focused on utilitarian values.
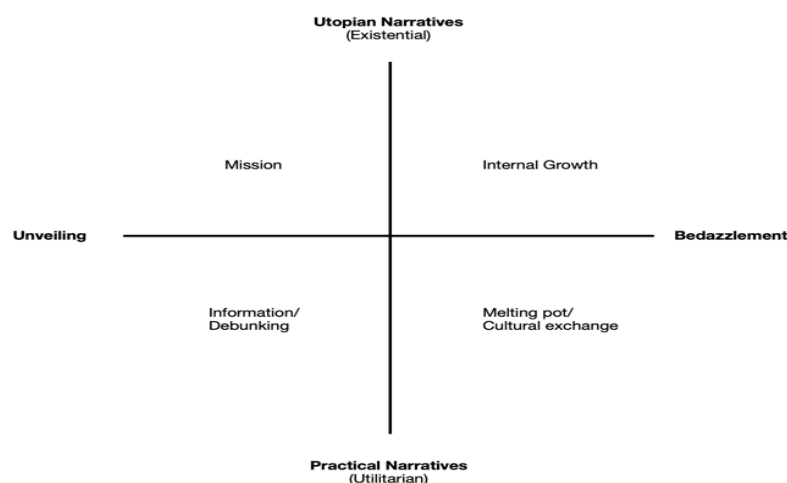

Figure 2 - Mapping of immigration narratives

10 Tik Tok. [@annahanane5]. https://www.tiktok.com/@annahanane5
11 Tik Tok. [@khaby.lame]. (2020, June 3). https://www.tiktok.com/@khaby.lame/video/6834056656494562566
12 Zenit Arti Audiovisive. (2023, November 6). Cultural Shock. http://www.zenit.to.it/produzioni-zenit/documentari-zenit-arti-audiovisive/14/cultural-shock

The stories about the hero's traveling style go inside the quadrant on the top right, as they are fables aimed at the spiritual growth of their listeners and viewers who learn from immigrants the moral strength necessary to fulfill the values of the sending instance of our society. But within this same quadrant we can also find the narratives that Andrea Pogliano identified in his lecture for E-mindful, the "aesthetic value of diversity", placing them within the dimension of cosmopolitanism. Some of those that Andrea Pogliano called "Reduction of distances" can also be placed there. Finally we can include stories about vagrants, looking for their own niche in our world ("utopia" means "eu-topos", that is, at the same time, a "good place" and "another place") and of course, one's own personal growth.

In the melting pot or cultural exchange quadrant we can include all those euphoric narratives on the wonders of two cultures meeting, beautifully represented in "Bangla" (2019) by the young female lead's Italian father, former hippie and enthusiastic explorer of foreign customs and traditions (especially culinary). Andrea Pogliano has called this kind of discourse the "consumer value of diversity". The information and debunking quadrant includes all the narratives centered on the pitting of data necessary to understand the truth about immigration rationally and with detachment. In his lecture Andrea Pogliano showed many of them, calling them Debunking (also ironically, in fact Chaby Lame or "I neri nel cinema" (in English: "Blacks in Cinema") are placed here). But he also referred to them by quoting projects such as "Restiamo Umani" (in English "Staying Human") (only the human race exists), "Siamo tutti migranti" (in English "We are all Immigrants") or "The DNA Journey". Or he spoke of them referring to the discourses he defined "Struttura storica delle disuguaglianze" (in English "Historical structure of inequality") (on colonialism, on the political and economic reasons behind migrations, etcetera). He also named utilitarianism, seen as the kind of considerations like "we need someone to pay for our pensions", "immigrants pay taxes" or "we are aging and we need carers". Finally, in the mission quadrant we find narratives rational and critical of the injustices of the world we live in, aimed at creating a better one. These are those Andrea Pogliano called "Victim frame" and "The border performance". In addition we also find the tales of revolutionaries.

These four quadrants clearly show that in practice, four very different kinds of reasoning can exist on the integration of immigrants, roughly corresponding to four "model recipients" (Eco, 1975) of the communication campaigns and writings analyzed so far. Maybe it does not make sense to choose one and neglect the others, maybe thinking it would be more effective in shifting the "movable middle". In the movable middle there will certainly be more "mission" quadrant people, others more oriented on "spiritual growth", others on "melting pot and cultural exchange", and finally some on "debunking and information". Each of them will be influenced by different kinds of discourse.

/Chapter Four

Main media platforms, actors and dominant voices in immigration narratives

Sara Monaci and Simone Persico - DIST - Politecnico di Torino – sara.monaci@ polito.it; simone.persico@polito.it

This report was developed starting from a few priorities shared by Gruppo Creativo Nazionale del Consorzio E-Mindful (in English E-Mindful Consortium National Creative Group), on the occasion of the internal project meeting held on 5 September 2022, specifically:

- the need to map experiences, profiles and narratives related to immigration on the main social media platforms: Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter) and Instagram, through a bottom-up approach;

- An interest in using digital methods (Rogers, 2019) and computers to analyze social media content;

- Identifying a number of potentially significant - and innovative - social media profiles relating to narratives established in legacy media and mainstream narratives.

