

Racist Discourse on social networks: a discourse analysis of Facebook posts in Italy

Paolo Orrù

(*Università di Cagliari*)

Abstract

The paper addresses the way people elaborate and share resentment against immigrants on social networks. Since its beginning in 2008, the financial crisis established itself as the main topic in Italian media discourse, monopolizing almost the whole public debate. Although anti-immigrant discourse is not a novelty in the European public sphere, the long recession in Italy has strengthened this kind of feeling. At the same time social networks, especially Facebook, grew in popularity and importance, establishing itself as a powerful means of sharing information, objectives and opinions.

The corpus of our analysis is composed by status updates and images posted on four Facebook public pages related to anti-establishment or generic protest topics. Moreover, this kind of material easily circulates on other more general groups and pages and is frequently shared by ordinary users on their personal profiles.

The analysis explores some of the main issues in racist discourse (illegal arrivals, crime, social struggle and denial of racism). In our study we take into account lexical items, rhetorical forms (metaphors, hyperbole) and arguments employed to set immigrants as antagonists of ordinary Italian people. Our aim, therefore, is to understand how new media help to strengthen racist discourse in everyday interaction.

Key words – Racist discourse; social networks; Facebook; discourse analysis; web discourse

1. Introduction

Although biological features (such as skin colour and appearance) still play a crucial role in self-representation as a member of a community, the concept of “racism” significantly evolved during the second half of the 20th century, moving away from its biological basis towards new, and more subtle, ways of exploitation, centred mostly on social and cultural elements¹. Nonetheless, what van Dijk (2000) called «everyday racism» consists of a wide range of social practices, perpetrated by the elite, that prevent migrants from accessing material and symbolic resources (better jobs and wages, better education, high social positions etc.). The aim of this study is to analyse how people/users process and share resentment against immigrants on the Internet, hence reproducing and constantly reinforcing racist stereotypes that affect intergroup relationships.

¹ «Especially in Western Europe, in particular in the countries that have immigrant workers from several Mediterranean countries, the discourse of race and racism has gradually taken a more sophisticated form by focusing primarily on “ethnic” properties of minority groups, and by emphasizing “cultural” differences. Hence, racism needs a more general, socio-cultural correlate, namely, *ethnicism* (MULLARD 1985), to account for prejudice and discrimination against ethnic minority groups in general» (VAN DIJK 1987: 28).

These discriminatory social practices are based upon systems of the socially shared ideas of a group, that – if we are to use van Dijk’s terminology – we can call ideologies. Thus, they may be considered cognitive structures that organize shared beliefs regarding certain social groups «such as their identity, their position in society, their interests and aims, their relations to other groups, their reproduction, and their natural environment» (VAN DIJK 2000: 14). Some of these features, especially the definition of ingroup and outgroup identities, are particularly affected by processes of categorizing and stereotyping. Even if it is somewhat commonplace to state the importance and centrality of categorization in the organization of human-encyclopaedic knowledge, it still represents a necessary point of departure for understanding prejudice and racist behaviour.

As a means of mental representation, stereotypes are not necessarily negative per se: they provide the oversimplification and generalization the mind needs to process information and to give order to reality (TAJFEL 1981a; ALLPORT 1954). In addition to this primary cognitive task, stereotypes play a fundamental social function: they are used to mark social distance and difference between ingroup and outgroup. According to Quasthoff:

One of the devices which members use to mark social differences, to differentiate “us” from “them” is the use of stereotypical attributions with respect to one’s own group and the respective outgroups (“auto-” and “hetero-stereotypes”). These stereotypical attributions fulfil a double function within the social patterning. Firstly, they are shared by the other members of the ingroup and thus establish or strengthen the ingroup solidarity, define the co-members as “belonging to us”. Secondly, they mark the difference between “us” and “them” by attributing traits to “them” which are different from the way “we are”. (QUASTHOFF 1989: 191)

Therefore, categorization involves both the self and the other. In social identity theory (HOGG and ABRAMS 2006 [1998], TAJFEL 1981a, TAJFEL and TURNER 1985, TURNER 1981) self-categorization – through ‘autostereotypes’ in Quasthoff words – leads individuals to perceive themselves as members of a homogenous group, to have the same biological, cultural and emotional traits of other members of that group and develop «category-congruent behaviour on a scale which is stereotypic (in the broad sense above) of the category» (HOGG, ABRAMS 2006 [1998]: 19). Individuals are, also, led to build their own identity through comparison and contrast with other groups²; hence, differences between groups are systematically emphasized, while there is a major tendency to apply pejorative stereotypes to outgroups and more positive ones to ingroups. But stereotypes, according to Tajfel (1981b), are also involved in the broader interpretation of reality with three key functions: social causality; social justification; social differentiation. The first concerns the interpretation of a social event by considering a social group directly responsible. The second «refers to the formulation of a specific stereotype of a group in order to justify actions committed or planned against that group» (HOGG, ABRAMS 2006 [1998]: 68). The third has to do with the abovementioned general tendency to exaggerate differences between groups. These three social functions help humans to make sense of complex events occurring around them.

² «Above all, and directly contrary to the form in which they are constantly invoked, identities are constructed through, not outside, difference. This entails the radically disturbing recognition that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the “positive” meaning of any term – and thus its “identity” – can be constructed. Throughout their careers, identities can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render “outside”, abjected» (HALL 2000: 18).

Discourse³ is one of the main instruments through which these social representations become «the contemporary version of common sense» (MOSCOVICI 1981: 181). According to this view, we can adopt Fairclough's definition of *discourse* as «language as social practice determined by social structures» (FAIRCLOUGH 1989: 17). Hence, language is looked on as in a constant and mutual relationship with social matters, so that it is constantly socially shaped and socially shaping (FAIRCLOUGH 1995: 55); thus, texts (oral, written or multimodal) are partially responsible for forming identities, knowledge, and relationships.

The entire process of meaning-making that emerges from discourse occurs within an increasingly wide and new public sphere, so wide that it has now evolved into a kind of «seconda dimensione di socialità, trasversale ed inclusiva, sempre più despazializzata e virtuale»⁴ (GROSSI 2004: 126). The evolution of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is both a product and an agent in the process of (re)shaping social and political change.

Not only does the “network society” – to use Castells' term – have an extraordinary means of communication⁵ in the Internet, but also one which is especially powerful in creating new identities and communities or reinforcing old ones:

In a world of global flows of wealth, power, and images, the search for identity, collective or individual, ascribed or constructed, becomes the fundamental source of social meaning. This is not a new trend, since identity, and especially religious and ethnic identity, has been at the roots of meaning since the dawn of human society. Yet identity is becoming the main, and sometimes the only, source of meaning in an historical period characterized by widespread destructuring of organizations, delegitimisation of institutions, fading away of major social movements, and ephemeral cultural expressions. (CASTELLS 2000 [1996]: 3)

As a result, these forms of communication are part of the dynamics of a political community. They help form public opinion and exert some influence on politicians, journalists and other social actors.

