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The principles of communication on refugees in the context of post-truth

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the representation of the issue of refugees travelling to the Italian coast that was reported by two major Italian newspapers between August 8th and August 19th, 2017. Using analysis tools belonging to communication theory and cognitive sciences, i.e. the concepts of frame and attitude, this article highlights two major points: firstly, the analysis reveals how the two newspapers aimed at establishing a specific relationship with their readers on this topic in the relevant period on the basis of specific interpretative models; secondly, each of these interpretative models relies on the representation of specific emotions which play a central role in the interpretation of reality according to a characteristic facet of the definition of post-truth.

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1. Introduction

The word “post-truth” was elected word of the year by *The Oxford English Dictionary* in 2016. The definition given by the dictionary is that of “adjective” and “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.” On the dictionary’s website¹ it is explained that this adjective has known “a spike in frequency this year in the context of the EU referendum in the United Kingdom and the presidential election in the United States” and that it often occurs in the phrase “post-truth politics.” So here we have a problematic relationship with the truth. The relationship between the truth of what is affirmed by language, newspapers and other mass media, and the reality to which that language would refer is no longer easily verifiable. The relationship becomes so problematic that the theme of post-truth has often been linked in recent years to the theme of fake news. The latter means, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, “false stories that appear to be news, spread on the internet or using other media, usually created to influence political views or as a joke.” There are, however, many possible ways of saying what is false or arousing the perplexities of a critical public, and therefore this

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definition covers a series of phenomena, ranging from actual lies to various forms of omission. Nevertheless, as emerges from the definition of the Oxford English Dictionary, public discourses characterized by post-truth are not necessarily marked by real lies or easily identifiable omissions. Indeed, these discourses appeal to “emotions and personal beliefs” and it seems therefore that these discourses do not take into consideration the forms of social and cultural authority of tradition, of institutions, religion and science; conversely, this definition shows that these discourses seek direct legitimacy from the recipients of the message, from an audience often composed of isolated individuals, whose beliefs and emotions are the main, if not the only, testing ground for information.

This unmediated, direct research of consensus finds a very fertile ground in the criticism that the twentieth century has turned to the concepts of “truth” and “reference to reality.” As Gili and Maddalena (2018) explain, the winning approaches in philosophy, sociology, communication sciences and journalism studies have challenged these two concepts that traditionally served as a barrier against manipulation, and they did so on the one hand based: “sulla contestazione teorica delle semplicistiche definizioni di verità e di realtà affermatesi con il pensiero positivistico; dall’altro, sul rifiuto «politico» della verità come strumento di cui si sono sempre appropriati e avvalsi i detentori del potere, i quali hanno affermato la «propria verità» come «la verità», a difesa dei loro interessi e della loro posizione di egemonia sociale” [on the theoretical contestation of the simplistic definitions of truth and reality affirmed with positivistic thinking; on the other, on the “political” rejection of truth as an instrument which the holders of power have always appropriated and used when affirming “their own truth” as “the truth”, in defence of their interests and their position of social hegemony] (Gili and Maddalena 2018, 7). This has led to the questioning of any model of truth and reality that was out of control of the emotions and beliefs of individuals.

This secular paradigm shift has clear repercussions on the role of the media. First because, as the German sociologist Luhmann (1996, 9) pointed out, on the one hand “was wir über unsere Gesellschaft, ja über die Welt, in der wir leben, wissen, wissen wir durch die Medien” [what we know about our society, about the world we live in comes through the media]; on the other, because the logic underlying journalistic work, as illustrated by Luhmann himself, no longer responds to a “true-false” distinction, but to the opposition of “information – non-information” (see Luhmann 1996, 32ff). This distinction illuminates the anxiety of journalistic publications to always put “the news” on top of newspaper articles, at the beginning of a television service, where news is new information, new today, that stands out against the background of information on the past, from yesterday. The journalistic work, which daily chases news that is always new and at the same time an always renewed consensus by readers and viewers, has to deal with the discursive regime of post-truth, which makes the verification of information a procedure often too complicated for the tight schedule of the editorial offices. Secondly – and this is the aspect of most interest for this paper – the discourses of post-truth can frame the same topic from different angles and therefore offer different representations of that argument: for example, they can choose certain adjectives rather than others; they can underline certain events and not others, link them to other events and give an implicit interpretation of those events, without

providing it explicitly, thus leaving the reader the task of systematically reconstructing the interpretation underlying the events in the newspaper article. This is often an interpretation that involves the emotions of both the writer and the reader. For this reason, in this article we make reference to the frames, which mean those linguistic and cognitive tools with which a text can orient the emotions, beliefs and interpretations of a reader. And we will do this by looking at some articles from two Italian newspapers on a theme that mobilizes readers' consciences: migrations from developing countries to Italian shores in the summer of 2017. Since then, the debate on this issue has become even more intense because of the restrictive policy of the current government on migration flows (the current government is composed of political forces that at the time of the facts reported in the articles analyzed here, were opposition parties), which has also been the subject of a considerable discussion between the current Italian government and the European Union.

2. Theoretical assumptions

2.1 *Evaluation attitudes and their components*

Evaluative attitudes towards objects, as Kühne (2015, 37–39) points out, are composed of three elements: a cognitive, an emotional and a conative element, and the latter can be defined as a behaviour that individuals have or intend to assume towards an object, and which influences not only the behaviours that an individual has towards the object of evaluation, but also the behaviours that individuals hold towards each other and that concern that object of evaluation. Petty, Wegener, and Fabrigar (1997, quoted in Kühne 2015, 37) explain that “attitudes are commonly viewed as summary evaluations of objects (e.g. oneself, other people, issues, etc.) along a dimension ranging from positive to negative.”

Cognitive elements concern information development processes and result from a series of different activities, including perception of different types of stimuli, processes based on automatic association of memory contents (such as stereotypes and schemes), active reflection on information (see Kühne 2015, 31), and opinion and judgement development.

Cognitive processes have the prerogative of modifying the accessibility of an idea in the mind of those who receive and interpret a text, as well as of modifying its importance and contents.

Emotions, which are relevant for the formation of evaluative attitudes, are events that occur within an organism following another internal or external event (see Kühne 2015, 32; Scherer 2005, 697–698); emotional processes consist of several elements: a cognitive element, an emotional element, motivations, a physiological component and a motor component (Kühne 2015, 32). Emotions are linked to changes that occur in each of these spheres and support the individual's progressive adaptation to the environment. We must also add that emotional processes are related to cognitive processes; the cognitions linked to emotional processes are evaluative and relational (Kühne 2015, 35), because they are evaluating the interconnections of an event with the needs, values and purposes of an individual, and because these evaluations are made on the basis of individuals' preferences and interests.

It should be added that evaluation attitudes, however, are not exclusively determined by these three factors, but also by elements that have no direct relationship with the object of evaluation, such as the presentation of the message or the credibility of those who present the message (Kühne 2015, 39).

Moreover, as Kühne (2015, 38) explains, the scientific literature sometimes specifies that attitudes have a relatively stable character over time (Petty and Cacioppo 1981, 6–7; Rosenberg 1956); however, social psychology highlights that they are often context-dependent and have a temporary character (Eagly and Chaiken 1993, 2–3; Fabrigar, McDonald, and Wegener 2005; Fazio and Olson 2003; Zanna and Rempel 1988; also see Kühne 2015, 38 about this issue).

2.2 The emotional component

As Kühne (2015, 86–87) explains, cognitive sciences involved in evaluation identify several parameters, whereby individuals are committed to a continuous evaluation of the surrounding environment. An important first parameter is the valence [in German: “Valenz”] of an event, that is the evaluation that an individual makes of the fact that an event can be linked to positive or negative consequences (Roseman 2001; Scherer 2001). Another important parameter is the evaluation of the probability that an event will occur or not. For example, an event that is subject to various assessments of the probability with which it will happen can generate a sense of insecurity in the individual.

A very important parameter for the generation of central emotions in the functioning of mass media such as fear or sadness is the controllability of an event or a problem.

A high degree of controllability occurs when a positive situation can be maintained due to an active intervention or when a negative situation can be ended (Ellsworth and Scherer 2003; Kühne 2015, 86; Lazarus 1991, 133–134; Roseman 2001).

As (Kühne 2015, 88) explains, controllability is a component that allows the activation of feelings such as anger or sadness. Anger is triggered by a negative, certain and controllable event, the responsibility for which can be attributed to an identifiable agent which has a focal role in the evaluation of reality. In other words, anger distinguishes the perception of an obstacle that stands between the individual and the achievement of his/her goal, given that this person has the ability to achieve this goal or to effectively manage the situation.

Controllability is also an important variable in activating the feeling of sadness. Sadness is triggered by a certain, negative and uncontrollable event. In other words, this feeling is often associated with the loss suffered by a subject who can hardly be compensated. Sadness represents a reaction to an undesirable event whose causes are often attributable to external circumstances or in any case not easily controlled factors (see Kühne 2015, 88).

The activation of these feelings therefore takes place on the basis of patterns, schemes made, *inter alia*, of attributions of responsibility, degrees of controllability and objectives to be achieved. These schemes are very important for the analysis of the content of newspapers, because newspapers try to select aspects of reality and to highlight

them within frames, offering keys that define goals, assigning responsibilities, enhancing certain agents as favourable factors or as obstacles to achieving a goal and establishing the controllability of a political and social situation.

