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## Social Media Society and Law during the Migrant Crisis: three cases from the Italian experience.

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Master Thesis (SOLM12)  
Spring 2021

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## **Abstract**

This thesis aims starting from the Branco-Shatz submission aims to analyze the influence of social media in the Legal framework during the migration crisis in Italy through quantitative methods such as data scraping from the comments present in Facebook in public news agencies posts as well as word counting of both the legislation and the comments before mentioned. On top of that, qualitative methods is used in order to understand and interpret the context as well as the conclusions given by the quantitative data. After the utilization of such methods, it emerged that the Italian narrative in social media and legislation seems to collide, first in depicting the migrants as an economical threat , and secondly criminalize them. In both cases a clear dehumanization of the individual is achieved.

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## Chapter 1: introduction and aim of the thesis

### 1. Introduction

“...Once they left their homeland, they remained homeless, once they left their state, they became stateless; once they were deprived of their human rights, they were rightless, the scum of the earth”<sup>1</sup>. This gloomy sentence marks the beginning as the main idea contained in the document presented by the two lawyers Omer Shatz and Juan Branco to the international court of criminal justice, which claims the possibility that EU migration policies during the decade 2012-2019 (especially the Italian ones), had generated a series of human right violations through media. As reported by the two lawyers:

*"The category of 'migrants' has been created to be categorically attacked. Indeed, discursive reification often precedes the commission of mass crimes. [...] This regrouping to a single semantic category over the years has created a catch-all terminology that allows for widespread and systematic persecution policies against this particularly vulnerable group of millions of civilians."*<sup>2</sup>

Two central components of the accusation are part of the innovative point of view that the document highlights: the inherent process of problematization that had been applied to the refugees through the media and the “reification” of them that comes as a result, and secondly the creation of harsher policies towards such category.

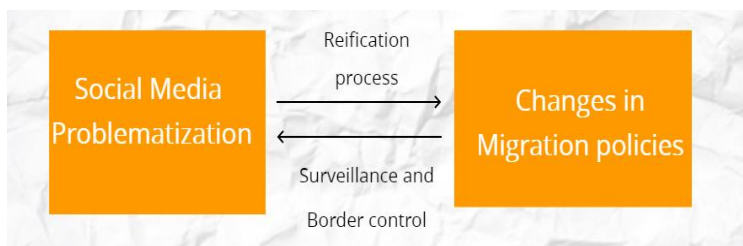


Figure 1. Scheme representing the "Branco-Shatz Equilibrium".

<sup>1</sup> ARENDT, Hannah. The origins of totalitarianism. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1973.

<sup>2</sup> THOMAS-DAVIS, Maya; SHATZ, Omer. EU & Libya: an interview with Omer Shatz. Socialist Lawyer, 2020, 85: 14-17.

## 2. The Hypothesis

As said before in the Branco-Shatz submission to ICC has a clear hypothesis: the possibility of social media to be able to influence the legal framework outside of them regarding relevant topics they aim to represent. Such connection between media problematization and legal policies is described as an equilibrium able to be used in order to commit human rights breaches and could drive three different sides of analysis:

- a. Methodological: the entire process described by Branco and Shatz indeed could be used as a *road map* to analyze a particular event as the origin of legal and political choices. The first layer is represented by the depiction of the problem by the media and the reaction towards it within the social population took under consideration, therefore a deep analysis of how and why such an issue is depicted as a problem. Secondly, such methodology would aim to transfer the analysis to the legal infrastructure that surrounds such problematization and therefore searching the legal changes that happened during the time. It represents in this way a qualitative analysis that aims to analyze how a particular social fact is depicted, and on a second level to connect such representation through media with political and legal choices.
- b. Theoretical: from a theoretical point of view, it relates to a series of philosophical ideas. Such is the importance given to the media depiction, which resembles the Baudrillard's concept of "*hyperreality*". Secondly the implementation of surveillance seems to refer to the Foucauldian idea of "*panopticon*". Post-modernist sociological views seems to be reflected in the submission and in the suggested methodology.
- c. Socio-legal: the previous methodological and theoretical perspective leads to the possibility of a legal system influenced by society itself,

therefore entering the realm of Sociology of Law. This socio-legal perspective could be found in the concept of “*living law*”, the possibility of a social world that can influence the legal world (theories of Ehrlich as well as the ones of Petrazyki).

### **3. Definitions**

#### *a. Migrants*

The term migrant is referred by the two lawyers in relation to the route between northern Africa and Italy throughout the *European migrant crisis* (therefore what is called *the Mediterranean route*). In this way during this thesis, I would reference as “*migrants*” the set people that had crossed the Mediterranean Sea from 2011 to 2018, normally coming from Northern Africa and a fewer percentage from Middle East.

#### *b. Media Depiction (Hyperreality):*

Media are central in the submission as a power able to influence the public opinion to harsher policies, and therefore to *dehumanize* the migrants (*see next term “reification”*). For media depiction Branco and Shatz seems to refer to any news, debate or any literal report by any public media to the public about the crisis. For the sake of this thesis, I have limited the research to the social media, and specially on Facebook as reported above, due to the fact of the high presence of political and news figure on the platform in the Italian societies during those years. The *depiction* would be any news that had spread through such social media and the discourse that raises around and from it.

#### *c. Reification:*

In the submission it is described as the dehumanization of the social body of the migrants, that would therefore enhance the possibility of legal solutions which are dehumanizing too. The concept of such *reification-dehumanization* is utilized even by Arcimaviciene in relation to the migrants from the eastern route and described as the

passage from commodification to then criminalization and dehumanization of the “*others*”. These two definitions could be put together for the scope of this thesis so that *reification* would be here referred as the progressive evolution of the above described depiction that led to a loss of human traits by the depicted. This as reported could be done through the representation of the human being as a commodity (commodification) or as violent criminal\beast (criminalization).