Former local identities are more and more in crisis in a new and expanding globalised world, where migration is changing the make-up of Western societies. Thus, widespread racism and xenophobia could be seen as people's reaction to deep processes of institutional and economic change – such as the European integration process or the Great Recession –, which threaten common national identities and the economic status quo, consequently forcing European citizens to feel as if they are constantly struggling with the other for material and symbolic resources (VAN DIJK 1987; COTESTA 1995).

2. The Internet in Italy

In 2013, the percentage of households owning a personal computer (62.8%) and having access to the Internet at home (60.7%) in Italy increased as compared to the previous year⁶.

³ Not only in its main meaning of “language in use”, but also in the foucauldian terminology of sets of propositions about specific phenomena that «systematically form the objects of which they speak» (FOUCAULT 1972: 49).

⁴ “a second dimension of sociality, inclusive and cross-cutting, more and more de-spatialised and virtual”.

⁵ «[g]razie anche ai suoi tratti peculiari, come l'interattività e la velocità, l'orizzontalità e il policentrismo, il pluralismo. È un mezzo che facilita, per i bassi costi, il superamento delle barriere spazio-temporali in ambito informativo e comunicativo. Offre, al tempo stesso, uno spazio sociale e civico di segno nuovo» (CECCARINI and DI PIERDOMENICO 2010: 347). “[t]hanks to its peculiar characteristics, such as interactivity, immediateness and transversality. It is a means which facilitates, thanks to its low costs, the crossing of time and spatial barriers in the field of information and communication. At the same time, it offers a new type of social and civic space”.

⁶ Figures taken from the Istat (Istituto nazionale di Statistica) surveys available at <<http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/108009>>.

At the same time, the percentage of people using the web to interact with others through social networks increased by 5 percentage points, totalling 53.2% during 2013. The highest increase in the use of social networks was seen in adults aged 35-44, +8% and 55-59, + 10%. As regards social networks, Facebook is definitely the most popular. Out of the 35,800,000 Italian Internet users, Facebook subscribers totalled 23,202,604 at the end of 2012⁷, establishing itself as the most popular social network service in Italy.

In addition, it is interesting to note that about 20.9% of Internet users aged 6 and over use the web to engage in some social or political activity, and 10% use the Internet to take part in consultations or votes⁸.

However, the country is still affected by the phenomenon of digital divide⁹: 65.4% of households in the central and northern regions own a personal computer and 63.3% have access to the Internet, while in the south and in the islands the percentages are 57.2% and 55% respectively. Nevertheless, the use of social networking sites prevails in the latter (59.9 compared to 48.6) and citizens living in southern regions seem more involved in expressing their opinions on social and political issues (24.6 compared to 18.1).

According to Demos&Pi surveys¹⁰, over the last 5 years the popularity of the Internet as a means of information has increased constantly. The percentage of people stating that they use the Internet every day to read news increased from 24.8 in 2007 to 46.9 in 2013. The Internet is also considered to be much freer and more independent than television (39.3 compared to 21.9).

These figures are useful in order to understand the overall perception of the Internet as a reliable source of information and as a channel for voicing social and political demands.

3. Corpus

The corpus comprises 120 Facebook posts, and represents only a portion of a wider set of data collected from social media, and thus could be considered as a pilot study for a more vast and ongoing investigation on the issue. They were originally posted on 4 Facebook pages: 1) *Questa è l'Italia*¹¹ (*This is Italy*), 140.898 likes, 40 posts; 2) *Il popolo non si piega ma si ribella*¹² (*People do not give in, they rebel*), 48.814 likes, 40 posts; 3) *Piovegovernoladro*¹³ (a typical idiomatic expression to blame politicians and specifically the government) 31,787 likes, 19 posts; 4) *Sputtaniamotutti*¹⁴ (*Slanderthemall*) 26,624 likes, 21 posts. The first of these pages is definitely the most popular, with around 140,000 likes (i.e. users subscribing to page updates). The other three pages have a smaller number of likes but their posts are often shared by other similar groups and pages (such as politically-oriented groups like those related to supporters of “Movimento 5 stelle”). The timespan for the collection of the data goes from June 2013 to early July 2014.

These kinds of page are interesting for two reasons. Firstly, they are public pages. This means that page administrators and users are fully aware that the contents are of

⁷ <<http://www.internetworldstats.com/europa.htm>>.

⁸ <<http://www.istat.it/it/archivio/108009>>.

⁹ More precisely, nowadays the concept of digital divide is no longer related only to physical access to the web, but rather to social factors like age, territorial distribution, gender (see CECCARINI and DIPIERDOMENICO 2010: 352-353).

¹⁰ The series of surveys *Gli Italiani e l'informazione* is available at <<http://www.demos.it/osservatorio.php>>.

¹¹ <<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Questa-%C3%A8-L-Italia/240152065998077?fref=ts>>.

¹² <<https://www.facebook.com/IlPopoloNonSiPiegaMaSiRibella?fref=ts>>.

¹³ <<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Piovegovernoladro/1403916913185096?fref=ts>>.

¹⁴ <<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Sputtaniamotutti/1418365938418307?sk=timeline>>.

public domain. Secondly, the main topic of the pages is not immigration *per se*, as suggested by the page titles. This could be of interest for observing how racism and anti-immigrant discourse merge in everyday discourse with other key domains, such as the economy, the financial crisis and anti-establishment topics.

The extracts discussed in the study were identified as the most representative of racist discourse strategies. They are reproduced as originally presented on Facebook, including errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

4. The Facebook post

The posts from the four pages are very similar and share some key stylistic features. They are (almost always) formed of a short written text and an image. The text performs three basic functions: a) it can serve as a caption for the image, also containing hyperlinks to articles from so-called counter-information sources; b) it contains a longer description of the specific issue focused on in the image; c) it contains an emphatic statement about the content of the image expressing the administrator's point of view. There may also be no caption at all, which is the case of the two smaller pages: *Sputtaniamotutti* and *Piovegovernoladro*.

Posts also contain a standard invitation to “follow” (i.e. subscribe to) the page (*SEGUICI SULLA NOSTRA PAGINA*) in order to keep up to date with “important news in our country” (*PER SEGUIRE LE NOVITÀ IMPORTANTI DEL NOSTRO PAESE*), to interact by expressing personal opinions about the topic and to be active by actually spreading the news: *DITE LA VOSTRA E FATE GIRARE* (“have your say and put the word out”); *DIFFONDI IN RETE* (“spread it on the web”). We can see how the invitations are strongly connoted by modality: use of the imperative mood prevails as regards verbs, communicating the need to act. It could also be linked to the idea that people should take seriously the activity of sharing what they consider to be the (always censored) real information in order to fight the elite.

However, the actual focal point of the whole post is the image. We identified six basic types of visuals:

- 1) **Image only:** Unlike in other categories listed below, no written text is attached to the image which, therefore, has only an iconic function. It must grab the attention of users and make the topic of the post instantly clear. For example, the image can be a photograph showing a group of caravans, if the post is about nomads.