Empirical analysis of the platforms is complemented by a more general exploration of communication and relational dynamics affecting the socialization process of the political narratives on immigrants in social networks and around particularly relevant profiles in the recent public debate on the issue.

As stated in the report, "positive or negative narratives about immigrants are usually developed in the political arena, offered to the public through the media and made into topics of conversation on social media" (Annex no. 6: Contextual Analysis, Cap. III). The topic of immigration features broadly within public debate in Italy, often through communication frames rooted in emergency, thus negative, sometimes with positive narratives supported by "humanitarian" visions or aimed at promoting inclusion. However, a focus on narratives pushes in the background both the role of opinion leaders, subjects with formal political roles, in "mediating" narratives for a broad audience, and the increasingly relevant role of new subjects, Political Social Media Influencers, able to rework topics and narratives in favor of niches and/or more specific groups of supporters/followers. These are subjects not necessarily linked to traditional political organizations who actually build their political reputation online thanks to a systematic process of launching and relaunching biased messages, often characterized by informal language and expressions aimed at reinforcing a daily relationship with their followers (Bause 2021).

From the perspective of opinion leaders, Matteo Salvini's institutional role strengthened by a pervasive presence in different social media (X, Facebook,

Instagram, TikTok), has been fundamental in relaunching, amplifying and strengthening a narrative on immigration essentially based on security and legislative issues, always aimed at bolstering a "national supremacy" regarding universal values such as reception, solidarity etcetera (Berti, 2021). Regarding the fundamental role played by opinion leaders, the classic reference in literature is Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), and the two-stage communication model. According to the authors, it is opinion leaders - and not just mass media - who influence the public with their ideas also thanks to a direct and charismatic relationship. Furthermore, the model describes the different dimensions of the influence exerted by opinion leaders: having a substantial audience, being considered experts, being informed and occupying a central position within one's network to influence social pressure and support. The model, by now considered a classic of media studies literature, has profoundly influenced marketing studies, political science and the diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 2003; Shah & Scheufele, 2006; Van den Bulte & Joshi, 2007).

On the other hand, other, far more positive narratives on the topic of immigration - for instance those related to the Ius Soli - have not attracted widespread consent. This is also due to the fact that, with other contingent factors, opinion leaders of the Italian left have not been able to exert their influence as effectively also through the different social media channels, part of an increasingly hybrid media scene (Splendore, 2018).

This aspect, next to the spread of specific narratives with different connotations in the context of immigration, is now increasingly under scrutiny, also because social media create new and better articulated "geometries of political influence", complementing institutional actors with self-taught subjects, or "digital natives" building their reputations precisely thanks to social media.

In the face of the uncontainable spread of X, Facebook and Instagram as new arenas for public debate, the classic model by Katz and Lazarsfeld has been redesigned in depth, in the perspective of a new articulation of communication flows in social media which sees a number of influencers - some with institutional roles, others as "digital natives" - at the heart of political discussion. As hinted at the outset, these are Political Social Media Influencers (PSMI) (Bause, 2021): journalists, activists, opinionists who, through social media, are in fact establishing their own sphere of political influence independently from their association with institutional political organizations. PSMIs can take a stand in favor or against the phenomenon of immigration: among those definitely against we have journalists from hyper-partisan news outlets (Rogers, 2021) such as Francesca Totolo (@fratotolo) from Il Primato Nazionale, Francesco Dragoni (@fdragoni) deputy director of La Verità, freelance journalist Davide Scifo, (@strange_days_82), while positive narratives are mostly relaunched by activists and humanitarian associations including Repubblica's cartoonist Mauro Biani (@mauro_biani), activist Saverio Giangregorio (@@saveriolakadima), and ISPI data journalist Matteo Villa (@emmevilla).

These subjects are active on a number of platforms - X, Facebook and sometimes Instagram - where they tend to repost the same content with the aim of expanding their group of followers as much as possible.

On the one hand PSMIs are interested in acting as catalysts of dissent, that is, being able to amplify hyper partisan positions, significantly more polarized than those found in mainstream media, and on the other, in spreading the opinions of the opinion leaders with whom they establish a synergic relationship. Simultaneously exploiting the visibility of the most influential profiles, while also "appropriating" narratives and content which precisely because of their radical nature, produce discussion on social media. In general, the interaction and synergic relationship between opinion leaders and PSMIs in online environments is strategic in order to transform the topics of the political agenda in subjects of conversation on social media, and to increase the visibility of certain narratives compared to others (Monaci & Persico, 2022).