A newspaper cannot have full control over reception processes, especially over those that occur in mind of its readers. However, through the operations of event framing, it can select certain aspects of reality and represent a constellation of agents with certain moral and psychological qualities and more or less desirable circumstances; through this operation it can corroborate the opinions of its readers or change the opinions of those who until a certain moment did not share all or part of the political line of the newspaper.

2.3 Frames

How can printed paper paint configurations of purpose, responsibility, more or less unfavourable, more or less controllable factors, so as to facilitate the emergence of certain emotions in the reader? The hypothesis of this study is that to do this written journalism (this article deals only with the written word) uses frames. A frame is a principle that regulates the interpretation of social reality. An important definition for framing studies and framing processes was provided by Gregory Bateson (1972, 187–188), who explained that the frame can be a concept related to the world of paintings and in this case suggests that the type of thought necessary to read what is inside the picture is not the kind of thought that is necessary to understand what is outside the picture; however, the frame, as Bateson explains, is also linked to the mathematical theory of sets, because it specifies which messages are part of a set of messages that share the same premises and are relevant to one another.

Goffman (1986 [1974], 10–11) drew on the notion of frames and applied it to sociology. A frame for Goffman is, therefore, a set of principles that organize and govern social events and our involvement in them. The author considers a portion of the current social activity as the object of the frame; hence, the frame in Goffman, as Forgione (2012, 251) explains, is “uno schema di interpretazione che permette di percepire, identificare e categorizzare in senso ampio un segmento di attività” [a framework of interpretation that allows one to perceive, identify and categorize in a broad sense a segment of activity] (Forgione 2012, 251; for an analysis of the concept of frame in political communication see Forgione 2012).

Several definitions of frames have been provided in more recent times, and many focus on the aspect of selecting certain information from all available information in the surrounding environment, and emphasizing the selected elements. For example, Entman (1993, 52) emphasizes the role played in communication by the framing process and explains: “To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicative text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described” (emphasis added). How does the association of the elements of a frame take place? Kühne (2015, 26) cites two works that indicate the relationship between frames and selected elements. One of the two works is by Simon and Xenos (2000, 367), who explain that:

A model of framing can be built on the premise that to frame a message in a given way entails necessarily that the message is constructed in such a way as to contain certain associations rather than others. [...] To say a message constructs an issue, we are really saying that it has built-in particular associations between concepts.

The framing process therefore provides that the message conveyed by the text contains only certain associations. This concept is confirmed by Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007, 15, cited by Kühne 2015, 26), who understand the frame as “a message that suggests a connection between two concepts such that, after exposure to the message, audiences accept that they are connected.” As can be seen, the definitions of frames are partially divergent from one another, even if all of them underline the function of selecting and linking certain information elements and not others.

Relevant to the use of frames theory in the political context are the three principles that Matthes (2007, 148) identifies and which must be considered by frame research (for a discussion of these principles, see Kühne 2015, 26–28):

1. the Principle of Ambivalence (das Ambivalenzprinzip): political themes can be tackled from different points of view, from different perspectives, and each of these perspectives is usually represented by a discourse actor, an agent of the debate. Political themes are very likely to be subject to this multiplicity of readings because they often have to do with the distribution of limited resources to a small number of subjects; this is why each subject tries to become the bearer of his/her own interpretation of a theme or of a political problem;
2. the Principle of Selection (das Selektionsprinzip): frames reduce this ambivalence of themes by selecting only certain information and omitting other information. This selection of information for each theme provides a single interpretative horizon for all the actors who want to deal with that political theme;
3. the Principle of Coherence (das Konsistenzprinzip): a frame consists of several elements. A frame, for example, shows or gives an understanding of its presuppositions and leads the interpreter to certain conclusions. Among the elements that a frame provides there is a definition of the problem, the attribution of the causes, an explicit evaluation and a recommended action. The frame links these parameters in a consistent way, so that the actors of the political discourse have a stable interpretive horizon at their disposal.

These three principles were considered in the analysis of the journalistic articles that constituted the corpus of this research and in the definition of the frames activated by these articles. The historical context that characterizes the articles in this research study corpus is illustrated below.

2.4 Frames and post-truth

What is then the role of frames in political and cultural discourses that take place in the context of post-truth? Frames organize the information conveyed by the text. The definition of a problem, selecting an aspect that focuses on that issue, the representation of an attitude and a proposal for a possible solution are not disconnected details

of a discourse that presents reality as a mirror, but are central features of political and social discourse, defining and constitutive traits. These essential traits are organized in frames; they are messages that share the same theoretical and/or ideological assumptions and act as a filter through which reality is represented in the discourses and then communicated. The discursive regime of post-truth, as explained in the introduction to this article, is characterized with respect to other discursive contexts for its recourse to emotions and individual beliefs; its appeal to the cognitive worlds of individuals takes place in an historical and informative context in which the speed of movement of news is very high and the angles from which the same event can be depicted are manifold. In the frames that organize speeches in the regime of post-truth discourse, the emotions aroused by the stories—which are represented through lexical choices or through the simple selection of an aspect—occupy a central position in the representation of the problem and its solution. Within a frame, an interpretive scheme of information is presented so that the subject may evaluate it in order to benefit not only from further knowledge, but also from emotions.

3. The historical context

According to the public security department of the Italian Ministry of the Interior, 119,310 migrants landed in Italy in 2017. In 2016, many more migrants had landed: 181,436. The percentage of decrease in the number of migrants from 2016 to 2017 was 34.24%.² Moreover, many migrants died in the Mediterranean Sea in 2017, trying to reach the European coasts. Deaths reached 3,116.³ The migrants who arrived on the Italian coast in 2017 came from African and Asian nations (such as Bangladesh, Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Guinea) fleeing wars and famines, looking for a better life in Europe, a continent possible to reach via the Mediterranean and the Italian coasts. According to Italian public opinion, the decline in migrants compared to 2016 was a consequence of the new agreements between Italy and Libya (the so-called Memorandum signed on February 2nd, 2017) and of the code of conduct (the so-called Minniti Code, from the name of the former Italian Minister of the Interior) for non-governmental organizations, which deals with the recovery of migrants from life-threatening situations at sea in order to lead them to the nearest safe harbour. The agreements with Libya foresaw that, in exchange for an economic aid package, Italy would help the government of Fayed al Serraj to patrol and close the southern border with Niger, the main point of access to Libya for migrants coming from sub-Saharan Africa; the Italian government also provided Libya with technical skills and boats to allow the Libyan authorities to better patrol the sea and to bring “irregular migrants” back to Libyan detention centres where, according to the director of Amnesty International’s office at the European institutions, they are kept in unimaginable conditions, among the protests of NGOs. Among the rules laid down by the Minniti code for NGO vessels were: the obligation to accept a judicial mandate for Italian law enforcement officers on board; the prohibition to tranship people recovered at sea onto other vessels (except in cases of emergency); the obligation to transport them to the nearest safe harbour; as well as the obligation for NGOs to present documents to the Italian authorities certifying the good condition of the boats used for rescue operations. In this political climate, on August

13th, 2017 *Il Fatto Quotidiano* published the news that the Procura di Catania were investigating the role of NGOs in the Mediterranean on charges of “criminal association aimed at illegal immigration”, in other words, on contacts between NGOs and traffickers of men at sea.

4. Research method

The news of the investigation carried out by the Procura di Catania is assumed, in this article, as a point of reference for the analysis of frames activated by the articles of two Italian newspapers of divergent political orientation, namely *Il Manifesto* and *Il Giornale*. *Il Manifesto* is a political newspaper concerned with the political group Manifesto, founded in 1971 by some members of the left (including L. Pintor) expelled from the Italian Communist Party. *Il Giornale* (originally *Il Giornale Nuovo*) is a newspaper that has been on newsstands in Milan since June 25th, 1974. Founded by a group of journalists from the *Corriere della Sera* who opposed the leftist change of the editorial line of that paper, *Il Giornale* had I. Montanelli as its first director. It established itself at the national level by taking a moderate liberal political line. At the end of the 1970s, Silvio Berlusconi became the majority shareholder of the company that owned it, but after the approval of the Mammi law in 1990, limiting the concentration of television networks and newspapers, he transferred the property of the newspaper to his brother Paolo Berlusconi. In January 1994, because of the forthcoming general elections in which S. Berlusconi himself would participate with 'Forza Italia' movement, I. Montanelli, due to disagreements with the property, left the management of the newspaper.⁴

In particular, as regards the temporal coverage of the items considered here, as a reference point we took what was done in a doctoral thesis presented at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross by Patrick Roland Ossein (2017, 178). Following this lead, this article analyzes the journalistic coverage provided by the two newspapers in the previous week and in the week following the event mentioned above, and identifies the frames activated by the articles considered. It should be added that therefore the research took into consideration all the articles published by the two newspapers from August 8th to August 19th, 2017 that contained the word “migrants”. However, in this article only some characteristic examples are illustrated for their capacity to show how frames related to the topic of migration from the southern shores of the Mediterranean to Italy are activated, and how these frames activate certain emotions and represent an invitation for the reader to assume certain attitudes toward migrants from the South.