Figure 1. Image only

- 2) **Emotional:** Based on the highly popular category of motivational posts (whose main intent is to motivate people to feel positive feelings with some optimistic

motto), we define all those posts aimed at eliciting negative feelings and resentment against immigrants with little or no informative intent as *emotional*. This is a very broad category, which includes a variety of sets of images with different configurations of texts and pictures, yet all sharing the same emotional intent. These posts may be similar to traditional motivational posters, or they may show comparisons between Italians and foreigners, ironic/sarcastic cartoons and also some rude and violent statements.



Figure 2. Emotional¹⁵

- 3) **Explanatory:** A few images are presented with long texts having a sort of explanatory aim, trying to describe or summarize specific facts to readers. For example: what the Ebola virus is (supposedly brought to Italy by immigrants) or the economic impact of immigration on the host country etc.

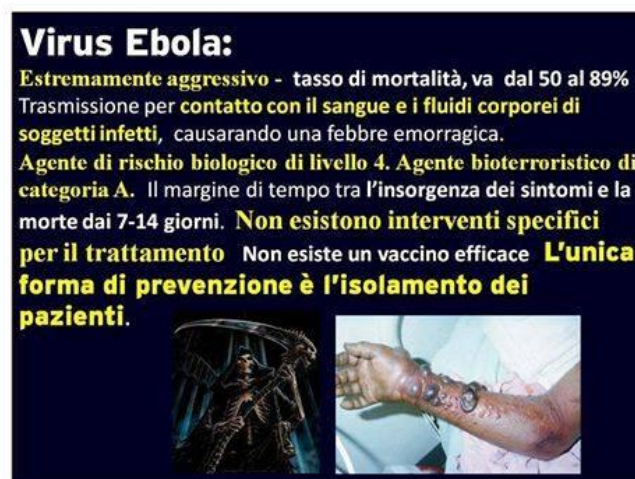


Figure 3. Explanatory¹⁶

¹⁵ “WHEN WE RUN OUT OF MONEY TO FEED THEM ... THEN IT WILL BE FUNNY”.

¹⁶ “Extremely aggressive – mortality rate, from 50 to 89% Contagion by contact with blood and body fluids of infected subjects, causing an hemorrhagic fever. Biohazard Level 4. Bioterrorist agent category A. 7 to 14 days from the appearance of symptoms to death. There are no specific treatments An effective vaccine does not exist The only precaution is to isolate patients”.

- 4) **Headline:** As for newspaper headlines, the primary goal of what is included in this category of images is to draw attention, summing up information and indicating the topic of the article. They are very often presented with colourful, mostly yellow, lines, while a background photograph helps contextualize the headline.



Figure 4. Headline¹⁷

- 5) **Text only and slogans:** This is a broad category that includes those pictures with a written text only. They can be either emotional or informative (in their own way). Texts are generally quite short with some important words or phrases highlighted by colour or size, to stress what is the most significant or emotional piece of information.



Figure 5. Text only¹⁸

- 6) **Quotes:** This category includes polemical statements against blameworthy politicians, mainly due to their pro-immigrant statements. The portrait of the author is surrounded by the quotation in question and by an argumentative, rude or abusive slogan.

¹⁷ “Trieste: woman raped by two immigrants, second case in a few hours”.

¹⁸ “ABSOLUTE PRIORITY TO EXPEL ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS BEFORE THEY DESTROY US”.

Figure 6. Quotes¹⁹

5. Issues

Four issues were identified as the most commonly featured in the corpus: 1) illegal arrivals, expulsions (MONTALI et al. 2013); 2) crime and deviance (TER WAL 2001; TAYLOR 2009); 3) struggle for material resources (VAN DIJK 1991; COTESTA 1995); 4) denial of racism (VAN DIJK 1992; BURKE AND GOODMAN 2012).

5.1. *Illegal arrivals and expulsion*

The migratory process has been a key topic in Italian public debate for years. As Montali (MONTALI et al. 2013) demonstrates, arrivals by sea gained a lot of attention during the 1992-2002 period when Italy progressively became a country of immigration: «In the media discourse, this transition is objectified by the image of thousands of migrants landing on the Italian coast, an image which fuels the notions of threat and fear» (MONTALI et al. 2013: 238), despite the fact that only a small share of migrants arrives by sea each year²⁰.

The use of numbers and statistics is a common persuasive strategy in news discourse (HALL et al. 1978: 9-10). Thanks to their inherent exactness, numbers suggest accuracy and make a source more reliable (VAN DIJK 1988: 87). Some of the posts in the corpus seem to reproduce this tendency, specifying numbers with a headline format and without appropriate sources. The aim is to create a sense of danger and alarm by giving some impressive figures as in example (1), where numbers are followed by the phrase *pronti a sbarcare in Italia* (“ready to land in Italy”). The use of the adjective *pronti* (“ready”) stresses the imminence of the arrivals, giving concreteness to the threat. The verb phrase *vuole accoglierli* (“wants to welcome them all”) serves to blame an institutional

¹⁹ “Boldrini says: ROM must be protected, they have the right to housing and we must give it to them – If you are so fond of GYPSIES just start by giving them your house, since you’ve got 5. We must care about those ITALIANS who are EVICTED or IN LONG TERM LETS first ‘CRONE’”.

²⁰ The vast majority of illegal immigrants in Italy belongs to the category of the, so-called, overstayers (i.e. people who entered the country with a valid visa and remained in Italy after the document expired). This category covers alone the vast majority of cases, with percentages between 59% in 2000 and 64% in 2006, with a peak of 75% in 2003 (MINISTERO DELL’INTERNO 2007).

counterpart and to confirm that the landing of migrants is more than a mere possibility: the use of the verb “to want” (*vuole*) followed by a verb in the infinitive form (*accogliere*) conveys in Italian the meaning of a strong motivation to achieve something. The feeling of an approaching menace is communicated in (2) and (3) by the use of adverbial phrases such as *a breve* (“soon”) and *in arrivo* (“arriving”). Example (3) also shows how Italian authorities are blamed for rescuing refugees, in this case by literally “picking them up” (*LI VANNO A PRENDERE*) from Libya.

- (1) *600.000 migranti pronti a sbarcare in italia, Bologna li Vuole accogliere tutti.*
 (2) *3000 IMMIGRATI AL GIORNO! A BREVE DIVENTEREMO IL PRIMO PAESE AFRICANO D'EUROPA... DICIAMO GRAZIE AI NOSTRI POLITICI*
 (3) *TELEFONANO DALLA LIBIA E LI VANNO A PRENDERE: 500 CLANDESTINI IN ARRIVO*

Pictures complete the general construction of fear and danger. Hundreds of black people are shown grouped together in figure 7 and 8 in order to give an instant, visual perception of the multitude of illegal-immigrants entering the country.



Figure 7. Ready to land



Figure 8. First African Country

Metaphors play a huge part in the conceptualization of migratory processes in media and political discourse. As reported in other studies (REISIGL and WODAK 2001; GABRIELATOS and BAKER 2008), some sets of metaphors are particularly frequent, like those which describe immigration as a “water-course”, as a “war/military activity” or as a “natural disaster”.