These dynamics are particularly obvious in the debate on X which must be considered the platform most fitting for public debate on immigration and political debate in general. With 436 million users worldwide, X is a fundamental part of the social media scene. In Italy the platform counts approximately 13 million active users. Although it is less popular than Facebook and Instagram, it is considered the privileged arena for political debate by private citizens, journalists, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and political party representatives (Bentivegna & Boccia Artieri, 2021). Furthermore, as stated by Dubois and Gaffney (2014), X's affordances effectively define the dimensions of individual influence identified by Katz and Lazarsfeld's classic model: for instance through the follower/following functions, its audiovisual characteristics, which increase the subject's visibility and the interaction networks which form around individuals of note or opinion leaders. Furthermore, in general Twitter is more tolerant than other mainstream platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, concerning divisive or polarizing content which is quickly removed or flagged as inappropriate elsewhere [(https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination-0/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online_en#monitoringrounds)](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination-0/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online_en#monitoringrounds)

Starting from these contextual considerations, an analysis has been conducted on X, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, using digital methods with the aim of mapping some dominant voices and/or relevant profiles and to identify potentially significant narratives within the Italian discussion on immigration. Furthermore, the specified platforms have a following which largely corresponds to the target group identified by the consortium as the final audience for the communication concept, that is, the age group between 18 and 35.

Specifically, from Statista (Dixon, 2023):

- Tiktok; main age range: 10-19 (25%)
- Instagram; main age range: 25-34 (31.2%), 18-24 close to 31%

· X; main age range: 18-29 (42%)
· Facebook; main age range: 25-34 (31.5%)

The following software tools were used for computational analysis:

– Crowdtangle (2020): data capture and analysis dashboard developed by Meta. Allows users to search for public posts on Facebook and Instagram, creating reports or exporting datasets to be analyzed by other softwares. The reports are mainly based on the metrics typically used by platforms. In our case it was used to explore content pertinent to the topic;

– 4CAT (Peeters & Hagen, 2022): data capture and analysis platform developed at Amsterdam University by Digital Methods Initiative and OILab. Allows users to analyze different social media platforms and import external datasets, in our case it was used for X, for which it has specific analytic tools and a data gathering mode exploiting X's APIs (Application Programming Interface).

– Gephi (Bastian, Heymann, & Jacomy, 2009): software dedicated to creation of graphs used for Social Network Analysis (SNA).

These softwares were used to gather data from social media platforms in the period between 21 March and 21 September 2022: a period considered significant for discussion in Italy also because it was related to the recent campaigns for the political elections held on 25 September 2022.

The tools were queried thanks to the use of common keywords describing in the most articulated way possible the phenomenon of immigration, also in its various positive and negative interpretations. The following words were used:

Q1: immigrazione (*immigration*) OR migranti (*migrants*) OR migrante (*migrant*) OR immigrato (immigrant) OR immigrati (*immigrants*) OR profughi (*asylum seekers*) OR rifugiati (*refugees*) OR sbarchi (*landings*) OR naufragio (*shipwreck*) OR naufragi (*shipwrecks*) OR naufraghi (*castaways*) OR clandestino (*illegal*) OR clandestine (*illegal*) OR clandestini (*illegal*)

The query allowed us to capture posts in Italian containing at least one of the above words. We focused on the word immigration and on the various declinations of the word commonly used in the public discussion to describe different aspects of the immigration phenomenon.

In a later stage of analysis, in order to identify "negative narratives", we used a second query complementing the first:
**Q1** - **Q2,** dove (*where*) **Q2:** razzismo (*racism*) OR razzista (racist) OR razzisti (*racists*) OR discriminazione (*discrimination*)

This passage allowed us to focus on content with a negative tone in order to analyze its rhetoric, narratives, stereotypes and reactions by society.