5. Articles from *Il manifesto*

The articles from *Il Manifesto* tackle the phenomenon of migrants within frames that emphasize the status of victims and identify a certain responsibility for the current crisis. This is the case of the following article, published on August 8th, entitled:

Il sistema che spinge i migranti è lo stesso che produce il deserto [The system that pushes migrants is the same one that produces the desert].

L'unico aiuto reale, che non cade cioè nelle mani di governi tirannici e corrotti, sono i progetti mirati all'istruzione, alla sanità, all'agricoltura, di alcune ONG, spesso le stesse che provano a salvare i migranti in mare, e soprattutto le rimesse dei migranti, che oltre a tenere in equilibrio il nostro sistema pensionistico, mandano nel Nord Africa soldi che vanno direttamente nelle mani delle persone che provano a sopravvivere nei villaggi e a ricostruire le condizioni minime di un'agricoltura di sussistenza.

[The only real help, which does not fall into the hands of tyrannical and corrupt governments, are the projects of some NGOs—often the same ones that try to save migrants at sea—aimed at education, health, agriculture, and above all the remittances of migrants, which in addition to keeping our pension system in balance, send money to North Africa that goes directly into the hands of people who try to survive in villages and rebuild the minimum conditions of subsistence agriculture.]

And also:

Forse riusciremo ad essere abbastanza crudeli da fermare i migranti. Non riusciremo senza cambiamenti profondi nel nostro modo di produrre e consumare a fermare il deserto. O forse riusciremo a capire e provare a far capire che il sistema economico e di vita per difendere il quale respingiamo i migranti è lo stesso che produce il deserto. Ci ha provato per ora solo papa Francesco. La politica, dopo gli applausi di rito, del resto sempre più tiepidi, si ritrae, incapace di confrontarsi con la parte più scandalosa del suo messaggio, quella che dovrebbe portarci a rimettere in discussione le idee di sviluppo, di progresso, di benessere, su cui si è modellata la nostra economia e la nostra società.

[Perhaps we will be able to be cruel enough to stop migrants. We will not succeed in stopping the desert without profound changes in the way we produce and consume. Or maybe we will be able to understand and try to make people understand that the economic and life system, to defend which we reject migrants, is the same that produces the desert. Only Pope Francis has tried it for now. Politics, after the usual rite of applause, that gets more and more tepid, withdraws, unable to confront the most scandalous part of his message, the one that should lead us to question the ideas of development, progress, well-being, on which our economy and our society are modelled.]

A first frame of this article is activated by the title, which recognizes an identity between two systems. The two systems are: first, the one that pushes migrants to risk their lives and second, the one that is destroying our planet, among other things producing the desert. Therefore, this text reads the phenomenon of migration in first an economic and then a political key, where politics is enslaved to a neoliberal market economy. In this robbery economy, which favours the ruthless consumption of resources and the indiscriminate production of rubbish from material that could instead be re-used, migrants move, migrants are forced to migrate because their territory has been transformed into a desert without water as a result of the action of men who bent the agriculture of entire continents to the consumption needs of megalopolises. Applying the principles in Matthes (2007, 148), it could be argued that the frame selects from among the different points of view that face the problem of development the one opposed to the neoliberal economy and the “crescita lineare e illimitata” [linear and unlimited growth]; moreover, this frame finds its “consistency” in a presupposition, which leads back to a single system, that of predatory economy, both the movement of migrants and the action of human traffickers. In fact, just one of the summaries of the

text at the top left of the page that contains the article reads: “gli scafisti non creano i flussi, li sfruttano” [the smugglers do not create the flows, they exploit them]; however, it finds its consistency even in a solution, to focus on the recycling of materials and on “invertire la rotta rispetto ad un’idea di progresso e di incremento della produttività avvenuta sostituendo il lavoro umano con l’energia fossile” [reversing the route with respect to an idea of progress and increasing productivity by replacing human labour with fossil energy]. The situation described within this frame—which is also reinforced by the closing photo of the article on the next page, showing migrants in Kenya in search of water—provides for the attribution of responsibility to the economic and political agents of the planet. However, it also implicitly assigns responsibilities to all of us who feed this system with our consumption. This implicit self-attribution of responsibility, combined with the direction that current planetary economic development is taking (“quando il mondo rischia di non avere più futuro” [when the world risks not having a future]) could generate a feeling of gloomy pessimism in the reader; however, in the article it is said that, although it is difficult, “si comincia finalmente a parlare di economia circolare,” [we can finally start to talk about a circular economy] an alternative economic model, and in the last column possible solutions are provided (the ones mentioned above) to promote this model, leaving the hope for change in the reader. This article aims therefore to instil, through the proposed solutions, a feeling of hope in the change of the political-economic system and a critical attitude towards the current political-economic system, based on “economie di scala” [scale economy] and “sulle stesse ricette del passato, in salsa neoliberista, e nel migliore dei casi, neo-keynesiana” [the same recipes as in the past, in neoliberal sauce, or at best, neo-Keynesian].

A second frame, which occupies a portion of the text in the first column, could be called *Migrants and NGO antagonists of the predatory economic-political system*. According to Matthes’ (2007, 148) principles the text selects a point of view, which embraces the cause of migrants and NGOs, conceived as main, if not unique, antagonists of the economic system. To migrants, who send money to African villages, where one tries to “ricostruire le condizioni minime di un’agricoltura di sussistenza” [reconstruct the minimum conditions of subsistence agriculture] and to some NGOs that promote education, health and agriculture, the text recognizes the status of subjects who, even within the system, fight it in order to improve it. In Kühne’s (2015, 86) terms this article recognizes a positive valence to the work of these two subjects, because they are believed to be harbingers of desirable consequences for the political-economic system. This factor cooperates to engender in the reader a feeling of hope for a possible change, an improvement of the system, whereas the attitude suggested to the reader from this second frame remains a critical one towards a specific subject within the entire economic system, i.e. against those who support government positions, aimed at the limitation of possibilities for action by NGOs. The NGOs become a central witness of the events in the following article, published on August 9th, entitled:

Libia, Gentiloni spinge per una maggiore presenza dell’ONU [Libya, Gentiloni insists on greater presence of the United Nations].

L'Italia spinge per un maggiore coinvolgimento delle Nazioni unite nella ricerca di una soluzione di pace in Libia. Il premier Paolo Gentiloni lo dice chiaramente quando, nel pomeriggio, riceve a Palazzo Chigi l'inviato speciale dell'Onu per la Libia Ghassan Salamé. Gentiloni sa bene che la soluzione ai flussi di migranti che arrivano sulle nostre coste passa anche da un accordo di pace nel Paese nordafricano, accordo che – nell'ottica di Roma – finirebbe col rafforzare il premier libico Faye al Serraj con cui da mesi l'Italia sta trattando. «Autorità libiche più forti renderanno più efficace l'impegno comune contro i trafficanti di esseri umani», spiega.

[Italy is pushing for a greater involvement of the United Nations in the search for a peace solution in Libya. Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni clearly says this when, in the afternoon, he receives the UN special envoy for Libya, Ghassan Salamé, at Palazzo Chigi. Gentiloni knows well that the solution to the flows of migrants arriving on our shores also requires a peace agreement in the North African country, an agreement that – from the perspective of Rome – would end up reinforcing the Libyan premier Faye al Serraj with whom Italy has been negotiating for months. “Stronger Libyan authorities will make the joint effort against human traffickers more effective,” he explains.]

And:

Il punto più delicato resta comunque il trattamento che i libici riservano ai migranti anche nei campi di detenzione gestiti dall'autorità per la lotta all'immigrazione clandestina di Tripoli. Unhcr, Oim e Medici senza frontiere hanno più volte descritto le condizioni disumane nelle quali i migranti sono costretti a vivere. Ieri si sono aggiunte anche le testimonianze raccolte nel tempo dalla clinica mobile di Medici per i diritti umani (Medu). Secondo l'associazione l'85% dei migranti sbarcati in Italia e provenienti dall'Africa subsahariana ha subito in Libia torture e trattamenti inumani e degradanti. In particolare il 79% è stato trattenuto/detenuto in luoghi sovraffollati e in pessime condizioni igienico sanitarie, il 60% ha subito costanti deprivazioni di cibo, acqua e cure mediche, il 55% gravi e ripetute percosse e percentuali inferiori ma comunque rilevanti stupri, ustioni, falaka (percosse alle piante dei piedi), torture da sospensione, obbligo di assistere alla tortura o all'uccisione di altri migranti.

[However, the most delicate point remains the treatment that the Libyans reserve for migrants even in detention camps managed by the authorities for the fight against illegal immigration in Tripoli. UNHCR, IOM and Doctors Without Borders have repeatedly described the inhuman conditions in which migrants are forced to live. Yesterday the testimonies collected over time by the mobile clinic of Doctors for Human Rights (Medu) were also added. According to the association, 85% of migrants who have landed in Italy coming from sub-Saharan Africa suffered torture and inhuman and degrading treatment in Libya. In particular, 79% were held/detained in overcrowded places and in poor hygienic and sanitary conditions, 60% suffered constant deprivation of food, water and medical care, 55% serious and repeated beatings and lower but nonetheless significant percentages suffered rapes, burns, falaka (beatings on the soles of the feet), suspension torture, or obligation to witness the torture or killing of other migrants.]