For example, in the corpus, arrivals by sea of African migrants are looked on as an *ondata* (“wave”) pushing against the – with another metaphor – “body” of the nation, as suggested, in example (4), by the use of the verb *soffocare* (“to choke”) and the noun *spinta* (“push”), which implies a physical action. They can be also grouped together in *ondate di disperati* (“waves of desperate people”), highlighting the continuity of arrivals by sea, as in example (5). Furthermore, immigration is seen as a military activity, an “invasion”, as in (6) *con i siciliani, che di questa invasione, non ne possono veramente più* (“Sicilians, who have had enough of this invasion”).

In (7), the Nation could also be described as a “house” (“Are we waiting to find them in our house?”), whose “doors” (the borders) must be closed: *CHIUDIAMO [...] LE FRONTIERE* (“close the borders”). As noted by Capdevila and Callaghan (2008: 6) «if we need to take control of our borders, we must surely be under attack!», and war imagery is clearly evoked in (8) through the use of military lexicon in sentences like: *CHIUDIAMO IMMEDIATAMENTE LE FRONTIERE* (“[we have] to immediately close

the borders”) and *PATTUGLIARE I MARI* (“to patrol the sea”). The image portrays an (alleged) soldier with a machine gun. This is how the author thinks Italy should patrol the sea and control illegal immigration.

- (4) *Questo è diventato il vero problema nazionale. L'Italia, rischia di soffocare, sotto la spinta di quest'ondata assurda ed insensata. Chi ha voluto questo, è un criminale, lui e la sua parte politica!!!*
- (5) [...] *togliere ogni ragionevole limite al disastroso fenomeno migratorio in atto, non persegue un fine umanitario, come i compagni ipocritamente dicono, ma quello molto meno nobile di rimpinguare il loro elettorato con ondate di disperati.*
- (6) *Questo succedeva a Porto Palo, l'altro ieri. Ma oggi, si è addirittura arrivati allo scontro fisico vero e proprio, con i siciliani, che di questa invasione, non ne possono veramente più.*
- (7) *Cosa aspettiamo di ritrovarceli in casa? Se già non ci sono....*
- (8) **CHIUDERE IMMEDIATAMENTE LE FRONTIERE, PATTUGLIARE I MARI (VEDI FOTO ACCANTO) RISPEDIRE CLANDESTINI E TUTTI QUELLI CHE LI VOGLIONO IN AFRICA!!! POI RAGIONIAMO.....**



Figure 8. Patrol

Not only is migration clearly framed as a problem for the host country, but there is also a strong propensity to dramatize events: the existence of asylum seekers in itself represents an inevitable threat for the country. The sense of fear is made explicit in (9), with the phrase *quello che si temeva è accaduto* (“what was feared just happened”). The removal of the subject through the use of the impersonal *si* pronoun makes the statement look collective, as if the author were speaking on behalf of the whole community. “What was feared” is the possibility that the foreign population may exceed the local population. That poses the question of whether there is a chance for migrants to actually integrate and become part of a community in the host country. Even migrants’ children born in Italy are inevitably considered foreigners *a priori* and are often defined *figlioli di immigrati* (“immigrants’ children”), with otherness becoming an ontological quality of the individuals.

In example (10) asylum seekers are directly referred to as an incoming menace to the Italian population: *prima che ci distruggano* (“before they destroy us”). Thus, the expulsion of all illegal immigrants has to be a *priorità assoluta* (“absolute priority”). Expulsion may also be rendered with the verb *rispedire* (“to send back”), whose primary meaning involves objects and not people (11). Even though the meaning of “send someone somewhere” is now common, we can see how this kind of metaphorical use compares humans to objects and totally discards migrants’ will and mobility rights, imposing ingroup decisions.

- (9) *Quello che si temeva è accaduto – Baranzate gli stranieri sono più degli ITALIANI – i negozi italiani sono quasi scomparsi*
- (10) *PRIORITA' ASSOLUTA ESPELLERE I CLANDESTINI PRIMA CHE CI DISTRUGGANO*
- (11) *CHIUDERE IMMEDIATAMENTE LE FRONTIERE, PATTUGLIARE I MARI (VEDI FOTO ACCANTO) RISPEDIRE CLANDESTINI E TUTTI QUELLI CHE LI VOGLIONO IN AFRICA!!! POI RAGIONIAMO.....*

5.2. Crime and deviance

The association between crime and immigrants is, not surprisingly, one of the most widely-investigated in earlier studies of Italian media (BRACALENTI and ROSSI 1998; MANERI 1998; DAL LAGO 2009 [1999]; COTESTA 1995; TER WAL 2001; TAYLOR 2009). The media play a key role in establishing this relation: «For example, journalists often portray migrants as the agents (but only rarely as the victims) of violent criminal acts. Secondly, journalists tend to indicate the illegal status and nationality of perpetrators when they report criminal acts committed by migrants» (MONTALI et al. 2013: 219). In this sense, we can see how this general trend in media discourse is reflected in Facebook posts that often try to emulate professional journalism.

Crimes against individuals and violent behaviour usually have an important emotional effect on readers. In example (12), the visual includes two photographs: at the top Nichi Vendola (a famous left-wing politician) is shown with a balloon saying “Immigrants are like brothers to us”, whereas the bottom of the picture shows a boy with a band aid on his face saying: “Brothers my arse... My name is Nicola Comerci, I was at a bar when two immigrants beat me up without a reason. They come here to our homeland and want to rule!”. The intent is to argue with pro-immigration politicians, but also to present readers with a concrete, credible example of migrant violence. The adverbial phrase *senza motivo* (“without a reason”) serves to stress the irrational, almost innate violent behaviour of migrants.

- (12) *“Gli immigrati sono nostri fratelli”. Fratelli un cazzo.. Mi chiamo Nicola Comerci, ero al bar quando due immigrati senza motivo mi hanno pestato. Vengono a casa nostra a dettar legge!*



Figure 9. Vendola

The following examples are presented in a newspaper headline-type format. They provide brief, summarized information, often without a source for checking the news and display some of the crimes most commonly attributed to immigrants, such as robbery (“rom steals a security cabinet full of weapons: arrested”) in (13); drug dealing (“Nigerian fake priest, hid 750 gr. of cocaine”) in (14), and sexual violence (“Trieste: woman raped by two immigrants, second case in a few hours”) in (15).

(13) *ROM RUBA UN ARMADIO BLINDATO CONTENENTE ARMI: ARRESTATO*

(14) *Nigeriano si finge “prete”, nascondeva 750 gr di coca*

(15) *Trieste: donna stuprata da due Immigrati, secondo caso in poche ore.*

A strong anti-gipsy sentiment can also be seen in the corpus. Romani people are often portrayed as the protagonists of robbery and violence. In (16), the headline structure isolates the ethnic nature of the crime by positioning extra information at the end of the text, marked graphically by a colon (“Old woman killed by adopted grandson for 50€: HE’S A ROM”). The result is what van Dijk (1993:258-259) calls “overcompleteness strategy”: «We say that a passage is overcomplete when it gives information that is relatively irrelevant to the description of the events. Such overcomplete passages may be used to convey a negative picture of a news actor» (VAN DIJK 1993: 258). The detail about ethnicity does not provide the reader with new information; therefore it has the effect of ethnicising crime²¹.