Crowdtangle was used for Facebook (160,179 posts) and Instagram (10,129 posts) in order to identify the most performing content in terms of reactions, comments and shares. The remarkably different volume of data is due to the platform's different policies regarding content sharing. From here we moved on to classifying narratives and identifying the profiles most active in the debate on immigratio
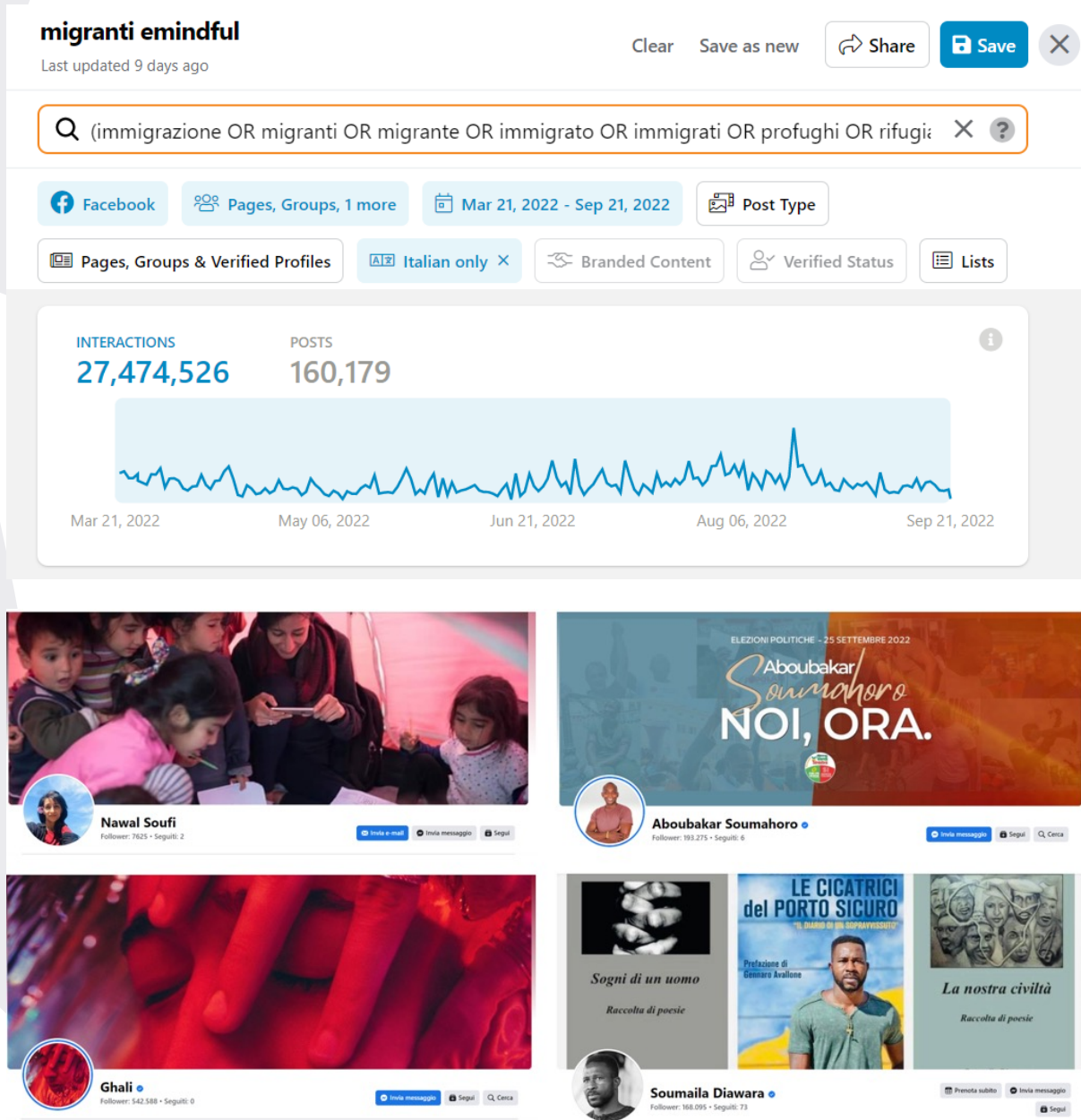
X was analyzed (453,224 tweets) generating a .gexf file with 4CAT, later processed with Gephi. Mentions by users were taken into consideration to identify the relationships between them with a focus on the dominant voices (users most often mentioned). Two clusters of users polarized on the issue emerged: on one side a cluster characterized by negative narratives on immigration (red), on the other a more positive outlook also using satire to discuss the issue (yellow). Between them we find profiles belonging to opinion leaders or PSMIs, representing the entire political spectrum (blue), mentioned by both clusters of users (red and yellow)
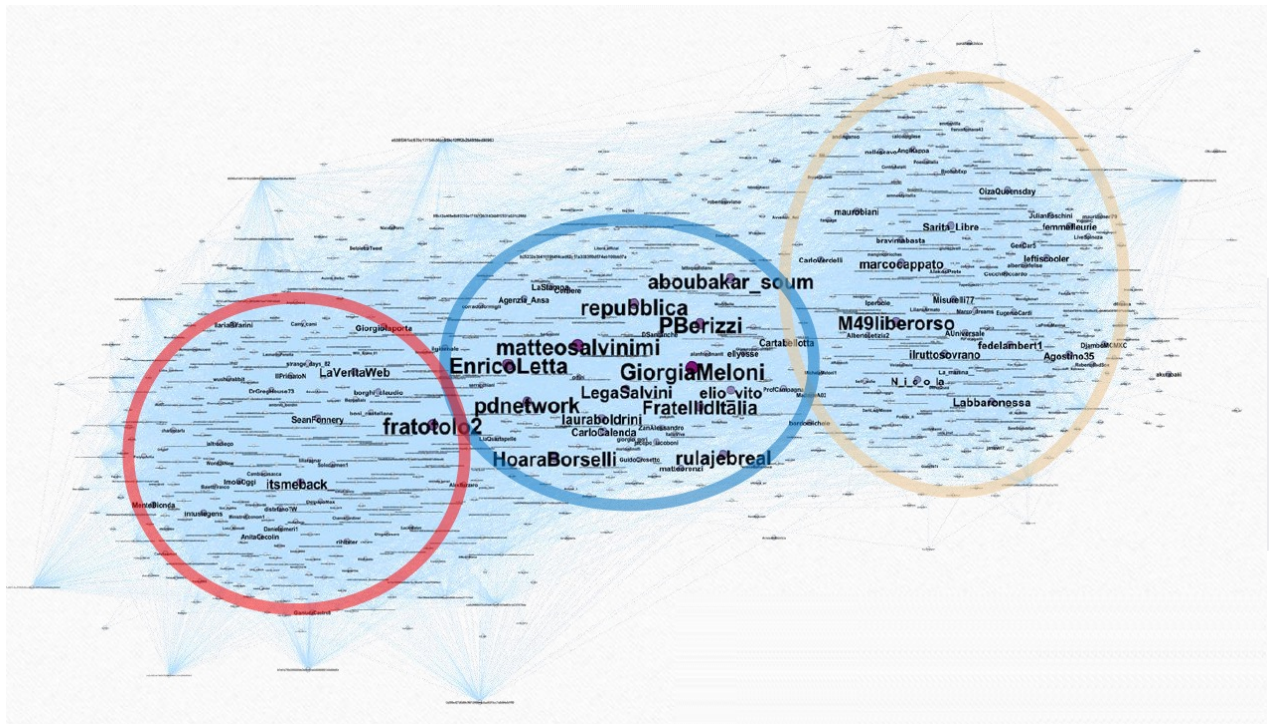
Finally, regarding TikTok, the platform's internal search tool was used to identify the most successful content regarding immigration, using the previously identified keywords and researching the content spread using those hashtags.