The first part of this article is characterized by a frame that could be called *the search for a political solution on the Italian side*. Following the principles in Matthes (2007, 148), the variety of possible representations of the Italian government is reduced by the selection of the image of a government taken from two different angles: on the one hand looking for an improvement of the agreement with the Libyan government of Faye Al Serraj, and for this reason striving to obtain the consent of the UN,

through its representative Salamé visiting Rome (this consent, however, seems very difficult to obtain for diplomatic reasons); on the other hand, it is bound by a moral concern, that of controlling what happens to the migrants held in the Libyan detention centres, due to the polemics following the revelations of those who saw the treatment in person. In fact, in the text we read: “Ciò che invece serve a Roma è la garanzia che Unhcr e Oim sorvegliarono sulle condizioni di vita nei campi in cui finiranno i migranti una volta fermati in mare e riportati indietro” [What is needed in Rome is the guarantee that UNHCR and IOM will supervise the conditions of life in the camps where migrants will end up once stopped at sea and brought back]. The article therefore highlights the main subject of the text, the Italian government, as not in full control of the situation, not fully up to the task of safeguarding human rights, and therefore activates in the reader a feeling of concern for the victims of this incapacity, migrants. This feeling is accentuated by the second frame, which is revealed in the second part of the text and which could be defined as *atrocities suffered by migrants*. Over time, in fact, the testimonies gathered by Doctors Without Borders, International Organization for Migration, UNHCR and MEDU have increased, and according to the latter “Libya is a lager where atrocities against migrants take place, which are worthy of the worst extermination camps of the twentieth century.” The reference to the extermination camps gives consistency to this frame, which, on the basis of some testimonies, represents atrocious tortures, inhumane treatments and poor sanitary conditions in which migrants live. The description of what is reported by these testimonies not only increases the reader’s concern, but defines a situation fully controlled by the promoters of abuse and cruelty, which aims to generate indignation for the impunity of torturers in Libya and empathy for the unfortunate fate of the migrants captured during their trip to Italy and brought (or taken back) to Libya. The comparison between the two frames shows an overall vision of an Italian government prey to ineptitude, which does not know or cannot control, and at the same time of a torturing and inhuman Libya. The image of Libya as a partner which is not up to Western democracy and to the rights it guarantees also emerges from the following article, published on August 10th, entitled:

L’Unhcr: «Migranti riportati nei centri di detenzione» [The UNHCR states, “Migrants brought back to detention centres”]

«In questi centri la situazione è molto complicata», ha spiegato. «C’è un problema di sovrappollamento, c’è l’assenza di servizi medici, c’è l’assenza dei servizi igienico sanitari, ci sono problemi di sicurezza anche per donne e bambini e di fatto sono i trafficanti che tengono le persone in detenzione». In Libia ci sono circa 30 centri gestiti dal governo di Tripoli. L’Oim, l’Organizzazione internazionale per le migrazioni ha dichiarato di riuscire ad entrare solo in una ventina di essi dove ha potuto riscontrare le condizioni disumane in cui sono trattenuti i migranti. Condizioni confermate anche dall’Unhcr, che invece riesce ad svolgere dei sopralluoghi in appena 13 centri. Cresce intanto il numero delle Ong che hanno scelto di aderire al Codice di condotta del Viminale. Dopo Moas, Save the Children e Proactiva open arms, a sottoscrivere le nuove norme ieri è stata Sea Eye, mentre Sos Mediterranée starebbe trattando. Un sostegno al Codice è arrivato ieri dalla Commissione europea. Una portavoce ha definito le norme come un contributo a «fornire certezza legale» al lavoro svolto dalle organizzazioni non governative, anche se si è rifiutata di commentare la denuncia della spagnola Proactiva open arms secondo la

quale le autorità italiane hanno vietato a una sua nave lo sbarco dei migranti salvati al largo della Libia.

["In these centres the situation is very complicated," he explained. "There is a problem of overcrowding, there is the absence of medical services, there is the absence of sanitary facilities, there are also safety problems for women and children, and in fact those who keep people in detention are traffickers." In Libya there are about 30 centres managed by the government of Tripoli. The IOM, the International Organization for Migration has declared that it will be able to enter only about twenty of them where it could find the inhuman conditions in which the migrants are held. Conditions are also confirmed by the UNHCR, which however manages to carry out inspections in only 13 centres. Meanwhile, the number of NGOs that have chosen to adhere to the Viminale Code of Conduct is growing. After Moas, Save the Children and Proactiva Open Arms, Sea Eye signed up for the new rules yesterday, while Sos Méditerranée would be negotiating. Support for the Code arrived yesterday from the European Commission. A spokeswoman defined the rules as a contribution to "providing legal certainty" for the work done by non-governmental organizations, although she refused to comment on the Spanish Proactiva Open Arms complaint that the Italian authorities banned one of their ships from off-loading migrants rescued off the coast of Libya.]

A first frame characterizing this text could be defined as *Detained migrants*. The title of the article supports this interpretation and also the words of Barbara Molinaro, of the UN refugee agency, which occupy the second and third columns of the article provide information organized according to this frame: "c'è un problema di sovraffollamento, c'è l'assenza di servizi medici, c'è l'assenza dei servizi igienico-sanitari, ci sono problemi di sicurezza anche per donne e bambini e di fatto sono i trafficanti che tengono le persone in detenzione" [there is a problem of overcrowding, there is the absence of medical services, there is the absence of sanitary facilities, there are also safety problems for women and children, and in fact those who keep people in detention are traffickers], explains Molinaro. The article therefore supports an anti-governmental interpretation, because both Gentiloni and Minniti are cited as supporters of a different position: "al di là di quanto più volte promesso dal premier Paolo Gentiloni e dal ministro dell'Interno Marco Minniti, i migranti vengono ancora rinchiusi nei centri di detenzione dove subiscono maltrattamenti e violenze" [after what has been repeatedly promised by Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni and the Minister of the Interior Marco Minniti, migrants are still locked up in detention centres where they suffer ill-treatment and violence]. The situation described, using the indicative mood, designates the certainty of mistreatment, whereas the expression "detention centres," where migrants are deported by the Libyan authorities, suggests a series of inferences that leads to a representation of a stable organization supported by the Libyan government. Following the principles in Matthes (2007, 148), one could argue that the words of Barbara Molinaro select a unique explanatory principle, which prevails over other positions represented in the debate. The certainty with which the situation of the detention centres is described and negatively assessed, following the principles illustrated by Kühne (2015, 84–92), induces in the reader a feeling of sadness for the extremely difficult situation of migrants and an attitude of empathy for the inhumane difficulties they face. A second characterizing frame could be named *Problematic relationship between the government and NGOs* and concerns the second part of the article. On the one hand, it describes the underwriting by the NGOs of the code of conduct

wanted by the Minister of the Interior and on the other the difficulties of a ship of the organization Proactiva Open Arms landing rescued migrants off the Libyan coast in the Pozzallo harbour (in the text we read: “la nave, con un’avaria al motore, è riuscita ad arrivare a Pozzallo dove, non senza difficoltà da parte delle autorità italiane, ieri ha finalmente ricevuto il permesso di attraccare [...]” [the ship, with a failed engine, has managed to get to Pozzallo where, not without difficulty caused by the Italian authorities, she yesterday finally received permission to dock]. This frame selects, among the possible representations of the relationship between the Italian government and NGOs, a representation of a partially hostile attitude on the part of the government towards these organizations. In Matthes’ (2007, 148) terms the frame consistency is given by the last words of the text, those of an exponent of the Proactive organization, who defines the situation as “paradoxical” and explains that “continueremo a svolgere le nostre attività di soccorso in mare” [we will continue to carry out our activities of rescue at sea]. The representation given by these last words is that of an NGO that is determined, which holds the control of the situation and, unlike the government represented as an obstacle (at least an occasional one), is close to the migrants previously described as potential victims of Libyans detention centres and of substantial indifference by the Italian government. This proximity expressed by NGO towards refugees suggests a positive evaluation of the work of NGOs and supports an attitude of empathy towards the unfortunate events of the refugees. These misfortunes are confirmed by this article published on August 15th, entitled:

È una tregua, ripartiranno [It is a truce, they will leave again].

Tra i motivi di preoccupazione – e certo non solo per il Viminale – c’è infatti la difficoltà a capire con certezza perché, nonostante le condizioni del tempo favorevoli, improvvisamente partano meno barconi dal Paese nordafricano. Una delle ipotesi possibili è che i migranti siano rimasti bloccati da una serie di scontri armati tra le organizzazioni che gestiscono il traffico e gli uomini fedeli al governo di Tripoli, conflitti a fuoco come quelli che ci sarebbero stati nei giorni scorsi a Sabratha. Ma da alcuni giorni si parla anche di un possibile scontro tra bande rivali di trafficanti, con i migranti in mezzo nell’impossibilità di potersi muovere e fuggire. Non è escluso infine che – in vista di un futuro giro di vite – i trafficanti stiano cercando nuove rotte per far arrivare uomini, donne e bambini in Europa. Proprio ieri il ministro degli Esteri algerino, Abdelkader Messahel, ha segnalato un aumento dei flussi dal Niger verso l’Algeria. Uno o anche l’insieme di questi fattori potrebbe aver determinato da parte degli scafisti la decisione di rallentare le partenze in attesa che la situazione si stabilizzi.