#### **4. Scope of the thesis**

The existence of such hypothesis is interesting for the scientific process due to the possible changes in the legal order surrounding the depiction given by such new media. The aim of the thesis shall be focused on putting into practice such hypothetical relation through quantitative data, as the reality of social media in this case could for the first time give a series of factual evidence related to the *depiction* and the social discourse that underlies it. To narrow down the spatial field of research, Italy was chosen as its controversial history regarding migration and migrants' assistance is central in the submission (and therefore is pointed as one of the main proofs of the existence of the mechanism described above), as well as one of the first to have a polarized debate on the matter through social media (Facebook).

## Chapter 2: Previous research and theoretical horizons

### 1. Previous Research

In academia the reality and complexity of migratory phenomena had been investigated several times, even in its connection with media and metaphors that are used. A historical catalog is offered by Jahoda<sup>3</sup>, who examined the many ways in which ethnic and racial others have been represented, both in popular culture and in scholarship, as barbarians who lack culture, self-restraint, moral sensibility, and cognitive capacity. O'Brien<sup>4</sup> is another example in academia that focuses on the degrading use of organism, object, natural catastrophe/war, and animal metaphors in the 1900s in the U.S. immigration restriction debate that both dehumanized migrants and portrayed them as a threat to social functioning. Santa Ana<sup>5</sup> then studied the dehumanizing use of metaphor in the Los Angeles Times in the 1990s and discusses how political policies and the electorate's responses are shaped by public discourse too. Similarly, Schiller<sup>6</sup> argues that the bounded perception of migration leads to the container approach in society and public policy of exclusion. A recent study by Musolff<sup>7</sup> then, shows how dehumanizing metaphors, in particular parasite metaphors, are used in weblogs and discussion *fora* and mainstream newspaper coverage with a high degree of deliberateness. Finally, it cannot be avoided the work of Arcimaviciene, which was published in 2018 and therefore is one of the most recent in the field of inquisition about media depiction of migrants and how such depiction works on society. Through the quantitative analysis of the number of metaphors from 57 media articles

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<sup>3</sup> JAHODA, Gustav. *Images of Savages: Ancient roots of modern prejudice in Western culture*. Routledge, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> O'Brien, *Indigestible Food, Conquering Hordes, and Waste Materials: Metaphors of Immigrants and the Early Immigration Restriction Debate in the United States*, *Metaphor and Symbol* Vol.18,2003.

<sup>5</sup> SANTA ANA, Otto. *Brown tide rising: Metaphors of Latinos in contemporary American public discourse*. University of Texas Press, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> SCHILLER, Nina Glick. *A global perspective on transnational migration: Theorizing migration without methodological nationalism*. Center on Migration, Policy, and Society, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> MUSOLFF, Andreas. *Dehumanizing metaphors in UK immigrant debates in the press and online media*. *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict*, 2015, 3.1: 41-56.

Arcimaviciene<sup>8</sup> pointed out in his study how the comparison of words related to trade and exchange to the migrants would have generated on mainstream media the idea of commodification of them through a form of dehumanization, reached using what the authors call metaphors (and as an example, they quote the *Us/them* narrative). This evolution pointed out in the media by Arcimaviciene deeply connects with the idea of the progressive representation of the “*other*” as an object without human connotation.

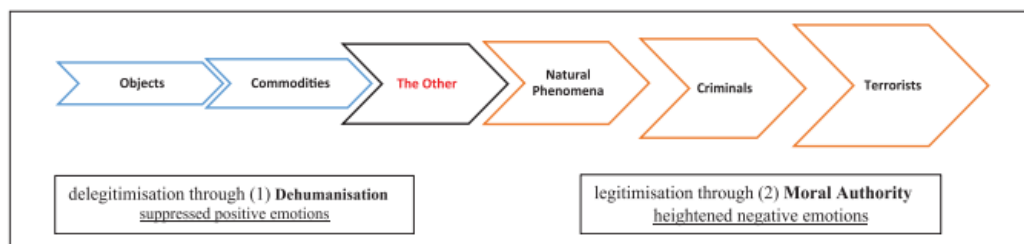


Figure 6. The evolution of the definition and dehumanization of the Migrants in the Greek-Turkish border as reported by Arcimaviciene.

## 2. Theoretical horizons

### a. Social Media Society – The Postmodernist Take

It is no wonder that many of the previous research had analyzed the utilization by the media of discourse and narratives, revealing the possibility of a *media-based society*. This concept is deeply grounded in post-modernist theory and thinkers such as Baudrillard and Lyotard. The latter indeed in his work “*The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*” argues as reported by Gane that:

*“[...] not only is knowledge translated into information, but this information is reduced to 'bits' that are easy to send, receive, and this process. The result of this is that 'knowledge ceases to be an end in itself, it loses its 'use-value' (Lyotard 1984: 5). For,*

<sup>8</sup> ARCIMAVICIENE, Liudmila; BAGLAMA, Sercan Hamza. Migration, metaphor and myth in media representations: The ideological dichotomy of “them” and “us”. Sage Open, 2018, 8.2: 2158244018768657.