In addition, it is interesting to note how, in example (17), Romani’s voices are used only to confirm a negative stereotype (“That’s the way we Romani are made”), according to which gipsies are specialised in robbery. There is also a misuse of sources aimed at reinforcing such stereotype. In fact, the original title of the article was altered in order to underscore the Romani’s alleged criminal culture.

Example (18) highlights the sense of oppression and victimization (VAN DIJK 2000) perceived by the ingroup: in fact, Termini station (the main railway station of Rome) is defined through the hyperbolic use of the idiom *E’ IN MANO* (“in the hands of”), likewise foreigners are emphatically characterised as *VIOLENTI E LADRI* (“violent and thieving”).

(16) *ANZIANA UCCISA DAL NIPOTE ADOTTIVO PER 50€: è UN ROM*

(17) *Sorprende dipendente Rom mentre ruba: “Noi Rom siamo fatti così”*

(18) *ROM A TERMINI – LA STAZIONE TERMINI A ROMA E’ IN MANO A ROM VIOLENTI E LADRI*

5.3. *Struggle for material resources*

The struggle for material, socio-economic resources (housing, jobs, welfare and social security) has been a prominent topic in the discourse on immigration since the Nineties. As noted by ter Wal (2001): «Il discorso politico e della stampa ha creato modelli antagonisti attraverso la definizione della situazione come una “guerra tra poveri”»²² (TER WAL 2001: 71).

The Great Crisis started in 2008, and the austerity measures adopted in the following years, pushed unemployment rates to reach a level not seen for more than 30 years (it has

²¹ «The most pervasive form of overcompleteness, however, is the very mention of origin, color, race, or ethnicity of news actors in situations where this information is clearly irrelevant, but which may be used as an implicit explanation of usually negative actions of minority group members, typically so in crime news» (VAN DIJK 1993: 258-259).

²² “Political discourse and the press created antagonist models through the definition of the situation as a “battle of the have-nots”.

doubled since 2007), and caused cuts to the welfare system in an attempt to manage the public debt crisis. Indeed, this highly problematic situation exasperated resentment and negative attitudes towards migrants, perceived as competitors for scarce socio-economic resources (COTESTA 1995). The issue is consistently represented in the corpus, in 25 out of 120 posts, and frequently overlaps with other discriminatory contents.

The vast majority of posts regarding this topic are constructed through what we called *emotional* images (see Section 3), the apparent goal of which is to generate negative feelings and resentment against immigrants. We identified several discursive strategies highlighting conflict between groups.

Firstly, opposition towards the outgroup consists in general statements comparing Italians and immigrants, both considered as homogeneous, coherent groups. Polarization between social groups employs collectivisation referential strategies (VAN LEEUWEN 1996; REISIGL and WODAK 2001) opposing “us” to “them”. In (19) the opposition is marked by personal pronouns. For instance, in this specific case, the subject could have easily remained implicit, hence the author decided to put extra emphasis on the opposing social actors.

Using a series of economy-related terms, lexical choices define immigrants as a “financial burden” (VAN DIJK 2000: 63) for the local population: *soldi* (“money”), *manteniamo* (“to feed”), *spendiamo* (“we spend”), *5 miliardi* (“5 billions”), *povertà* (“poverty”), and *disoccupato* (“unemployed”). The “burden topos” is one of the most common discursive moves in racist discourse, «it implies that we do not refuse immigrants for what they are (their colour, culture or origin), nor out of ill will, or because of other prejudices, but only because we cannot. It is not surprising, therefore, that it is widely used in EU political discourse that opposes immigration, and not only on the right» (VAN DIJK 2000: 64).

In (21), the author presents unemployment of Italian citizens as directly caused by foreigners: *Per ogni immigrato che lavora in Italia, c'è un italiano disoccupato* (“For every immigrant working in Italy, there’s an unemployed Italian”). Therefore, recalling one of the most overused stereotypes according to which “Foreigners are to blame for high unemployment rates” (REISIGL and WODAK 2001: 55).

The overall contrast is accentuated by the use of emotional sentences such as: *ALLORA SI CHE CI SARA' DA RIDERE !!* (“it will be funny”), which, in a sarcastic manner, conveys a sense of fear and insecurity for the future, and *NONE' GIUSTO!* (“it’s not fair”).

All these statements are presented as self-evident facts, with no need for further explanation. Verbs are in the indicative mood and there are no adverbs expressing modality, except for example (20) where the adverb *almeno* (“at least”) serves to reinforce the truthfulness of the key figure provided in the message, therefore amplifying its effect.

(19) *QUANDO NOI NON AVREMO PIU' SOLDI PER MANTENERE LORO.... ALLORA SI CHE CI SARA' DA RIDERE !!*

(20) *SPENDIAMO ALMENO 5 MILIARDI PER I CLANDESTINI CON 12 MILIONI DI ITALIANI RIDOTTI IN POVERTA' NON E' GIUSTO! SIETE D'ACCORDO?*

(21) *Per ogni immigrato che lavora in Italia, c'è un italiano disoccupato. Pensaci!*

Another issue always present in the discourse about immigration is the accusation that “Foreigners are always privileged in comparison with us” (REISIGL and WODAK 2001: 55). Especially given the economic crisis, any social help granted to foreigners is looked on as unjust favouritism.

Problems related to housing are the most popular and most often highlighted on Facebook posts. The prevalent discursive strategy is that of constructing parallelism and contrast. In (22) the visual configuration of the pictures clearly emphasises this tactic.

The image is split in two halves where two men are portrayed: a black man, named Ubuntu, on the left side and an elderly Italian man on the right side. The comparison is carried out on different levels: age, nationality, criminal record, and, above all, social condition. Each level carries its own set of presuppositions. The black man is young, Congolese, a criminal, but lives in public housing, while the Italian man is old, *incensurato* (“has a clean record”), and is forced to live in a park because the State took away his house. Despite the fact that one is younger (therefore stronger), is a criminal (unsuitable for any social help), and is not even Italian (which makes him less suitable for obtaining social help), the State favours him over the poor, old, Italian man²³.

(22) *SOLO IN ITALIA Ubuntu 36 anni, congolese Pregiudicato vive in un bilocale messo a disposizione dal comune in cui risiede Carlo 78 anni, piemontese incensurato da due mesi vive in un parco perché lo Stato gli ha pignorato la casa!!! E' UNA VERGOGNA!!!*



Figure 10. Ubuntu/Carlo

Contrast is among the most popular discursive strategies in racist discourse (VAN DIJK 2000). Examples (23) and (24) share the same structure. Both use parallelism to convey the same sense of injustice towards Italian people. The use of the same syntactic structure with conflicting meanings highlights the cognitive need of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation at the base of ideological discourse (VAN DIJK 2000). In (23) the opposition is constructed between two subjects: *FAMIGLIA SFRATTATA/I MIGRANTI SBARCANO* (“evicted family”/“migrants just arrived”), characterised by their social condition *VIVE IN AUTO/IN HOTEL* (“lives in the car”/“put up in hotels”). Likewise, in example (24) “earthquake victims” (*AI TERREMOTATI*) and “illegal immigrants” (*AI CLANDESTINI*) receive two contrasting forms of social assistance: the former are depicted as living in tents (*LE TENDE*), while the latter are provided with “house and jobs” (*CASA E LAVORO*).