[Among the reasons for concern – and certainly not only for the Interior Ministry - there is indeed difficulty in understanding with certainty why, despite the favorable weather conditions, suddenly fewer boats are leaving the North African country. One of the possible hypotheses is that the migrants were blocked by a series of armed clashes between the organizations that manage the traffic and the men loyal to the government of Tripoli, exchanges of fire like those in recent days in Sabratha. But for some days there has also been talk of a possible clash between rival gangs of traffickers, with migrants in the middle unable to move and flee. Finally, it is possible that – in view of a future crackdown – traffickers are looking for new routes to get men, women and children to Europe. Just yesterday, the Algerian Foreign Minister, Abdelkader Messahel, reported an increase in flows from Niger to Algeria. One or even all of these factors

could have led the smugglers to decide to slow down the departures while waiting for the situation to stabilize.]

The first part of the article is characterized by a frame that could be called *Inability of institutions*. This inability is attributable to the Italian government, which has the task of understanding the causes of this significant decrease and coping effectively with the needs of migrants and the Italian State. In fact, this article describes “possible hypotheses” on the reason for this decrease, and lists scenarios that kindle the concerns and compassion of the reader who is sensitive to this issue. Among the possible hypotheses are the armed clashes between the gangs of traffickers, or between them and the government of Tripoli, of which migrants could have been victims. The truce, this scarcely comprehensible decrease in the flow of migrants, is due “più a cause interne alla Libia che all’azione di contrasto messa in atto dal governo italiano” [more to internal causes in Libya than to the law enforcement action put in place by the Italian government], which therefore does not know how to operate and does not know what factors to act on. The article starts with the words of an officer of the Italian Ministry of the Interior, who says: “sappiamo che è solo una tregua, prima o poi arriverà un’altra ondata di migranti” [we know it’s just a truce, sooner or later another wave of migrants will come]. Following the principles in Matthes (2007, 148), it could be argued that the interpretative key selected by this frame is the difficulty faced by the Italian government, whereas what gives this frame its consistency is also the description of the Italian government’s diplomatic approach, which also in this way tries to find a solution to the problem of the flow of migrants. (“Nei giorni scorsi Gentiloni e la Merkel si sono sentiti più volte fino a concordare per un «approccio comune» al dossier migranti” [In the past few days, Gentiloni and Merkel have constantly been in touch to agree on a ‘common approach’ to the migrant dossier]). The words “preoccupazione”, “difficoltà a capire con certezza”, “una delle ipotesi possibili” [worry/concern; difficulty to grasp with certainty; one of possible hypotheses] induce in the reader a feeling of concern for a migratory situation which is difficult to understand and for the difficulties the Italian government is facing.

This inability to predict the trend of migratory flows aggravates the situation of migrants who need humanitarian aid, especially those who end up in Libyan detention centres. A second frame characterizing this article could in fact be entitled *Danger for migrants in Libya*. This frame is supported by a commentary on the article on the next page that contains the words of Antonio Marchesi, president of Amnesty International Italy, according to whom the issue of migrants cannot be solved by “sending people back “and according to whom it is necessary to monitor the respect of human rights by Libya. This second frame, therefore, like the first, is based on a representation, which also constitutes the definition of the problem: it is the harsh fate unjustly felt by many migrants; to give consistency to the frame, in addition to this definition, also one of the solutions proposed in the debate intervenes, that is to monitor the conditions of migrants in Libya to remove them from the guerrillas or the mistreatment of detention centres. In Kühne’s (2015, 84–92) terms the situation described includes a negative evaluation, also linked to the uncertainty of the causes that determine the temporary cessation of landings. The feeling that the article induces in the reader is therefore sadness for the probable damage to the life of migrants, for which they can hardly be

compensated. Besides this, it can be argued that the description of the possible causes of this “truce” induces in the reader a feeling of empathy for the unfortunate fate of the migrants.

6. Articles from *Il giornale*

In the newspaper *Il Giornale* from August 8th to 19th, 2017 a series of articles appeared, both as news and as commentary, which on one hand attacked the centre-left government for its constitutive indecision, and on the other appreciated the decisions of PD Minister of government Marco Minniti and the government’s agreements with Libya. On August 8th, the following article was published, whose title was:

Accoglienza, veti e dietrofront. Sindaci PD in crisi di nervi [Reception, vetoes and turnabouts. PD mayors in a nervous breakdown].

The text reports the confusion between PD mayors of Italian municipalities who, in the absence of specific directives, are moving in a politically anarchist way, not bound by a national party leadership. Here is an initial excerpt:

Facite ammuina. Sulla questione migranti nel PD sembra essere diventata regola la norma della Real Marina borbonica. Un falso storico quella, una realtà politica il «fate confusione» del partito unico di governo (un po’ terzomondista un po’ legalitario e certo di sinistra ma democratica e riformista) di fronte alla massa di disperati che arrivano dall’Africa sulle coste italiane. Così quelli a poppa vanno a prua, quelli a dritta a sinistra, quelli a sinistra a dritta. Giuseppe Falcomatà, ad esempio: sindaco di Reggio Calabria, già renziano doc: «Le comunità che ospitano i migranti vanno premiate. Per loro meno tasse», suggeriva ieri, provando a convincere la ciurma dei sindaci dem a navigare altri mari, alla caccia del tesoretto di Stato.

[Make a mess. On the question of migrants in the PD it seems to have become the rule of the Bourbon Royal Navy. A false history, that; the political reality instead is the “mess” of the single party of government, (a bit third-worldist, a bit legalistic and certainly leftist but democratic and reformist) facing the mass of desperate people arriving from Africa on the Italian coasts. So those at the stern go to bow, those to starboard to the left, those to the left to starboard. Giuseppe Falcomatà, for example, mayor of Reggio Calabria, already a certified Renzi supporter: “The communities that host the migrants must be rewarded. For them less taxes,” he suggested yesterday, trying to convince the crew of democratic mayors to sail other seas hunting for State treasure.]

The main frame of this article is clear from the title and could be called *Confusion of the ruling party in the management of migrants*. The opinions of the mayor of Reggio Calabria are not in line with the opinions of other mayors such as the mayors of Bari or Catania; specifically, the mayor of Catania declares: “Abbiamo fatto la nostra parte, ora non ce la facciamo più” [We have done our part, now we cannot do it anymore]. The article highlights the will of the majority of Italian mayors of the centre-left area, who want to block the flow of refugees and, implicitly, the contrast between this will and the voices of the centre-left, represented by the mayor of Reggio Calabria, which would like to reward an attitude that tends towards integration. On the basis of Matthes’ (2007, 148) principles, the point of view that undermines the authority of the ruling party is precisely supported by a part of the party, the non-governmental one. In this way the article selects the characteristic of the internal contradiction of the PD,

and gives consistency to its point of view, opposing the words of the mayor of Reggio Calabria to those of many other mayors, who oppose indiscriminate reception (as shown on the map published on the following page of this article). If reference is made to what has been said about the definition of post-truth in the first paragraph, the majority of the opinions of mayors elicit in the reader the opinion that it is necessary to interrupt the flow of migrants, by virtue of the fact that, as explained by the mayor of Bari in reference to reception facilities: “Se continua così non ce la facciamo. I prefetti ci devono aiutare a distribuire i profughi. I sindaci non dicono di no, ma spesso chi ne ha di più ne riceve altri” [If this continues we cannot do it. The prefects must help us distribute refugees. The mayors do not say no, but often those who have more receive more]. The feeling of these mayors and what is underlined by the text is the indignation for not being technically able to accommodate these migrants in decent conditions. The indignation appears as a constant emotional element also of other frames that are activated by other articles of this newspaper in the relevant period, as this sentiment allows the reader of the newspaper to align his/her own position with regard to the political environment as described, and stems from the negative evaluation given by journalists of this magazine to the immigration event (see Kühne 2015, 32–35). This negative assessment, supported by the opinions of most of the centre-left mayors, represents and nourishes an attitude aimed at closing borders for a large part of migrants.

This sentiment of indignation is accompanied by another sentiment in the articles of this newspaper during the period considered, namely that of concern for the “massa di disperati” [mass of desperate people] represented by migrants. Metaphors such as the one describing immigration in terms of a mass or a human tide provide a trigger for this feeling. On August 14th, *Il Giornale* publishes an article with this title:

Primo giorno «zero migranti». Così l'Italia ferma l'invasione [First day “zero migrants.” Italy thus stops the invasion].

The text of this article illustrates how, thanks to the agreement policies with Libya implemented by Minister of the Interior Marco Minniti and the restrictions imposed on the ships of NGOs, the invasion of migrants has been blocked.