*to politicize McLuhan's famous dictum, the medium of commodity exchange becomes more important than the content of what is being exchanged."*<sup>9</sup>

In this way the intrinsic value of knowledge, or the amount of truth that any "bit" would carry, loses its importance while the speed with which is passed through "users" of the media became to mean to evaluate its truth: it is not true what brings knowledge, but what is shared by the many as truth, and higher is the number of shares, higher the "truthfulness"<sup>10</sup>. This interpretation of Lyotard seems to reflect the Baudrillard juxtaposition of 'representation' with 'simulation' as processes for the creation of the social world. Baudrillard explains the difference between the two as follows:

*"Representation starts from the principle that the sign and the real are equivalent (even if the equivalence is Utopian, it is a fundamental axiom). Conversely, simulation starts from the Utopia of this principle of equivalence, from the radical negation of the sign as value."*<sup>11</sup>

In this way media images dominate and distort any perception of the world to the extent it becomes difficult to distinguish between media images and reality. The term *Hyperreality* defines such world in which media images are seen as reality. Both concepts ("media society" and "hyper-reality"), would be applied in this thesis to the contemporary existence of social media and the representation that they apply towards any fact around them. Indeed since 2000 authors such as Levinson had revised the XX century thoughts in the light of the so-called "new-new media"<sup>12</sup>, such as YouTube, Facebook, and other social media that are organized through an algorithm. The ideas of Baudrillard had been then indeed declined in regard to such platforms (and

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<sup>9</sup> GANE, Nicholas. Computerized capitalism: the media theory of Jean-Francois Lyotard. *Information Communication & Society*, 2003, 6.3: 430-450.

<sup>10</sup> This represent in Gane's view the main critique to the post-truth: it is commodified as a good and has a value in connection to how many had decided to share and its possibility to be shared in a quick and easy way.

<sup>11</sup> BAUDRILLARD, Jean. The precession of simulacra. *Media and cultural studies: Keywords*, 2001, 451-475.

<sup>12</sup> LEVINSON, Paul. *New new media*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2009.

algorithms) especially through the works of Lovink<sup>13</sup>, Morris<sup>14</sup> (That investigates the relation between simulacra and the fake news epidemic), and Reveley<sup>15</sup> (That gives to its analysis a more Marxist perspective through the use of the alienation concept). In the same way, Gane<sup>16</sup> in 2003, described the computerized society and the relevance of the “*inhuman*” system that such an algorithmic society was creating. In this way the concept of the rising of a media society as put by Baudrillard and Lyotard could give me insight into a problematic structure that was still developing during their time and would be relevant to the thesis to notice if such depiction’s discourse and language had spilled over to the legal world.

*b. Surveillance state, Law and social media society*

Surveillance Studies, a combination of the mainstream liberal sociological approach of Rule<sup>17</sup> via Giddens<sup>18</sup>, following Zuboff<sup>19</sup> and Gary Marx<sup>20</sup>, with a Foucauldian perspective, is the second theoretical landscape to take under consideration. As said by the French philosopher Foucault:

*"Power not only did not hesitate to exert itself directly on bodies but was exalted and strengthened by its visible manifestations"*<sup>21</sup>.

A change into this ‘*light*’ power as opposed to the ‘*heavy*’ power of the monarch's dungeon, can be detected in the architecture of the panopticon as imagined by Bentham,

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<sup>13</sup> LOVINK, Geert. What is the social in social media?. E-flux Journal, 2012, 40.12: 2012.

<sup>14</sup> MORRIS, James. Simulacra in the Age of Social Media: Baudrillard as the Prophet of Fake News. Journal of Communication Inquiry, 2020, 0196859920977154.

<sup>15</sup> REVELEY, James. Understanding social media use as alienation: A review and critique. E-Learning and Digital Media, 2013, 10.1: 83-94.

<sup>16</sup> GANE, Nicholas. Computerized capitalism: the media theory of Jean-Francois Lyotard. Information Communication & Society, 2003, 6.3: 430-450.

<sup>17</sup> RULE, James B. Social control, and modern social structure. The surveillance studies reader, 2007, 19-27.

<sup>18</sup> GIDDENS, Anthony. Time, space, and regionalization. In: Social relations and spatial structures. Palgrave, London, 1985. p. 265-295.

<sup>19</sup> ZUBOFF, Shoshana. The White-Collar Body in History. In: Rise of the Knowledge Worker. Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998. p. 199-219.

<sup>20</sup> MARX, Gary T. Undercover: police surveillance in America. Univ of California Press, 1988.

<sup>21</sup> FOUCAULT, Michel. Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison. Duke University Press, 2007.

in which every inmate is spied by an unseen eye, that allows having a complete vision of what every inmate is doing as the prisoner, by watching himself, becomes the principle of his subjection. In academia, the concepts of Foucauldian surveillance had been declined in the new technologies from a "mode of ordering" as reported by Law<sup>22</sup> to an ever-flowing through cyberspace, as stated by Romein and Schuilenburg<sup>23</sup>, as well as in the idea of "Black Box Societies" developed by Frank Pasquale<sup>24</sup>, for which the use of hidden algorithms not only is biased but could even dictate the rules of the real-world society<sup>25</sup>, having more decision power than the human consumer or agent. Another development of surveillance theory is the one related to what used to be the "Global South", focusing on border control and migration policies: examples are Jensen<sup>26</sup>, Walters<sup>27</sup> and Topak<sup>28</sup>, which would focus on a concept such as border control as well as bio-politics to develop them in the present era and present technologies for facing borders issues. These studies reveal the political and more critical aspect of media and other instrument of direct surveillance in describing the interaction with migrants from other states, and are important in the light of this thesis.

### 3. The gap in the research and main objective of the thesis

As it could be seen previous research had shown the demarcation, or the narratives that operate in the borders and even the surveillance that is empowered through it. However what lacks in such studies, that many times are based on discourse or metaphor analysis, is any inquiry regarding state policies containing any reference to the

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<sup>22</sup> LAW, John. Notes on the theory of the actor-network: Ordering, strategy, and heterogeneity. *Systems practice*, 1992, 5.4: 379-393.