(23) *FAMIGLIA SFRATTATA VIVE IN AUTO (CON 3 BIMBI) - I MIGRANTI SBARCANO E VANNO SUBITO IN HOTEL*

(24) *AI TERREMOTATI LE TENDE AI CLANDESTINI CASE E LAVORO*

²³ «Poor whites thus feel that they are victims of inadequate social and urban policies, but instead of blaming the authorities or the politicians, they tend to blame the newcomers who, in their eyes, are so closely related to the changing, i.e. deteriorating, life in the inner city» (VAN DIJK 1992: 99).

Along with contrast and polarization, there is also another distinctive element which contributes to the formation of prejudiced discourse: the use of examples and illustrations: «More than general ‘truths’ concrete examples have not only the power to be easily imaginable (as episodic event models) and better memorable, but also to suggest impelling forms of empirical proof» (VAN DIJK 2000: 70). Both examples (25) and (26) tell the story of Italian citizens that lost their homes, which is a very sensitive and emotional topic, especially in Italy. These stories are placed in opposition to the condition of foreigners, sharing the same syntactic structure with the use of an adversative proposition: *Il comune di TRIESTE non le trova un alloggio, ma ha trovato alloggio per 191 clandestini in questi mesi* (“Trieste municipality was not able to find her an accommodation, but they found it for 191 illegal immigrants in these months”); *accolgono gli immigrati negli alberghi, ma gli Italiani vivono nei boschi!* (“they put immigrants in hotels, but Italians live in the woods!”). The stories are full of personal details that increase their concreteness; above all, there are dramatic details about the protagonists’ social condition that make an impression on the reader: *dopo la separazione vive in un’auto da mesi* (“she has been living in a car for months after separating from her husband”); *una vita di tasse pagate* (“he paid taxes for all his life”); *senza un aiuto dallo Stato* (“without any help from the State”); *dopo aver perso casa e lavoro* (“after losing his house and his job”). They are contrasted with the privileges granted to immigrants: *ha trovato alloggio per 191 clandestini in questi mesi* (“they found accommodation for 191 illegal immigrants”); *accolgono gli immigrati negli alberghi* (“they put immigrants in hotels”).

In example (26) the disproportion between the amount of details regarding Italians and the very general statement about immigrants is overwhelming.

In addition, the intensity is further amplified by photographs portraying the protagonists of the stories.

(25) *Questa signora triestina si chiama CORINNA TROCCA, ha 56 anni e dopo la separazione vive da mesi in un’auto. Il comune di TRIESTE non le trova un alloggio, ma ha trovato alloggio per 191 clandestini in questi mesi. L’appello della signora «Hanno trovato 191 sistemazioni per persone venute da fuori e non riescono a trovarne una per me?» - VERGOGNA!!*

(26) *accolgono gli immigrati negli alberghi, ma gli Italiani vivono nei boschi!*

“la triste storia di un italiano come noi, dopo una vita di tasse pagate vive nel bosco con la famiglia senza un aiuto dallo Stato.”

“Sfrattato vive nel bosco insieme alla sua famiglia: capanna con moglie e figlio dopo aver perso casa e lavoro.”

le famiglie italiane vengono abbandonate, i servizi sociali si muovono solo per togliere i figli agli italiani, vivere in un bosco mentre aiutiamo tanti paesi in via di sviluppo e’ ridicolo.... VERGOGNATEVI!!



Figure 11. Corinna

5.4. Denial of racism

Given that general values in contemporary society reject forms of blatant prejudice and discrimination (BILLIG 1988), individuals are particularly resentful of accusations of racism: «One of the crucial properties of contemporary racism is its denial, typically illustrated in such well-known disclaimers as ‘I have nothing against blacks, but...’» (VAN DIJK 1992: 87). Hence, a number of discursive devices have emerged in public and everyday discourse to avoid such public blame (VAN DIJK 1992; CAPDEVILA and CALLAGHAN 2008; AUGOUSTINOS and EVERY 2010; GOODMAN and BURKE 2011). Therefore, people tend to explain their aversion to immigrants with some reasonable motivation, such as cultural or economic factors, in order to appear reasonable.

Example (27) shows two important characteristics of denial. On the one hand, migrants are presented in a very extreme and negative way as rapists, thieves and criminals (*loro possono violentare, rubare, ammazzare*; “they can rape, steal and kill”), so that the author can disclaim prejudice by ascribing his/her opposition to social/cultural factors, but not to race; this is what Augoustinos and Every (2007) called «discursive deracialization». On the other hand, the taboo involving ethnic prejudice is directly rejected and attacked (*IN SILENZIO PERCHÈ APPENA APRI BOCCA SEI ETICHETTATO COME UNO SPORCO RAZZISTA*; “silently, because as soon as you open your mouth you’re labelled as a dirty racist”). The use of the hyperbole *sporco razzista* (“dirty racist”) also reinforces the contentious intent of the post. The final (rude) request “share if you are fed up too” (*SE TI SEI ROTTO I COGLIONI ANCHE TU DI QUESTA STORIA CONDIVIDI*) invites readers to express similar opinions so as to break the taboo.

In both examples (27) and (28), the statements are made as if the author is speaking on behalf of the whole ingroup by using inclusive formulae such as *noi, la nostra terra* (“we”, “our land”). In fact, the social, collective dimension frequently emerges in the denial of racism: «Not only do most white speakers individually resent being perceived as racists, also, and even more importantly, such strategies may at the same time aim at defending the ingroup as a whole: ‘We are not racists’, ‘We are not a racist society’» (VAN DIJK 1992: 89). Forms like *una volta per tutte, lo voglio dire ad alta voce* (“once and for all I want to say it loud and clear”) convey a feeling of oppression, as if people are unable to express themselves freely, and they can only do so by criticising and rejecting the norm against prejudice²⁴.

(27) *ITALIA, PAESE DOVE ZINGARI, IMMIGRATI, STRANIERI E TUTTI QUELLI CHE ARRIVANO SONO CONSIDERATI PATRIMONIO DELL'UNESCO, LORO POSSONO VIOLENTARE, RUBARE AMMAZZARE, NOI LI DOBBIAMO SOLO MANTENERE NEL LUSSO E IN SILENZIO PERCHÈ APPENA APRI BOCCA SEI ETICHETTATO COME UNO SPORCO RAZZISTA. SE TI SEI ROTTO I COGLIONI ANCHE TU DI QUESTA STORIA CONDIVIDI*

(28) *UNA VOLTA PER TUTTE LO VOGLIO DIRE AD ALTA VOCE: NOI ITALIANI NON SIAMO RAZZISTI, DIFENDIAMO SOLO LA NOSTRA TERRA, E CI SIAMO ROTTO I COGLIONI DI TUTTO E DI TUTTI IN MODO PARTICOLARE DI ROM D'IMMIGRATI, DEI FINTI, BUONISTI, E DEI FINTI MORALISTI, CHE SI DEFINISCONO ANTIRAZZISTI, MA A CASA LORO NON LI VOGLIONO. COSA NE PENSATE? CONDIVIDETE*

²⁴ «This happens when members of majority groups use the taboo on prejudice to argue that they are being discriminated against by having their freedom of speech suppressed» (BURKE and GOODMAN 2012: 20).