Dopo Msf se ne vanno «Save the Children» e i tedeschi di «Sea Eye». E nella scia dell'abbandono resta solo la bava velenosa di Msf decisa a scaricare sul governo italiano e sulla Libia la responsabilità della propria resa. In verità se ne vanno semplicemente perché non c'è più bisogno di loro. E non ce ne sarebbe mai stato se in passato il governo avesse affrontato il dossier migranti con l'attenzione dedicatagli negli ultimi mesi dal Viminale. I dati dicono, infatti, che mai negli ultimi anni s'era registrato un agosto così avaro di sbarchi. Ieri mattina sul quadrante libico, stando a Marina Militare e Guardia Costiera, non si segnalavano né partenze, né richieste di soccorso. E non si tratta di un miracolo.

Per capirlo basta consultare il Cruscotto statistico del Ministero dell'Interno che registra i dati degli sbarchi del 2016 e del 2017. Da febbraio a giugno 2017 non c'è mese in cui gli arrivi non superino di gran lunga quelli del 2016 facendo prevedere un «annus horribilis» destinato a concludersi con oltre 200mila sbarchi. Ma a luglio, un mese in cui le partenze toccano solitamente il picco, arriva la svolta. Gli 11mila e 459 sbarchi risultano meno della metà rispetto ai 23mila e 552 del 2016.

After MSF “Save the Children” and the Germans of “Sea Eye” leave. And in the wake of the abandonment there remains only the poisonous burr of MSF determined to off-load onto the Italian government and Libya the responsibility for its own surrender. In truth, they leave simply because they are no longer needed. And they would never have been needed if in the past the government had addressed the migrant dossier with the attention given to it in the last few months by the Interior Ministry. The data, in fact, say that in the last few years there had never been an August with so few landings. Yesterday morning on the Libyan quadrant, according to the Navy and Coast Guard, there were no departures or calls for help. And it’s not a miracle.

To understand this, it is sufficient to consult the Statistical Dashboard of the Ministry of the Interior which records the data of the landings of 2016 and 2017. From February to June 2017 there is no month in which the arrivals do not exceed by far those of 2016. This forecasts an “*annus horribilis*” destined to end with over 200 thousand landings. But July, a month in which departures usually peak, is the turning point. The 11 thousand and 459 landings are less than half compared to 23 thousand and 552 in 2016.]

The frame activated by this text could be called *Stop invasion*. The title specifies that the flow of migrants constitutes “an invasion”, or as stated in the following page a “*biblico esodo africano*” [Biblical African Exodus]; these expressions, together with the numbers of landings provided for 2016, project the spectre of an uncontrollable invasion into the reader’s mind. However, the reader is also given news with a countertendency: in 2017 the landings fell sharply and Italy managed to stop the invasion. The enemies of Italy, NGOs with their ships, accomplices of this invasion, “*se ne vanno semplicemente perché non c’è più bisogno di loro*” [simply leave because they are no longer needed]. At the top of the page containing the article, a title summarizing the speeches on the subject of migrants in the August 14 issue weaves the strategic praises of the so-called “hard line” of Minister Minniti and announces that the day before, August 13, “*non sono stati registrati barconi in partenza dalle coste della Libia né richieste di soccorso*” [no boats have been registered departing from the coasts of Libya nor are there requests for assistance]. This title also attributes the merit of this result not to the government in general, but to one of its choices in particular, to “targeted funds.” The third column of the second page, in fact, states: “*l’addestramento della «nuova» guardia costiera è solo una copertura per non far capire che il lavoro sporco è stato delegato alle vecchie milizie fornendo loro soldi e mezzi*” [the training of the “new” coast guard is just a cover in order to obscure the fact that the dirty work has been delegated to the old militias by providing them with money and means]. The old militias are those to which the central Libyan government turns the funds from the Italian government.

In compenso grazie agli accordi con l’Italia - spiega una di queste fonti - il ministero degli interni di Tripoli gira mezzi e soldi a Bija e a quelli come lui che guidano le «varie» guardie costiere. L’addestramento della «nuova» guardia costiera è solo una copertura per non far capire che il lavoro sporco è stato delegato alle vecchie milizie fornendo loro soldi e mezzi. Il vostro governo ha trattato con le tribù che si sono fatte garanti con Bija e tutti i capi miliziani in grado di esercitare una certa autorità sia in mare, sia nelle zone d’influenza. E così Bija e quelli come lui si godono i fondi messi a loro disposizione e fanno il lavoro richiesto. Le famiglie di trafficanti intorno a Tripoli che non hanno accettato le offerte se la sono vista con Abdul Rauf Kara e gli uomini di Rada, la milizia islamista che fa capo al ministero dell’interno.

[On the other hand thanks to the agreements with Italy – explains one of these sources - the interior ministry of Tripoli turns over vehicles and money to Bija and to those like him who drive the “various” coast guards. The training of the “new” coast guard is only a cover to obscure the fact that the dirty work has been delegated to the old militias providing them with money and means. Your government has dealt with the tribes that have made themselves guarantors with Bija and all the militia leaders capable of exercising a certain authority both at sea and in areas of influence. And so Bija and those like him enjoy the funds made available to them and do the work required. Families of traffickers around Tripoli who have not accepted the offers have had to face it with Abdul Rauf Kara and the men of Rada, the Islamist militia headed by the interior ministry.]

Based on Matthes' (2007, 148) principles, the ambivalence of the different estimates of the number of migrants is cancelled in this frame by the presentation of a precise series of numbers; the metaphor selected to describe these numbers is that of the “invasion” which aims to alarm the reader of this newspaper, already aware of the difficulties of municipalities in accepting migrants in a dignified manner; the consistency of the frame finds its origin in a precise attribution of responsibility to the unorthodox choices of the government, which allowed blocking the invasion. The feelings of worry and indignation are accompanied in this frame by the sad observation that “dirty work” is necessary. The feeling of sadness can be defined here in Kühne's (2015, 88) terms as a sentiment triggered by a certain negative and uncontrollable or barely compensable situation. The attitude exhibited and requested in order for the reader to appreciate the political line of Minniti is that of the rejection of the mass of migrants that pours onto the Italian coasts.

Il Giornale, however, proposes again by means of other frames, activated by other articles, the attitude of closure towards migrants and more generally an attitude of closure towards political actors outside the Italian State. For example, an article published on August 17th, entitled

Minniti smaschera l'UE. «Volevano pagarci per tenerci i migranti» [Minniti unmasks the EU. “They wanted to pay us to keep migrants”]

on the one hand evokes the worrying image of migrants conceived as a human tide, as an invasion; on the other it attributes negative responsibility to the European Union, guilty of wanting to turn Italy into a lager for refugees:

Qui nel palazzone dalle cento stanze sul colle del Viminale il ministro Marco Minniti discute con un nugolo di generali, alti funzionari e capi delle forze di sicurezza mentre si divide tra riunioni e sale operative del Viminale. La sua testa è ferma a quei fatidici 27 e 28 giugno quando nell'arco di sole 48 ore ben 27 navi di tutta Europa, Ong comprese, scodellano sulle coste italiane la bellezza di 12 mila migranti. Quello è per lui il «D day», il giorno in cui comprende che l'Italia non può più sperare nella compassione dell'Ue, deve trovare da sola la soluzione. «Sapete cosa ci offrono i nostri amici di Bruxelles dopo quelle giornate tragiche e tremende? Non ci offrono soluzioni politiche, non ci tesero una mano, proposero soltanto di darci più soldi per creare nuovi hot spot». Insomma per Bruxelles l'importante non era fermare la marea di migranti che si stava scaricando sul nostro Paese ma soltanto metterli in condizione di non muoversi dal nostro Paese – fa capire il ministro. «Perché non crediate mica – rimarca Minniti – che quei soldi ci venissero offerti per far star meglio i migranti, per accudirli, per garantire la loro integrazione. No, offrendoci quei soldi ci chiedevano di creare dei centri da cui i migranti non potessero uscire. Ci proponevano di fare dei centri di internamento, cioè delle vere e proprie galere, persino per i minori non accompagnati».

[Here in the big building with a hundred rooms on the Viminale hill the minister Marco Minniti consults with a swarm of generals, senior officials and heads of the security forces while he divides his time between meetings and operations rooms of the Interior Ministry. His mind is stuck on those fateful days of June, the 27th and 28th, when in 48 hours as many as 27 ships from all across Europe, including NGOs, dished up the beauty of 12 thousand migrants on the Italian coast. That is for him “D day,” the day when he understood that Italy can no longer hope for the EU’s compassion, it must find the solution by itself. “Do you know what our friends in Brussels offered us after those tragic and terrible days? They didn’t offer us political solutions, they didn’t give us a hand, they only proposed to give us more money to create new hot spots.” In short, for Brussels the important thing was not to stop the tide of migrants that was being unloaded in our country but only to put them in a position to not move from our country—the minister makes it clear. “I say this because you should not believe—remarked Minniti—that that money was offered to us to make migrants feel better, to look after them, to guarantee their integration. No, by offering us that money they asked us to create centres from which migrants could not leave. They proposed that we should make internment centres, that is real prisons, even for unaccompanied minors.”]