<sup>23</sup> ROMEIN, Ed; SCHUILENBURG, Marc. Are you on the fast track? The rise of surveillant assemblages in a post-industrial age. *Architectural Theory Review*, 2008, 13.3: 337-348.

<sup>24</sup> PASQUALE, Frank. *The black box society*. Harvard University Press, 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Using the terms of Habermas we could say that the technological world and its rule could go beyond the limit of its own spaces, and being able to enter inside what is beyond such boundaries, the *Lebenswelt*, the world of life, or the social world that is outside the social media.

<sup>26</sup> JENSEN, Ole B. New 'Foucauldian Boomerangs': Drones and Urban Surveillance. *Surveillance & Society*, 2016, 14.1: 20-33.

<sup>27</sup> WALTERS, William. Foucault and Frontiers. *Governmentality: Current issues and future challenges*, 2010, 138-164.

<sup>28</sup> TOPAK, Özgün E. The biopolitical border in practice: surveillance and death at the Greece-Turkey border zones. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 2014, 32.5: 815-833.

dehumanizing discourse considered. This particular side of the analysis (the connection between media and legal world) is at the core of my thesis and aims not only to prove the existence of concepts such as dehumanization / reification and hyperreality, but even the possible implementation of such vision through surveillance and the legal order surrounding it.

## **5. Research questions**

From what has been described above the main questions I would aim to answer with the thesis are as follows:

- *Main Research Question:*
  - Was there an influence in Italian Migration policies by social media from 2011 to 2019?
  
- *Sub-questions:*
  - What could data report about the problematization of the "Migrant Crisis"? does it interact in any way with the migratory policy of the time?
  - Could then an analysis of the data that we could acquire from the legal changes and the social media discourse prove any relation between them?

## Chapter 3: Methodological Overview

### 1. Quantitative Methods

The first step to take is to notice when the public was moved to interest during the decade regarding the migrant situation. In order to do so a set of words in Italian would be put in *Google Trends* in order to find out any spike of interest during the decade I took under consideration. After having done so I will obtain a precise indication of the moments in history in which the interest spiked. This would lead me to identify events that had shaped the interest of public opinion and divide the interest rate in different phases. After that I would take it as a reference such events in order to have a timeline and proceed to Data scrape the posts of the 10 most read newspaper in Italy during that time. Precisely the source of the posts were the journals: *Liberio*, *Il Giornale*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, *Ansa*, *La Stampa*, *Il Sole 24 Ore*, *La Repubblica*. Through the utilization of software like Face Pager (that works specifically for Facebook platforms), it could then be categorized and stored the amount of reaction and opinion that would raise from a particular post that such major news agency or media had developed. I have therefore created a series of databases with all the posts present on the news agency page from 2012 to 2019, and then scrutinized the whole of

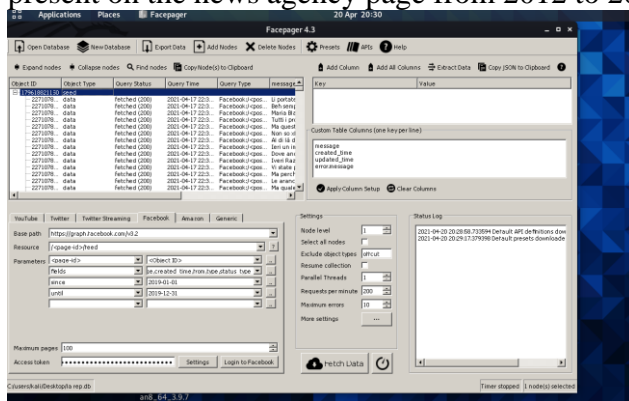


Figure 2. Data Scraping through Facepager app

them selecting just the posts and newsfeed that were referencing migration in any way possible. After that the comments and reactions of the social media public to such marked post was divided by year. Crossing such databases with the data about the spark that had indicated me the specific cases that

had raised the interest, I could not only understand when these cases happen, but even having the comments of the public in reaction to the news regarding such events. Then

it would be necessary to proceed to word counting, to know the amount of time particular concepts and words were utilized in the contest of comments, that therefore would give us a set of most utilized words. A second part of the research would then be to put any legal intervention in the Italian Migration law on a timeline and proceed in the same way utilizing a word counting software. In this way, we would have the same word-counting data for the legal texts, which could be crossed with the ones related to social media reactions. For doing so the data shall be put in comparison creating a first ax "x" that is the one with the number of times the word had been repeated, and a second one (ax y) which reports about the amount of time the word had been used divided by the whole amount of the words in the text. In this way, we would be able to proceed in a cluster analysis of the groups of words that had been used both in the legal texts and in the Facebook comments to the news, which would aim to evidence any other relationship between the two groups of wordcount data.

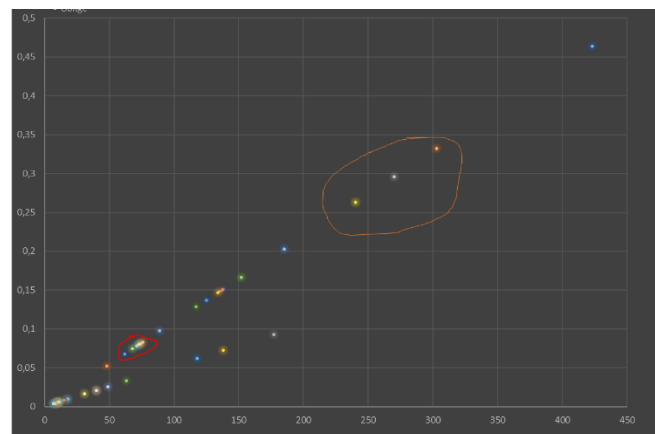


Figure 4. Example of Cluster analysis

## 2. Qualitative Methods

The aim of the qualitative analysis of the empirical and quantitative data is to have a detailed idea of the problematization of the migrant crisis in Italy from the perspective of the legal documents and laws as well as the media and social depiction of the problem. from a Foucault perspective *“thinking problematically”*<sup>29</sup> is the method where the point of analysis is not to look for the one correct response to an issue but to examine how it is *“questioned, analyzed, classified and regulated”* at *“specific times and under specific circumstances”*<sup>30</sup>. In this way, problematization captures a two-

<sup>29</sup> FOUCAULT, Michel. Security, territory, population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78. Springer, 2007.