annamouzoun
Anna Mouzoun

Segui

24 Seguiti   87.6K Follower   2.1M Mi piace

🟤🟤🟤🟤🟡 Essere nati dalla parte giusta è solo un caso: ricordiamocelo

nerineifilm
Neri nei film

Segui

24 Seguiti   5120 Follower   5205 Mi piace

Negreggiare con stile 😎🍫🔹

permessodisoggiorno
AFNN

Segui

51 Seguiti   75.4K Follower   621.4K Mi piace

afnnworldwidetv per immigrati e stranieri permesso di soggiorno TV IT🏖️
🏠📬

🔗 instagram.com/afnnworldwid...

officialcrackerfactsnews
officia Cracker

Segui

443 Seguiti   5262 Follower   21.2K Mi piace

Migrants News/entertainment & Education ITITIT
🔗 youtu.be/iEbeuOTUAkc

Starting from the computational analysis of content and dominant voices on the different social media platforms, we then identified a few profile categories and narratives related to the immigration phenomenon and to discussion on social media in Italy.

CATEGORY 1. HEROES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE

Within the Italian debate most of the narratives refer to the Mediterranean migration route; a lower number of posts and profiles referring to the Balkan route and immigration from Ukraine were found. Among the most visible narratives on social media we find the positive ones of the successful immigrant, bringing into the spotlight tales of immigrants excelling in their field: soccer players, high level athletes, politicians but also chefs, lawyers and referees.

Next to reports of their successes feature episodes of racism occurred in Italy against immigrants. A symbolic case is that of Joseph Blair (former professional basketball player in Bologna) who was unfairly targeted for searches by Italian law enforcement.

CATEGORY 2: POLITICAL SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

This category of profiles emerging from social media analysis corresponds to activists: Anna Mouzoun on TikTok or Nawal Soufi and Soumaila Diawara on Facebook using their own social media channels to report on the phenomenon and recount tales of immigration.

Another interesting category of profiles denouncing episodes of racism and is active in spreading information on the rights of immigrants: "permessodisoggiorno" and " officialcrackerfactsnews" on TikTok and Baobab Experience on X.

There is a further series of profiles dealing with the issue ironically, such as for instance "nerineifilm" on Tik Tok. On X the ironic tone used by a number of users has clearly political overtones and thus follows the flow of national news.

The use of irony or parody in social media profiles dealing with immigration surely is an element to be flagged because it reveals a definitely productive narrative register, rather than a specific narrative (Jenkins et al., 2013). If used intelligently, the "humor" genre is especially popular on social media because it positively resonates with the need for "light" communication, apparently disengaged, suitable for being spread widely, becoming popular and potentially viral according to the algorithmic logics of social media. In the analysis undertaken with X we can specifically see in the yellow cluster a number of profiles such as @M49liberorso or @ilruttosovrano who, partly thanks to an independent political stand, often use political satire and parody to call out the provincialism of opinion leaders on the topic of immigration, or to highlight, in line with content and forms appropriate for sharing on social media, particularly sensitive episodes and news items.

CATEGORY 3: CELEBRITIES

Often famous people/celebrities take it upon themselves to speak about episodes of discrimination suffered by immigrants: singers Mahmood and Ghali, both Italians of North-African origins, comment on Instagram news items that create discussion within public opinion. Along with them the Instagram profile of young Chris Obehi

also stands out, displaying stronger connections in the context of independent music, but who has less followers than the previous two.