Another specific form of denial is reversal. In other words, discrimination is denied by reversing accusations of racism, so that ingroup members are seen as the real victims of discrimination. This may be expressed through statements according to which Italian citizens are subject to a form of “reverse racism”, like in (29): “RAZZISTI... SI MA CON GLI ITALIANI!” (“Racist... yeah but with Italians!”). These discursive moves often tend to employ victimization strategies (VAN DIJK 2000: 84). For instance, in example (31), various pro-migrant quotations from left-wing politicians are contrasted with dramatic statements about Italians. It is particularly worthy to note the use of the idiomatic expression *per aver dato il sangue per la patria* (“for giving their blood to their own country..!!”). *Patria* is a typical term belonging to nationalist rhetorical tradition. Moreover, the body-related metaphor (“the blood” that stands for “sacrifice”) helps intensify the expression and materializes the alleged state of suffering of the collectivized group (“the Italians”). Also, in example (30), the author makes use of a complex discursive strategy to reject the label of racist. The post opens gloomily, with a description of the violence frequently involved in human trafficking²⁵: *LI AMMASSANO COME BESTIE, LI UCCIDONO, LI BUTTANO IN MARE* (“they pile them into [the boat], they kill them, they throw them outboard”). Traffickers, who are responsible for these acts, are firstly lexicalised as the “illegal immigrants’ brothers” (despite the fact that traffickers and asylum seekers usually come from completely different countries), thus implying that they should share an emotional bond, based on a common territorial origin. This referential strategy collectivizes migrants and traffickers under the same category, therefore ascribing the same moral characterization to both. The strategy responds to the cognitive need to «positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation» (VAN DIJK 2000: 44), so that Italians are considered more generous than foreigners, while “they” are cruel with their own “brothers”.

Also, the Italian government is defined as being *complice* (“accomplice”) of the human trafficking *scempio* (“slaughter”), because of Operation *Mare Nostrum* and the aid given to refugees. The post ends with a statement aimed at generating approval and denying accusations of racism at the same time: *IO CHE MI BATTO PER EVITARE QUESTA CARNEFICINA ALLA FINE SONO RAZZISTA* (“me, the one who fights against this slaughter at the end of the day I am the racist”).

(29) *Un bambino italiano appena nasce ha un debito di 30 mila euro verso lo Stato italiano. Un bambino immigrato appena arriva in Italia riceve un sussidio dallo Stato italiano. RAZZISTI... SI MA CON GLI ITALIANI!*

(30) *IMMIGRATI CLANDESTINI I SUOI FRATELLI (GLI SCAFISTI) LI AMMASSANO COME BESTIE, LI UCCIDONO, LI BUTTANO IN MARE, SE GLI VA MALE FORSE LI ARRESTANO LO STATO ITALIANO, CHE È COMPLICE DI TUTTO QUESTO SCEMPIO, LO FA PER SOLIDARIETÀ IO CHE MI BATTO PER EVITARE QUESTA CARNEFICINA ALLA FINE SONO RAZZISTA IN ITALIA FUNZIONA COSÌ*

(31) *“Gli immigrati in Italia meritano una vita dignitosa” – “I rom sono un grande popolo, meritano una casa” – “I musulmani meritano le Moschee” - Ma che cazzo nessuno mai dice gli italiani meritano una casa per tutti i sacrifici fatti...per aver dato il sangue alla patria...!! NO per carità se si dovesse dire questo è:RAZZISMOOOOO!!*

²⁵ Not surprisingly, since descriptions of migrants arrival by sea on the press are often «characterised by a certain degree of drama» (MONTALI et al. 2013: 235).

6. Conclusions

In this article we attempted to demonstrate the ways in which racist discourse and ideologies are represented in everyday discourse. The starting hypothesis was that Facebook could be considered as a new public and political space where people feel free to interact, express personal opinions and make sense of the reality around them.

The analysis has focused on the use of discursive strategies in order to share resentment towards migrants as part of the broader phenomenon of racist discourse. The four pages were selected mainly because of their general anti-institutional topic. In addition, the names of the pages do not have any explicit reference to immigration or related issues, they are, apparently, unaligned and do not show direct relationships with any specific parties. The choice was made to avoid pages (like fascist and far-right groups) where racism and extreme positions are overt, in favour of those in which racist statements are presented as shared and reasonable opinions.

We tried to develop a typology of Facebook posts which considers the essential multimodal nature of these texts, based both on their visual and textual contents. Images, in fact, have a crucial role in the communicative process. Visuals circulate easily on the social network and are very frequently shared by ordinary users in order to express instantly their opinion and personal beliefs on a wide range of topics. However, a more detailed investigation is needed on this aspect.

Page administrators make use of several strategies in the attempt to position the broad category of Italian citizens as the victims of migratory processes. The analysis of the data has shown that this kind of communication is deeply influenced by mainstream political and media discourse. Some of the identified issues definitely show continuity with the usual representation of key topics, such as arrivals of migrants by sea or the link between migrants and crime (MONTALI et al. 2013; TAYLOR 2009).

The economic crisis that broke out in 2008 appears to be a key point in the process of meaning making for groups and individuals (ANGOURI and WODAK 2014), it exasperated resentment and negative attitudes towards migrants, perceived as competitors for scarce socio-economic resources (COTESTA 1995). Victimisation strategies and comparisons (VAN DIJK 2000) are particularly consistent throughout the corpus, showing that immigrants still play the part of the “scapegoat” in the interpretation of reality in everyday discourse.

The findings suggest that denial of racism and discursive deracialisation (AUGOUSTINOS and EVERY, 2007) play a huge part in Facebook posts, confirming results from other previous research on CMC (BURKE and GOODMAN 2012). The authors systematically try to avoid accusations of racism in order to appear reasonable. This strategy has led to greater normalization of racist claims in public everyday discourse on the Internet.

Finally, the results of this research show that everyday discourse on Facebook is deeply affected by media and political discourse on migration (TER WAL 2001; ORRÙ 2013). Linguistic features and contents deployed in the posts are consistent with other results from previous research on the topic in Italy and in the European context.

A more detailed multimodal analysis on the configuration of the posts, along with an in-depth examination of users' comments, could be interesting points of departure for further investigation on the complex nexus between the economic crisis, national identity and sense making through social networks in everyday interaction.