<sup>30</sup> DEACON, Roger. Theory as practice: Foucault's concept of problematization. Telos , 2000, 2000, 118: 127-142.

stage process including “*how and why certain things (behavior, phenomena, processes) become a problem*” and how they are shaped as particular objects for thought. For achieving such result of a comprehensive view of the problematization on the different layers of the research it would be necessary to utilize DEA (Discourse-Ethnographic Approach), which, starting from the sociological school of the historical method of criticism of discourse promoted by Wodak<sup>31</sup>, organized the investigation on macro and micro levels and therefore balancing the use of ethnographic methods with critical discourse studies. This approach assumes, on the one hand, the idea of an ethnography that is not only fieldwork or data collection but “*a complex, situated and ordered though not necessarily linear research process*”, and on the other hand sees the CDA as “*a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation (s), institution (s) and social structure (s), which frame it*”<sup>32</sup>. Utilizing DEA in the cases we would analyze means therefore to analyze the singular case in the light of the social changes that happened during that time and the relations between power structures and society that happened inside and outside online spaces.

### **3. Ethical Considerations**

To avoid performing any breach on the privacy issue of any accounts that were expressing an opinion on the topic, I have decided to limit my research on the public posts by the journals as well as much more on the words used on the comments replying that posts, regardless of the accounts that were saying them (that left no trace of their name in my data collection, therefore annihilating the possibility of any breach of their anonymity). As we are analyzing public posts, on public pages and comments on them, such comments are not covered by the right of secrecy that could happen for example when data scraping private groups.

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<sup>31</sup> WODAK, Ruth. The discourse-historical approach. *Methods of critical discourse analysis*, 2001, 1: 63-94.

<sup>32</sup> WODAK, Ruth; SAVSKI, Kristof. Critical discourse-ethnographic approaches to language policy. *The Oxford handbook of language policy and planning*, 2018, 93-112.

## Chapter 4: The Stages of the Crisis

### 1. Trends on Google searches and social media

Starting from the trends on Google Trends, which reports about the google search in a determinate period in a determinate country, regarding terms such as “*Sbarchi*” (“Arrivals”), “*Immigrazione*” (“Immigration”) and “*Migranti*” (“Migrants”) a peculiar pattern could be noticed:

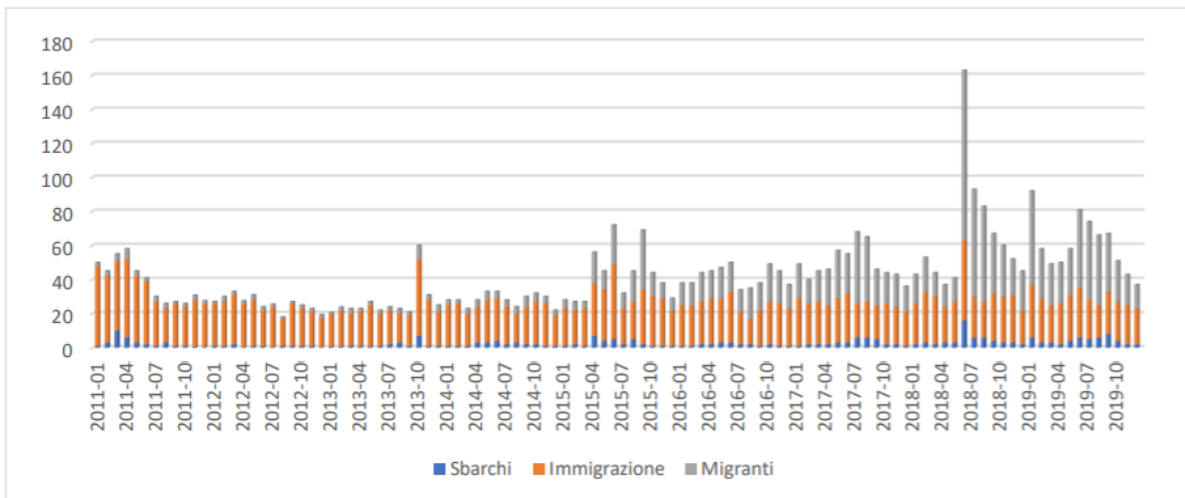


Table 1 Italian Google terms related to Migrant crisis researched from 2011-2019

As it could be seen we have a spike of interest in 2013, one in 2015 and 2017, and finally a strong raising in 2018 and 2019. In this way three different stages seem to emerge from the data of the google searches:

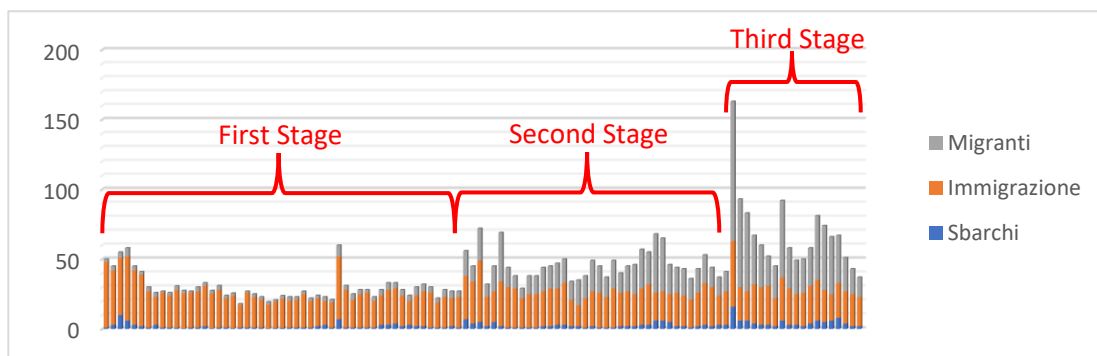


Table 2 Definition of the different stages from Table 1.



It could be seen that a first stage, in which the interest is relatively low (with some spikes of interest during 2013), goes from 2012 to 2015; a second stage from 2015 to early 2018, seems to suggest a rising in the interest of the terms and the issues, while in 2018 and 2019 we witness a huge rise in interest and research. As it could be seen in table 3, five cases (the arrival of Migrants in Lampedusa in 2011, the shipwreck of 2013, the "Aquarius case", and finally the "Sea-watch 3 " case), correspond to the spikes of interest in the previous table 2, demonstrating that such cases are the divide that had led to the rising of importance during the time.

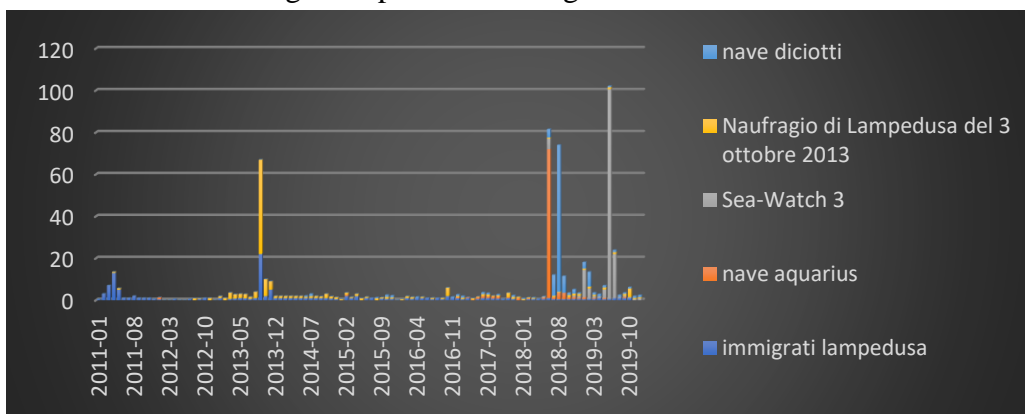


Table 3 Google trends of search terms related to five cases.

## 2. The Legal Changes per year

Another component to keep under consideration is the legal changes that had happened during those years, to notice if there is any connection between the two sides of our research. For having reliable data about those, I have proceeded to check on the *Normattiva* site, which is the database of the Italian government where any changes to the legislation are uploaded (and with them the full extent of the law text). Therefore, it had been searched any approved law that had any mention of the same words used for searching the google trends (such are "immigrazione", "migrant" and "sbarchi"). As it could be seen in Table 4 the division in three stages seems to be followed: indeed, it

could be seen the first stage with a spike in 2013, then a fall of interest during 2014, a rising trend from 2015 to 2018, and finally a strong interest spike in 2018 and 2019.

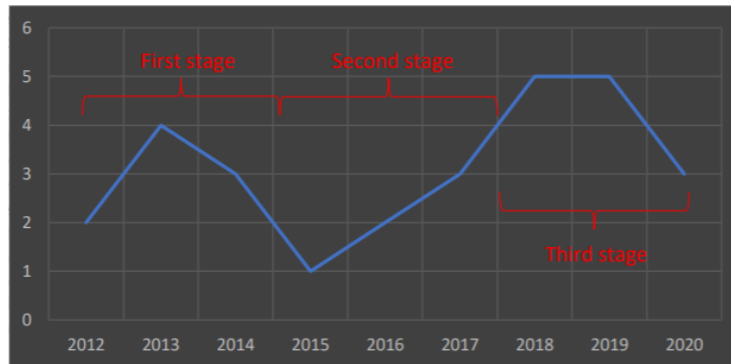


Table 4. Legal changes in Migration policies during the years 2012-2019

### 3. Conclusions

From what had been seen before we have a clear connection between the two graphs, where the spike of interest and the change in legislation goes hand by hand in time with the relevance in the public debate of the immigration matters. A timeline had emerged, that could define the stages of the problematization as well as indicate the cases that had relevance in leading the changes, and therefore we could pick them for having the possibility of analyzing the social media narrative and comparing with the legal changes that happened in that years. To do so, it would be necessary to go deeper in the analysis on the beginning of the crisis when the interest was still low and then confront it with the later stages in which instead the interest has sparked.