Finally, a profile that became quite popular during the referenced period of time, belonging to Jago, an Italian artist responsible for the public artwork "In Flagella Paratus Sum", which became very popular on social media. In its simplicity it denounces the vulnerability of refugees of any ethnicity and origin. Jago's sculpture arrived on the bridge of Castel Sant'Angelo after being symbolically shipped by the "Ocean Viking", a ship working to intercept and rescue refugees traveling from Libya. Over 300 immigrants' lives were saved during the period the sculpture was on board. Later the artist's sculpture was displayed for three days on the green pitch of the Stadio Olimpico.

/Chapter Five

The choice of narrative frame

Davide Tosco and Massimo Arvat – davide.tosco@prodeagroup.com and arvat@zenit.to.it

The stocktaking and context analysis provided by academics involved with Gruppo Creativo Nazionale Italiano (NMCG) have been decisive in steering the discussion on narrative choices and the narrative direction of the Italian prototype. Given that audiences are fragmented and many variables can influence their attitudes, the proposed format is based on the considerations emerged during interdisciplinary work.

Based on stocktaking, NMCG has identified a concept capable of translating a series of specific indications provided by context analysis and preliminary research into an effective narrative device. As is clear from a number of articles and reports, immigration narratives are predominantly negative and alarmist, if not folkloristic, and very often biased and simplified representations. Stereotypical stories tend to present immigrants (especially refugees) as a threat, as victims or heroes, according to the mediatic context and the political discourse in which they are represented.

Confronting and preventing polarized and negative attitudes towards immigrants implies creating a better understanding of the issues at stake through balanced, accurate and evidence-based information, but also provides an opportunity to promote alternative reports capable of establishing a completely new perspective and debate on immigration.

After multidisciplinary work which involved a creative group including creative producers, copy writers, academics and university students, IP presents a prototype conceived to resonate with a broad spectrum of the public with the objective of shifting perception according to the different characteristics highlighted in the E-MINDFUL narrative (see document 'Alla ricerca della narrativa E-Mindful', Torino 3/12/2022), combined with a number of the key results yielded by the stocktaking exercise. The creative concept incorporates a series of indications, of which the main ones are the following fundamental recommendations that NMCG has identified as appropriate for the Italian context:

- Conceiving surprising narratives. It is more likely that when constructing sensibilization content, the use of irony, paradox and irreverence would spread it to a far wider audience, and make it more effective in the fight against prejudice and discrimination.
- Capitalizing on influencers and webstars. Influencers are the new broadcasters, prominent web stars and web creators capable of creating and entertaining vast communities of followers. Their strength is the sense of proximity with the public they are able to generate, and referring to them can bring the public closer to the issue of immigration in an original way and outside of the usual context of news, reports, journalism and polarized talk shows.

- Speaking of Us rather than "Us and Them". It is important to deal with the subject of "immigration and of being an immigrant" in an universal and existential sense, and not so much as a specific phenomenon bound to historically defined flows (the immigrants of the last 20 years). To contribute to the depolarization of immigration narratives and encourage a change in the perception of its causes, rather than focusing on problems, specific attention should be given to avoiding juxtapositions or narrative elements confirming/highlighting the distance between the opposing forces. Immigrants are a component of society and this can be a decisive factor in conceiving tales of inclusion and in the perception these tales can generate. Taking into consideration elements of proximity, shared historical backgrounds, objective advantages caused by the flow of people, can also stimulate empathetic feelings in the public.

- Avoiding the victim narrative frame, but also a pietist and victimizing frame. Considering that the miserable image of desperation (immigrants as desperate people) is strong within the collective imagination, it would be important to show that immigration is not widely synonymous with desperation (and it certainly does not cover all cases). The image of desperation also lends itself to a progressive dulling of perception and is consequently counterproductive for an empathetic discourse, or is in any case an element used and abused by mainstream media that in alternate waves strengthens prejudices and biased attitudes in the public, without encouraging the development of visions favoring different inclusive attitudes.

- Exploring the hero narrative model offers a series of valid starting points if it is deconstructed, freeing it from the cage of exceptionality and making the hero "one of us", with a story that could be our own. Stories of success can contribute to developing acceptance, although avoiding the risk of excessive characterization and the sense of exceptionality often generated by celebrities in sports and music ("they are ok because they are special and famous but do not belong to 'our world'"). The option of contextualizing their existence within an historical frame also makes this narrative choice less risky.

- Considering immigrants as productive members of society. Immigration is a fact, it is part of mankind's evolution. Highlighting this concept should trigger increased resonance with a utilitarian narrative.

Considerations on the prototype.

The choice of telling the story starting from one of the most important Italian fashion influencers could entice the public's curiosity and interest, and encourage a potential viral mechanism.