A first frame is therefore that of *Petty Europe*, whereas within the latter a further frame is inserted, that of *Migrants conceived as a problem and as a human tide*. The previous 27th and 28th June migrants had been “scodellati” on the Italian coast, an implicit metaphor in the verb “scodellare” [dish up], which gives back to the reader the same feeling of simplicity with which liquid courses are dished into soup plates, thus comparing Italy to a bowl: “la sua testa è ferma a quei fatidici 27 e 28 giugno quando nell’arco di sole 48 ore ben 27 navi di tutta Europa, ONG comprese, scodellano sulle coste italiane la bellezza di 12 mila migranti” [his mind is stuck on those fateful days of June, the 27th and 28th, when in 48 hours as many as 27 ships from all across Europe, including NGOs, dished up the beauty of 12 thousand migrants on the Italian coast]. Migrants are abandoned on the Italian coast as if they were waste, but they also represent a “tide”, which cloaks the Italian coasts in an uncontrollable and potentially harmful way as the tides can do: “l’importante non era fermare la marea di migranti che si stava scaricando sul nostro Paese” [the important thing was not to stop the tide of migrants that was being unloaded in our country]. The frame of “migrants” as a dangerous mass which is difficult to manage is confirmed by the European Union’s attempt to solve the problem by convincing Italy to build “gaols.” The mean and dangerous character of the European Union is confirmed in the words that specify the concept of prison for migrants: “centri da cui i migranti non potessero uscire” [centres from which migrants could not leave]. The rest of the article lingers on the figure of Minniti as a promoter of the Italian position, even in spite of the criticism that comes from his more pro-European left-wing comrades, and as an enemy of the coalition composed of the European Union and NGOs, which manage ships that ferry refugees from Libya to the Italian coasts. The two frames here activated are aimed at provoking two different emotions: on the one hand, Europe is described as a subtle and corrupting enemy of Italy which has already tried to deceive the country, and this generates Italy’s need for “intervenire” [intervening] and “trattare da sola con la Libia” [dealing alone with Libya]: the representation of the opposition is linked to the representation of indignation, of a burst of pride: “ma i trenta denari di Bruxelles hanno anche il potere di far scattare l’orgoglio di Minniti” [but Brussels’ thirty pieces of silver also

have the power to trigger Minniti's pride], while the representation of migrants as a human tide, scattered on the Italian coast, aims to arouse concern in the reader, through the accentuation of the uncontrollable nature of a situation that the State is not able to manage. On the basis of Matthes' (2007, 148) principles, the ambivalence of the points of view is reduced by means of both frames to the exposition of Minniti's point of view; the aspects related to the conflicting interests of Italy and Europe are selected through the frame relative to Europe, and the consistency to this frame is also given by the attribution of negative responsibilities to Europe. This frame arouses indignation, because the situation described, in Kühne's (2015, 88) terms is negative, certain and potentially controllable, such as the one which would arouse the feeling of anger, but is also linked to the betrayal perpetrated by the Union against sovereignty and the interests of a member country. The further frame, the one of migrants as a human tide, aims to generate concern in the reader; a concern that is accentuated by the use of the metaphors of jail and internment centres. In this frame the predominant information of the image of this uncontrollable stream of people is selected, while the numbers of ships and migrants give consistency to this second frame, aimed at generating concern. This feeling, like sadness in Kühne's (2015, 88) perspective, is due to a negative situation, but the tidal, "biblical exodus" character to which *Il Giornale* refers, emphasizes the aspect of uncontrollability. The attitude exhibited by the article and required by the typical reader, who understands the reasoning of *Il Giornale* and embraces its point of view, is therefore of closure towards immigrants and of resentment towards the European Union.

The reference to the problem of controllability as an element that discriminates between emotions (see Kühne 2015, 86–88) is made by another article in *Il Giornale*, published on August 18th, entitled

Ora l'ONU ci fa la guerra. «No al piano sulle ONG» [Now the UN is making war on us. "No plan on NGOs"].

Gli esperti dell'Onu sparano a zero sul codice di condotta per le Ong del Viminale e accusano l'Europa e l'Italia di «violare gli standard internazionali condannando (i migranti) a violazioni dei diritti umani in Libia». Purtroppo è solo l'inizio dell'offensiva che i talebani dell'accoglienza delle Nazioni Unite vogliono scatenare contro il nostro paese. E dietro l'operazione c'è il neanche tanto tacito consenso del nuovo segretario generale dell'Onu, Antonio Guterres. Lo ha rivelato il settimanale Panorama osservando che «il governo guidato da Paolo Gentiloni è seriamente preoccupato».

[UN experts fiercely criticise the code of conduct of the Interior Ministry for NGOs and accuse Europe and Italy of "violating international standards by condemning (migrants) to suffer violations of human rights in Libya." Unfortunately it is only the beginning of the offensive that the Taliban of Acceptance of the United Nations wants to unleash against our country. And behind the operation there is the not even tacit consent of the new UN general secretary, Antonio Guterres. This was revealed by the weekly publication Panorama, noting that "the government led by Paolo Gentiloni is seriously worried."]

And,

Secondo loro la soluzione per ridurre la pressione generata dall'arrivo in Europa di migliaia di migranti «non è restringere l'accesso alle acque internazionali o sparare per

minacciare le imbarcazioni, come pare che la Libia abbia fatto ripetutamente, perché questo porterebbe più morti e va contro l'obbligo di salvare persone alla deriva».

[According to them the solution to reduce the pressure generated by the arrival of thousands of migrants in Europe “is not to restrict access to international waters or to shoot to threaten boats, as Libya seems to have done repeatedly, because this would lead to more deaths and goes against the obligation to save people adrift.”]

A first frame could be entitled *War between Italy and the UN for the control of migration*. From the title and the summary appear words such as “guerra” [war] and “contro” [against] that oppose the Italian government (and the code of conduct for NGOs drawn up under the leadership of Minister Minniti) to the United Nations (the summary of this article reads: “Le Nazioni Unite contro il protocollo Minniti. Il segretario Guterres da sempre pro-volontari” [The United Nations against the Minniti protocol. Secretary Guterres always in favour of volunteers]). The United Nations are represented as a defender of NGOs. And the negative evaluation of Italy’s international aggressors also emerges indirectly from the reference to the collaboration between Morales, UN special human rights rapporteur, and billionaire George Soros’ Open Society, sometimes mentioned in Italian television political debates as an obscure funder of the migrant ferry activities to the Italian coasts, and more generally, as a proponent of a project of capitalist globalization against the European nation states. Following Matthes’ (2007, 148) principles, the responsibility of the UN is selected as an explanatory principle of a dangerous situation; as in a previous article on the responsibilities of the European Union, *Il Giornale* points the finger at non-Italian organizations, which prevent Italy and its government from leading a hard line which is yet necessary for the country’s good and national interests. And this attribution of responsibility defines a certain, negative and potentially controllable situation, but only by a national government unbound by supranational constraints. Because of this it activates the nationalist feeling of indignation towards a supranational body that tramples the interests of Italy and tries to corrupt it. The indignation is channelled towards a non-national body, like the UN, and the attitude exhibited to and requested of the reader is that of opposition to the false and self-interested criticisms of the UN and of complementary support to Minniti’s policies.

In this text we can identify a second frame, which could be called *Migrants considered as a problem to be controlled and resolved*. This frame is also found in other texts of the newspaper *Il Giornale* analyzed in this research and is activated from the beginning of this text. Just the information above in the title activates the frame “migranti come nodo da risolvere” [migrants as a problem to solve] from the first sentences (at the top of the page of this article we read: “allarme terrorismo. Il nodo immigrazione” [terrorism alert. The immigration problem]). Immigration is a problem to be solved and can be a source of terrorism and therefore of concern. Migrants are also depicted as a source of “pressure” for Europe, and this verbal picture of the crowd is confirmed by the photographic image that is found at the end of the article and which depicts a crowd of immigrants of colour, tight against one another on a rubber boat, and equipped with lifebuoy, ready to put pressure on the Italian coast, to dock with their precarious means as if they were a tide of men flooding the coast. Based on Kühne’s (2015, 86–88) indications regarding feelings of anger and sadness, it could be said that

the sentiment conveyed by this frame originates from the representation of a situation that is difficult to control and tendentially negative, which could degenerate into an invasion, and it is therefore the feeling of concern. This sentiment is conveyed by a very similar frame, *Migrants as a human tide* activated by another article, published on August 19th, entitled:

Dalle marce al lutto. L'accoglienza per forza è un assist a chi ci odia. [From marches to mourning. The reception by force is a decisive sign for those who hate us].

The text is inspired by the massacre of August 17th, 2017 in Barcelona, when a van hurled itself against the main street of the city causing 16 deaths. This attack was organized by a jihadist cell of the self-styled Islamic state.

L'ha ripetuto Antonio Tajani presidente del Parlamento Europeo, ed è un dato evidente: la marea di profughi che abbiamo visto in questi anni affrontare i flutti non calerà dalle sue dimensioni bibliche, al contrario. In dieci anni, quando l'Egitto avrà raggiunto i 100 e la Nigeria i 400 milioni di abitanti, le folle che vorranno raggiungere le nostre città toccheranno le decine di milioni. I numeri sono e saranno alti per quanto si manipolino, e impongono una scelta, uno «screening» come quello che cercano di fare le nuove misure italiane: in Italia nel 2017 abbiamo finora 11.849 arrivi contro i 13.246 di tutto l'anno scorso, in Spagna dall'inizio del 2017 sono arrivate 8.385 persone, tre volte il numero nello stesso periodo dell'anno scorso.