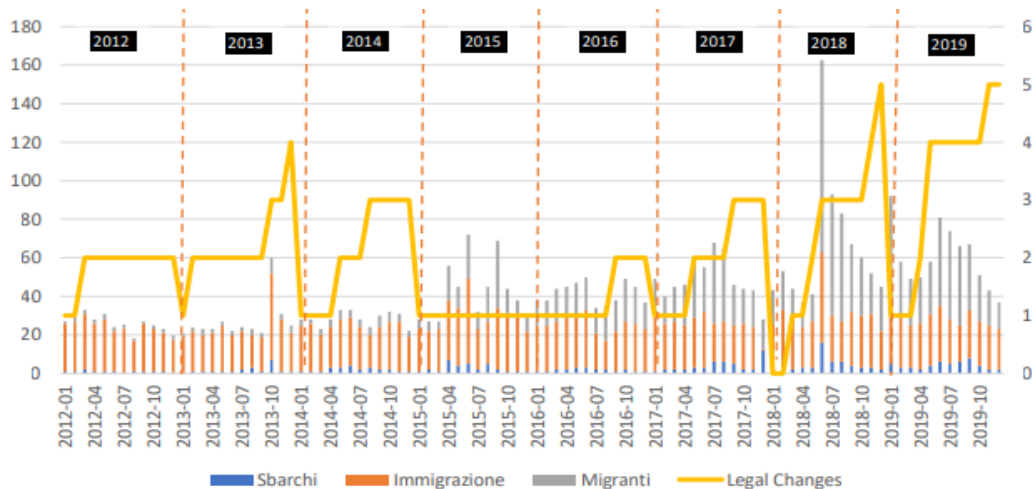


Table 5. Legal changes and Google terms during the years 2012-2019

## Chapter 5: Quantitative analysis in the stages of the crisis

### 1. Historical-legal background

#### a. Early stage of the Crisis

##### i. *Pre-2013 migrations*

Lampedusa, as an Italian island close to the African coastline, was the epicenter of the migrant routes that aim to cross the Mediterranean Sea and in March of 2011, the Italian government started to work on a plan for the redistribution of the new arrivals, for which three different camps were built near military airports, as it was thought to send back the arrived people to the Tunisian coasts where they have started their voyage<sup>33</sup>. The following years reported contrast between the different states of the European Union regarding the necessity of redistribution of the arrivals, as well as a need for reorganization plan while the whole of the agreements that created ties between the Italian government and the North-Africans one (such as Libya), were falling apart<sup>34</sup>. At that time, due to the economic crisis that was striking in the Western world since 2008-2009, regulation of migration had become central, strengthening the path already taken in 2002 with the Bossi-Fini Law (L.n. 189/2002)<sup>35</sup>. The connection between economic crisis and immigration was attested before the first stages of the crisis (especially before 2013, that we pointed as the main event that triggered deeper legislation of the matter in the first stage), and that is attested by the strengthened of the policies through “security package” (L.n. 125/2008 and 94/2009)<sup>36</sup>, which introduced a criminalization of the illegal migrant as well as the crime of illegal entrance and residence, and adding fines from 5000 to 10000 euros and if arrested a

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<sup>33</sup> BONTEMPELLI, Sergio. Da «Clandestini» a «Falsi Profughi». Migrazioni forzate e politiche migratorie italiane dopo le Primavere arabe. *Meridiana*, 2016, 167-179.

<sup>34</sup> COLUCCI, Michele. *Immigrazione come storia: un percorso a tappe dentro l'Italia repubblicana*. PASSATO E PRESENTE, 2019.

<sup>35</sup> ROOS, Christof; ZAUN, Natascha. *The global economic crisis as a critical juncture? The crisis's impact on migration movements and policies in Europe and the US*. 2016.

<sup>36</sup> AMBROSINI, Maurizio; TRIANDAFYLIDOU, Anna. Irregular immigration control in Italy and Greece: strong fencing and weak gate-keeping serving the labor market. *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 2011, 13.3: 251-273.

second time as irregulars they could have been imprisoned for a maximum time of five years.

ii. *The Lampedusa Shipwrecks in 2013*

During those years the strategy of the migrant smugglers was still based on driving the boats to the Italian shore of Lampedusa, and that led to several shipwrecks, as many times the captain of the ships did not have nautical experience. In 2013 a strong amount of such shipwrecks happened, leading the Italian government to organize a public funeral for the victims. In the same year, the controls continued to be enacted by the Italian Coast Guard operation, which had been patrolling the Strait of Sicily since 2004, and then by the *Mare Nostrum* operation in October 2013, which pursued both security and humanitarian goals by contributing to the Libyan Search and Rescue Area (SAR). *Mare nostrum* would cease to exist in 2014, a year in which it was transitioned to *Triton* and *Frontex*, which were more focused on border patrol than rescue.

b. Late Stages of the Crisis

The years from 2018 to 2020 in the Italian migratory crisis are embedded inside the political campaign of the *Northern League*, represented by Matteo Salvini, who had proposed a harsh policy against the "migrants", as well as against the Ong. While until 2016 migrant smugglers would try to reach the coast of Lampedusa now their aim was just to leave the boats filled with human beings in the international waters, whereas required by the Law of the sea any vessel who would meet them was required to bring them in a secure port in Europe. This change in strategy by the migrant smuggler made the raise of Ong operations to deliver such migrant boat to the closest port, and in 2018 two cases (the one of the commercial vessel *Aquarius* and the military one *Diciotti*), divided the public opinion. In the previous years (2014-2017), following the Dublin III Regulations, the country of the first entry was reported as having the responsibility of providing first aid and examining asylum application and during the years before the

Diciotti and the Sea watch cases, two categories of actors emerged having an interest in the immigration problems:

- Small and medium-sized businesses in the touristic hospitality sector that have been converted, at the request of the prefectures, into reception centers for asylum seekers
- NGOs and Cooperatives that specialist in running these centers and related services.<sup>37</sup>

From mainstream media, the migration problem and solutions provide were called “*the industry of migration*”<sup>38</sup>, and dissatisfaction was mounting towards what was seen as the business done by NGOs to profit on human lives while enforcing the micro criminality.