References

- ALLPORT, Gordon Willard (1954), *The nature of prejudice*. New York: Perseus Books.
- ANGOURI, Jo and WODAK, Ruth (2014), “‘They became big in the shadow of the crisis’: The Greek success story and the rise of the far right”, in «Discourse and Society» 25 (4), 540–565.
- AUGOUSTINOS, Martha and EVERY, Danielle (2007), “The language of ‘race’ and prejudice: A discourse of denial, reason, and liberal-practical politics”, in «Journal of Language and Social Psychology» 26 (2), 123–141.
- AUGOUSTINOS Martha and EVERY, Danielle (2010), “Accusations and denials of racism: Managing moral accountability in public discourse”, in «Discourse & Society» 21 (3), 251-256.
- BILLIG, Michael (1988), “‘The Notion of ‘prejudice’. Some rhetorical and ideological aspects”, in «Text» 8 (1-2), 91-110.
- BRACALENTI, Raffaele and ROSSI, Claudio (1998), “L’immagine dell’immigrato e dell’immigrazione attraverso la stampa quotidiana: una ricerca empirica svolta nell’area romana”, in Raffaele BRACALENTI and Claudio ROSSI (eds.), *Immigrazione: l’accoglienza delle culture. Dalla scuola ai mass media, esempi concreti di intercultura*. Roma: Edup, 103-136.
- BURKE, Shani and GOODMAN, Simon (2012), “‘Bring back Hitler’s gas chambers’: Asylum seeking, Nazis and Facebook – a discursive analysis”, in «Discourse and society» 23 (1), 19-33.
- CAPDEVILA, Rose and CALLAGHAN, Jane E. M. (2008), “‘It’s not racist. It’s common sense’. A critical analysis of political discourse around asylum and immigration in the UK”, in «Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology» 18 (1), 1-16.
- CASTELS, Manuel (2000) [1996], *The rise of the network society*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Blackwell.
- CECCARINI, Luigi and DI PIERDOMENICO, Martina (2010), “Info-nauti. Cittadini in rete”, in «Comunicazione politica» XI (3), 343-370.
- COTESTA, Vittorio (1995), *Noi e loro. Immigrazione e nuovi conflitti metropolitani*. Messina: Rubbettino.
- DAL LAGO, Alessandro (2009) [1999], *Non-persone. L’esclusione dei migranti nella società globale*. 2nd edn. Milano: Feltrinelli.
- FAIRCLOUGH, Norman (1989), *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- FAIRCLOUGH, Norman (1995), *Media discourse*. London: Arnold.
- FOUCAULT, Michel (1972), *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language*. New York: Pantheon.
- GABRIELATOS, Costas and BAKER, Paul (2008), “Fleeing, sneaking, flooding: A corpus analysis of discursive constructions of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press, 1996-2005”, in «Journal of English Linguistics» 36 (5), 5-38.
- GOODMAN, Simon and BURKE, Shani (2011), “Discursive deracialization in talk about asylum seeking”, in «Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology» 21 (2), 111-123.
- GROSSI, Giorgio (2004), *L’opinione pubblica*. Roma-Bari: Laterza.
- HALL, Stuart (2000), “Who needs identity?”, in Paul DU GAY, Jessica EVANS, Peter REDMAN (eds.), *Identity: A reader*. London: Sage, 15-30.
- HALL, Stuart, Chas CRITCHER, Tony JEFFERSON, John CLARKE AND Brian ROBERTS (1978), *Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state and law and order*. London: Macmillan.

- HOGG, Michael A. and ABRAMS, Dominic (2006) [1998], *Social identifications. A social psychology of intergroup relations and group processes*. London and New York: Routledge.
- MANERI, Marcello (1998), “Lo straniero consensuale. La devianza degli immigrati come circolarità di pratiche e discorsi”, in Alessandro DAL LAGO (ed.), *Lo straniero e il nemico. Materiali per l’etnografia contemporanea*. Genova: Costa & Nolan, 236-272.
- MINISTERO DELL’INTERNO (2007) *Rapporto sulla criminalità in Italia. Analisi, Prevenzione, Contrasto*. http://www.interno.gov.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/assets/files/14/0900_rapporto_criminalita.pdf [accessed 2nd July 2014].
- MONTALI, Lorenzo, RIVA, Paolo, FRIGERIO, Alessandra and MELE, Silvia (2013), “The representation of migrants in the Italian press. A study on the “Corriere della Sera” (1992–2009)”, in «Journal of Language and Politics» 12 (2), 226-250.
- MOSCOVICI, Serge (1981), “On social representation”, in Joseph P. FORGAS (ed.) *Social cognition: Perspectives on everyday understanding*. London: Academic Press, 181-210.
- ORRÙ, Paolo (2013), “Il Partito dell’amore e il partito dell’odio. Analisi linguistica del conflitto politico nell’Italia della Seconda Repubblica”, in «Letterature Straniere & Quaderni della Facoltà di Lingue e Letterature Straniere dell’Università degli Studi di Cagliari» 14, 233-261.
- QUASTHOFF, Uta M. (1989), “Social prejudice as a resource of power: towards the functional ambivalence of stereotypes”, in Ruth WODAK (ed.), *Language, power and ideology: Studies in political discourse*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 181-196.
- REISIGL, Martin and WODAK, Ruth (2001), *Discourse and discrimination: Rhetorics of racism and anti-semitism*. London and New York: Routledge.
- TAJFEL, Henri (1981a), *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in social psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- TAJFEL, Henri (1981b), “Social Stereotypes and Social Groups”, in John C. TURNER and Howard GILES (eds.), *Intergroup behaviour*. Oxford: Blackwell, 144-177.
- TAJFEL, Henri and TURNER, John Charles (1985), “The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour”, in Stephen WORCHEL and William G. AUSTIN (eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 7-24.
- TAYLOR, Charlotte (2009), “The Representation of Immigrants in the Italian Press”, in «CIRCaP Occasional Papers» 21, 1-40, http://www.circap.org/uploads/1/8/1/6/18163511/occ_21_2009.pdf [accessed July 16th 2014].
- TER WAL, Jessica (2001), “Minacce territoriali, socio-economiche e di sicurezza. L’immagine degli immigrati nella stampa quotidiana”, in «Incontri» 16, 67-78.
- TURNER, John Charles (1981), “The experimental social psychology of intergroup behaviour”, in John TURNER and Howard GILES (eds.), *Intergroup behaviour*. Oxford: Blackwell, 66–101.
- VAN DIJK, Teun Adrianus (1987), *Communicating racism. Ethnic prejudice in thought and talk*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- VAN DIJK, Teun Adrianus (1988), *News as discourse*. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- VAN DIJK, Teun Adrianus (1991), *Racism and the press*. London: Routledge.
- VAN DIJK, Teun Adrianus (1992), “Discourse and the denial of racism”, in «Discourse & Society» 3 (1), 87-118.
- VAN DIJK, Teun Adrianus (1993), *Elite Discourse and Racism*. London: Sage.

- VAN DIJK, Teun Adrianus (2000), *Ideology and discourse. A multidisciplinary introduction*, <http://www.discourses.org/OldBooks/Teun%20A%20van%20Dijk%20-%20Ideology%20and%20Discourse.pdf> [accessed June 28th 2014].
- VAN LEEUWEN, Theo (1996), “The representation of social actors”, in Carmen Rosa CALDAS-COULTHARD and Malcolm COULTHARD (eds.), *Texts and practices: Readings in Critical discourse analysis*. London: Routledge, 32-70.

Paolo Orrù
University of Cagliari (Italy)
paolo.orrù@unica.it