In Le origini di Chiara (in English; Chiara's Origins) we travel backwards along the history of the origins of mankind, from the present all the way to prehistoric times, proving that every one of us has a family history marked by relocation. The story develops by retracing, century after century, the genesis of mankind, recounting the discoveries, improvements and innovations that have always come with immigration flows.

In terms of generative narrative, the concept draws inspiration from video campaign "The DNA Journey" (Momondo, 2016). This is one of the most successful case studies quoted in the stocktaking exercise, based on the cosmopolitan narrative and on the idea that the melting-pot generated by immigration flows is a background common to us all.

In terms of language, the prototype's concept draws inspiration from a few successful models found on Youtube and on the main social media (The Story of Suff, TV Series or Movie saga recaps, ironic and paradoxical analysis of historical events, just to quote a few) condensing an historical or imaginary saga into a quick narrative of sequential events, told through a language based on motion graphics animation.

The tale takes cues from real historical facts and proceeding towards the past, processes them in an imaginary but historically plausible way, interpreting them from an ironic and paradoxical perspective.

Regarding the target, in reference to the NMCG's internal considerations, in addition to the discussions held during the project's plenary events, about the so-called movable middle characterized by a certain randomness, we have chosen the so-called Disengaged moderates 18-30s segment (Attitudes towards National Identity, Immigration and Refugees in Italy "https://www.moreincommon.com/media/3hnhssh5/italy-en-final_digital_2b.pdf"):, defined by a series of characteristics:

- Uncertain about the chances of success for people like them and whether people like them have any say in politics and society;

- They think Italy is "divided" and "weak" but at the same time "welcoming";

- Moderately proud of being Italian, but they do not consider loyalty to family or country as equally important;

- Often they do not express an opinion on controversial issues;

- Weak bonds with political parties, the do not feel traditional parties are concerned with people like them;- They feel friendly towards refugees, immigrants and muslims;

- They are not sure whether immigration is culturally and economically good or bad for Italy;

- They do not know whether there is pressure to steer opinions on refugees in a certain direction, but perceive that reports in the media are often unfair and imprecise.

Validation process

After a series of validation stages that involved the academic team and members of the executive committee (members of project management and of the multidisciplinary work group, representatives from Ministero del Lavoro - Italian institutional partner -, students), as well as representatives from creative work groups nationwide, the concept entered the creative creation stage. After a first preliminary version of the story was written, the creative team organized a first focus group with the students involved in the first creative workshops. The focus group was led by two of the academics involved in the project and resulted in a series of useful ideas to further refine the text (a video is available (https://youtu. be/OTT28sE6lbw) as well as a more in-depth report written later which can be viewed here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tBhD3vUWj4xfMgnCBzsy7iT2uqHew TRR/view?usp=share_link)

The focus group lasted two hours and was structured as follows:
- Individual reading of the script
- First impressions' discussion
- Comprehension exercises:
> Identifying the topic-focus pair
> Discussion of the narrative structure

* Identifying the dramaturgical demand
* Values at stake
* System of oppositions to the fulfillment of the values at stake

- Evaluation of the enunciation style
- Considerations of the possible length of the video and its placement
- Punctual analysis of the different issues related to writing and possible solutions

Among the elements that came to light during the analytical work group there are a series of considerations linked to some of the strong points of the text presented. Among them, the ironic style and choice of lead character were especially highlighted. A series of more critical considerations regard the story's fictional elements and how much they could subtract from the effectiveness of the message if unrevised and unchanged thanks to a few devices. Among the indications, the importance of emphasizing and clarifying the connections between our reality (that of the well-known influencer which must seem very similar to our own) and the past was highlighted, as well as the importance of narrative coherence related to the topic of immigration.

The script is being revised on the basis of these considerations.

/References

1. Bastian M., Heymann S., Jacomy M. (2009). Gephi: an open source software for exploring and manipulating networks. International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media.

2. Bause, H. (2021). Political social media influencers as opinion leaders?. Publizistik, 66, 295-316.

3. Benson, R. (2013). Shaping immigration news. A French-American Comparison. Cambridge University Press.

4. Bentivegna, S., & Boccia Artieri, G. (2021). Voci della democrazia. Il futuro del dibattito pubblico (pp. 5-201). Il mulino.

5. Berti, C. (2021). Right-wing populism and the criminalization of sea-rescue NGOs: the 'Sea-Watch 3'case in Italy, and Matteo Salvini's communication on Facebook. Media, Culture & Society, 43(3), 532-550.

6. Binotto, M., Martino, V. (Eds.). (2004). Fuori Luogo. L'immigrazione e i media italiani. Rai Eri.

7. Bond, E., Bonsaver, G., Faloppa, F. (Eds.). (2015). Destination Italy. Representing Migration in Contemporary Media and Narrative, Peter Lang.