[Antonio Tajani, president of the European Parliament, has repeated this, and it is an obvious fact: the tide of refugees we have seen in recent years confronting the waves will not fall from its biblical dimensions—quite the opposite. In ten years, when Egypt has reached 100 and Nigeria 400 million inhabitants, the crowds that want to reach our cities will touch the tens of millions. The numbers are and will be high no matter how much they could be manipulated, and impose a choice, a “screening” like the one the new Italian measures are trying to make: in Italy in 2017 we have so far 11,849 arrivals against the 13,246 in the whole of last year, in Spain 8,385 people have arrived since the beginning of 2017, that is three times the number as in the same period of time last year.]

In this opinion article a first frame could be identified, which is linked to the theme of *Migrants as a tide* advancing towards Italy, and a second frame linked to the *Opposition between Western cultures*, represented by Italy and Barcelona, and the *Islamic fanaticism* which grows with the increasing level of multiculturalism of Western societies. The first frame, as shown by other analyses in this same work, represents a type of frame often present in the articles of *Il Giornale*; this article plays the role of expressing the editorial line of the magazine and for this purpose draws on the metaphor of migrants as a tide, this time qualifying migrants as refugees, which emphasizes their nature as a problematic element; not only this, but the mass aspect which is difficult to manage is highlighted in its “biblical dimensions.” In short, the portrait of these “folle che vorranno raggiungere le nostre città” [crowds who will want to reach our cities] is crossed by an isotopy of semantic elements that reaffirm a worrying character, which is harbinger of anxiety for the future of these masses. These elements refer to each other in depicting a situation that requires a complete change of course, and taking up a firm stance immediately. The attitude that is required by a frame that activates the fear of invasion is that of “screening”, the inevitable selection of migrants who try to cross our borders *en masse*. In Matthes's (2007, 148) terms the

ambivalence of opinions on the theme of “migrants” is reduced by the selection of the idea that “masses” of migrants ready to invade the West are destined to increase, and the attitude, which needs to be selective, contributes to giving consistency to the frame as it is one of its key elements: the concern for the masses of migrants is exorcised through the reasonableness of a selection. Another frame activated by this article consists in the *opposition between Western culture and Islamic fanaticism*. As stated later on:

Dunque l'accoglienza che deve essere praticata secondo il senso comune deve necessariamente contenere un criterio selettivo. Questo significa razzismo? Mancanza di rispetto per la libertà di religione o di opinione? Non è così, anche se è la pretesa di chi predica l'accoglienza indiscriminata. L'Europa non ha ancora voluto capire che molti guerrieri di una guerra senza quartiere si annidano nel fanatismo religioso islamico, e che esso è cresciuto parallelamente alla nostra scelta di una società multiculturale. Ma i fanatici non saranno mai conquistati dalla gentilezza di chi li vuole pacificare, dalle braccia aperte dell'accoglienza. Verificare l'identità di chi entra, selezionarla secondo criteri di sicurezza non ha nulla a che fare con il dovere morale di salvare le persone in pericolo.

[Therefore the reception that must be practiced according to common sense must necessarily contain a selective criterion. Does this mean racism? Lack of respect for freedom of religion or opinion? This is not the case, even if it is the claim of those who preach indiscriminate reception. Europe has not yet wanted to understand that many warriors of a relentless war are lurking in Islamic religious fanaticism, and that it has grown in parallel with our choice of a multicultural society. But the fanatics will never be conquered by the kindness of those who want to pacify them with the open arms of welcome. Checking the identity of those who enter, selecting them according to safety criteria, has nothing to do with the moral duty to save people in danger.]

In this article, on the one hand, Christian civilization is portrayed, which even when it was the engine of the ambitions of expansion of the West, represented a salvific and profitable civilization even for those to whom it was brought (“beh, intanto va ricordato che il cristianesimo fu responsabile del tentativo di quegli uomini e di quel tempo di imporre una civiltà ritenuta salvifica oltre che redditizia”) [well, in the meantime it must be remembered that Christianity was responsible for the attempt of those men and of that time to impose a civilization deemed salvific as well as profitable] and, on the other, the Islamic civilization is depicted as a bearer of terrorism and terrorist fanaticism. By virtue of this difference, the author of this article says, they cannot be mixed in a melting-pot without respect to different cultures and traditions, but narrow mesh filters are necessary to select the migrants who enter Italy and generally Western countries like Spain. According to Matthes' (2007, 148) principles, the ambivalence of the debate on the comparison and synthesis between Western and extremist Islamic civilization is resolved in the selection of the principle of confrontation, which establishes the moral quality of the former; frame consistency is given by the memory of the victims of Islamic religious fanaticism in Europe. According to Kuhne's (2015, 88) theoretical directions, one could say that this article elicits not only a feeling of indignation for the treatment given to a too generous Occident, but also of concern, because the mass of immigrants, which is difficult to control, can hide potential terrorists within it. These two ways of thinking confirm the attitude exhibited also within the

first frame of the article, which is that of rejecting the mass of immigrants as a human tide.

7. Conclusions

The frames activated by the articles of the two newspapers analyzed here display common elements and can be traced back to two macro-types.

The first group of frames analyzed here is the one that characterizes *Il Manifesto*. This macrotype of frames is united by a definition of the problem, an attribution of responsibility and a possible solution. The problem, in this first case, does not concern a possible invasion (as shown in the articles of *Il Giornale*), but the miserable conditions of migrants looking for a better life. To underline the nature of this problem *Il Manifesto* provides the lists and descriptions of the torture and the sanitary conditions which these people experience in Libya. In the articles of *Il Manifesto* considered here, the responsibility for this situation is not attributed to non-national institutions, but to the confusion and policies of the Italian government and not only the Italian government; it is indeed the entire Western political-economic system that is brought into play as the cause of these unfortunate migrations. The solution to this problem is identified in the change of that political and economic system that causes misery in developing countries and which forces migrants to move towards Europe. In order to change the economic system, politics, according to the *Manifesto* macroframe, must play a central role again in the social and cultural debate and must address the issue of the redistribution of income, labour and wealth. The articles of the *Manifesto* do not emphasize the problem of the controllability of flows, but rather that of the possibility of change. This focus has the potential to generate on the one hand a feeling of sadness for the existing situation, but on the other hand an attitude of openness to possible change. The reference to the misfortunes of migrants, together with the negative evaluation of their fate and their status as victims of the political-economic system, can induce a feeling of empathy in the reader. The focus on an alternative political and economic scenario appeals to the reader, so that s/he adheres to a different project of society and then opens him/herself to other subjects and their traumatic experiences.

The second group of frames analyzed here is the one that characterizes *Il Giornale*. This macrotype provides a definition of the problem, which focuses on one aspect of the social developments: migrants constitute a mass. The metaphors of the “tide” and the “biblical exodus” describe the destructive potential of these people. These metaphors activate a disturbing representation of the problem. In addition, the worrying nature of this problem is reinforced, in this macro-frame, by the attribution of possible responsibilities to non-national institutions, such as the European Union, the UN, NGOs. On the other hand, the solution advocated by this kind of frames provides support for the choices of the national government and Minister Minniti, aimed at controlling flows and strengthening borders. This macro-frame is therefore united by a definition of the problem, by an attribution of possible responsibilities and solutions. Hence, in the articles of *Il Giornale*, the proposed solution is positively evaluated and the factors that hinder the realization of this solution are negatively evaluated: the European Union, the UN, those who want to abandon the mayors in the management

of an uncontrolled mass of migrants, NGOs. These evaluations require greater control of borders, and the problem of controllability is central to the definition of emotions (see Section 2.2). An absence of controllability can generate a feeling of concern, and the recognition of enemies who would like to diminish Italy's ability to control can lead to indignation in the reader of this newspaper. To increase the controllability of the borders, the migrant flow and the enemies' action, therefore, a suspicious, closed attitude is required.

These two macro-frames focus on different aspects of the same reality. The focus on these aspects invites the reader to make certain elaborations of the information communicated: in the articles of *Il Giornale* considered here, the mass, the "tide" of migrants is difficult to control and puts at risk the common good constituted by the boundaries and resources available for the well-being of the population. This emphasis is an interpretative model for the reader, to which s/he may have recourse to construct certain representations of the problem and thus access certain emotions, such as anxiety about a potentially dangerous situation and indignation for the behaviour of those who plot behind the backs of Italians and abuse their good faith. The post-truth discursive regime, as we said, accentuates this emphasis on emotions and could therefore facilitate the construction of a newspaper-reader relationship focused on these emotions.

A mirroring discourse can be made about the articles of *Il Manifesto*. The focus on the miserable conditions in which migrants are living, portrayed in their condition as victims of an unjust system that forces them to abandon their land in search of fortune in Europe, induces feelings of sadness and empathy; these feelings—in a post-truth discursive regime—could help define an interpretative scheme for the reader of this newspaper, so that s/he focuses his/her own attention on the fate of migrants and on possible changes in the political-economic system.

Notes

1. The site can be found here: <https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016> Accessed August 19, 2019.
2. Source for this information: source: www.corriere.it Accessed August 19, 2019.
3. Source: <https://adnkronos.com> Accessed August 19, 2019.
4. Source: <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia> Accessed August 19, 2019.

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