8. Bukowski, W. (2019). La buona educazione degli oppressi. Piccola storia del decoro. Alegre.

9. Cohen, S. (1972). Folk devils and moral panics. Routledge.

10. CrowdTangle Team (2020). CrowdTangle. Facebook, Menlo Park, California, USA.

11. Dubois, E., & Gaffney, D. (2014). The multiple facets of influence: Identifying political influentials and opinion leaders on Twitter. American behavioral scientist, 58(10), 1260-1277.

12. Eco, U. (1975). Lector in fabula. Bompiani.

13. Faloppa, F. (2011). Razzisti a parole. Laterza.

14. Fassin, D. (2012). Humanitarian reason. A moral history of the present. University of California Press.

15. Fassin, D. (2013). The Precarious Truth of Asylum. Public Culture, 26(1), 39–63. https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-1890459

16. Ferraro, G. (2019). Semiotica 3.0. Cinquanta idee chiave per un rilancio della scienza della significazione, Aracne.
Ferraro, G., Brugo, I. (2008). Comunque umani. Dietro le figure di mostri, alieni, orchi e vampiri

17. Floch, J. M. (1990). Sémiotique, marketing et communication. Sous les signes, les strategies. Presses Universitaires de France.

18. Gargiulo, E. (2022). Senza residenza. L'anagrafe tra selezione e controllo. Eris.
Greimas, A. J. (1976). Sémiotique et sciences sociales. Editions du Seuil.

19. Jenkins, H., Ford, S., & Green, J. (2013). Spreadable media. In Spreadable media. New York University Press.

20. Katz, E., and P. F. Lazarsfeld. 1955. Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications. Piscataway, NJ, USA: Transaction Publishers.

21. Maneri, M. (2001). Il panico morale come dispositivo di trasformazione dell'insicurezza. Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia, 1, 5–40. https://doi.org/10.1423/2557

22. Maneri, M., Pogliano, A., Piccoli, F., & Anselmi, G. (2023). Migration narratives in media and social media. The case of Italy. BRIDGES Working Papers 8. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8009758

23. Maneri, M., Quassoli, F. (2018). La criminalità come costrutto culturale. Media, immigrazione e agenzie del controllo. In C. Rinaldi, P. Saitta (Eds.), Criminologie critiche contemporanee (pp. 135–162). Giuffré.

24. Monaci, S., & Persico, S. (2022). The COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign and Disinformation on Twitter: The Role of Opinion Leaders and Political Social Media Influencers in the Italian Debate on Green Pass. International Journal of Communication, 16.

25. Momondo – The DNA Journey (2 June, 2016). Video on YouTube. Viewed on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyaEQEmt5ls

26. Peeters, S., & Hagen, S. (2022). The 4CAT Capture and Analysis Toolkit: A Modular Tool for Transparent and Traceable Social Media Research. Computational Communication Research 4(2). Available at https://computationalcommunication.org/ccr/article/view/120

27. Pitch, T. (2013). Contro il decoro. L'uso politico della pubblica decenza. Laterza.

28. Pogliano, A. (2019). Media, politica e migrazioni in Europa. Carocci.

29. Pogliano, A., Premazzi, V. (2014). Lo spazio delle "seconde generazioni": un'analisi critica dei rituali dei media. Sociologia italiana. AIS journal of sociology, 3, pp. 71–94.

30. Pogliano, A., Zanini, R. (2010). L'immaginario e le immagini degli immigrati, un percorso qualitativo. In L. Gariglio, A. Pogliano, & R. Zanini (Eds.), Facce da straniero. 30 anni di fotografia e giornalismo sull'immigrazione in Italia (pp. 103–187). Bruno Mondadori Pearson.

31. Rogers, R. (2003). The Viagra files: The Web as anticipatory medium. Prometheus, 21(2), 195–212.

32. Rogers, R. (2019). Doing digital methods. Sage.

33. Rogers, R. (2021). Marginalizing the mainstream: How social media privilege political information. Frontiers in big Data, 4, 689036.

34. Semprini, A. (1996). Analizzare la comunicazione. Come analizzare la pubblicità, le immagini, i media. Franco Angeli.

35. Shah, D. V., & Scheufele, D. A. (2006). Explicating opinion leadership: Nonpolitical dispositions, information consumption, and civic participation. Political Communication, 23(1), 1-22.

36. Splendore, S. (2018). Communicative activism and political impasse: the changing media system in the context of fake news and populism. Contemporary Italian Politics, 10(4), 407-420.

37. Dixon, S. J. (2023). Topic: Social media. Retrieved from: https://www.statista.com/topics/1164/social-networks/

38. The EU Code of conduct on countering illegal hate speech online. (n.d.). European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination-0/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online_en#monitoringrounds

39. Propp, V. (1928). Morfologija skazki. Academia.

40. Van den Bulte, C., & Joshi, Y. V. (2007). New product diffusion with influentials and imitators. Marketing science, 26(3), 400-421.

41. Van der Brug, W., D'Amato, G., Berkhout, J., Ruedin, D. (2015). The politicisation of migration. Routledge.

42. Vogler, C. (1992). The writer's journey, Michael Wiese Productions.