## **2. Legal Changes analyzed**

### a. Early Stages analysis

#### *i. Laws number 179/2011 and 191/2011*

These two laws represent two laws that were approved in 2011 and regulate the integration deal (*accordo di integrazione*) with the foreigner, and the treatment of the foreigners below the legal age. Law number 179/2011 concerns a deal that any foreigner needed to sign with the authority, which would track "credits" to be lost if the foreigner was not trying to achieve integration through the mandatory language and culture courses that would aim to give to the immigrant a knowledge of the life and rules in Italy as well as its language. The second law took under consideration is law number 191/2011, which, as said aims to discipline the treatment of the minor when

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<sup>37</sup> CAPONIO, Tiziana; CAPPIALI, Teresa. The Persistent Issue of Refugees: Organized Hypocrisy, Solidarity, and Mounting Protest. *Italian Politics*, 2017, 32.1: 175-193.

<sup>38</sup> FRANCESCHELLI, Michela. Global Migration, Local Communities, and the Absent State: Resentment and Resignation on the Italian island of Lampedusa. *Sociology*, 2020, 54.3: 591-608.

entering the Italian soil, fixing the limit of 120 days for staying that could be renewed with the residence permit of the parents.

Percentage and Number of the most used words in 2011 Legal texts (total word number : 6000)					
Word	Amount	Percentage	Word	Amount	Percentage
Law	539	8,98%	Attenuation	34	0,57%
State	264	4,40%	Language	31	0,52%
Government	242	4,03%	Knowledge	31	0,52%
Residency	161	2,68%	Reasons	30	0,50%
Foreigners	157	2,62%	Entrance	28	0,47%
Deal	152	2,53%	Territory	27	0,45%
Money	136	2,27%	Discipline	25	0,42%
Article	101	1,68%	Regions	25	0,42%
Italy	93	1,55%	Life	25	0,42%
Matter	71	1%	Locals	25	0,42%
Integration	63	1,05%	Force	24	0,40%
Release	58	0,97%	Espulsions	23	0,38%
Intern	41	0,68%	Sociality	23	0,38%
August	40	0,67%			
Education	35	0,58%			

*ii. Laws number 120/2013, 137/2013, 69/2013 and 56/2013*

In 2013 there was a spike in legal changes and during the year L.n. 120/2013, L.n. 137/2013, l.n. 69/2013 and l.n.56/2013 had created changes that were everlasting in the assimilation process of the migrants. Between the first and the second, there is a deep connection as the second makes some changes on the first, while the third is a general law that touch immigration on some parts and the latest is a law that creates the institute for monitoring the poorness of the migrants (INMP), that aims to guarantee the poorness and the medical care for the “*migrant population*”. Now the first two laws tried to manage the resources necessary for creating a national plan related to guarantee medical care and safety in the different regions of Italy (distributing the economic resources between them). With the institution of the INMP then the distribution and research of the condition of the migrants in Italy were put more relevant in the plan of the government.

Percentage and Number of the most used words in the 2013 Legal Texts (total word number : 1903)					
Word	Amount	Percentage	Word	Amount	Percentage
Law	177	19,60%	Donations	12	1,33%
Money	138	15,28%	Matter	11	1,22%
Government	118	13,07%	Reduction	11	1,22%
Article	63	6,98%	Responsibility	10	1,11%
Modifications	49	5,43%	Reassure	10	1,11%
Millions	40	4,43%	Authority	10	1,11%
Europe	40	4,43%	Extinction	10	1,11%
Internal	31	3,43%	Flux	9	1,00%
Strenght	18	1,99%	Harmony	9	1,00%
Migrants	17	1,88%	provide	9	1,00%
Funds	17	1,88%	Measures	8	0,89%
Necessity	15	1,66%	Territory	7	0,78%
Humanitarian	13	1,44%	Emergency	7	0,78%
Entrance	13	1,44%	Oblige	7	0,78%
Words	13	1,44%			

iii. Laws number 53/2018, 71/2018, 113 /2018, 132/2018, 151/2018.

As said previously the laws regarding immigration in 2018 were various and very different in the matter they wanted to regulate: previously to the change in political orders, the two laws L.n. 53/2018 and L.n. 71/2018 were approved. The latter was intended to regulate the legal status of the foreigners coming from a third country (meaning outside both the European Union and Schengen agreement), for the reason of work, student exchange, or university studies in general, the first was instead created to regulate the treatment of data and the rights of foreigners and illegal immigrants with suspected ties to terrorist organizations. Since 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018, the new government with Salvini as Ministry of Intern affairs was elected, and approved DL 113 /2018, the L.n. 132/2018, and finally the L.n. 151/2018. DL 113/2018, named "*the security decree*" is in line even in its wording with the previous harsher migratory policy of 2002 and 2007 (the "*security package*" of Berlusconi government). In such law, many points were touched: a reduced number of types of residence permits, a longer staying in the center for the expulsions of the illegal foreigners, a long list of crimes for which the international protection as a refugee could not be confirmed, simpler ways to send the people back to the country of origin, a list of "*secure countries*" which were not recognized as war-zone, the suppression of international protection if not for an

important reason, and finally the closing of the SPRAR, the integration center that was managed by the local administration, in this way closing any public intervention in the integration process as was in the previous years (as we had seen in what was criticized as the “immigration business”).<sup>39</sup> The approved law number 132/2018 created some little changes on the previous DL but confirming its core values and finally the L.n. 151/2018 was added to the DL 113/2018 for the only reason of being more precise on the economic costs of the expulsion and how to face it, as well as the determination of how to eventually estimate such cost.

Percentage and Number of the most used words in the 2018 Legal Texts (total word number : 2000)					
Word	Amount	Percentage	Word	Amount	Percentage
Article	1370	68,50%	Europe	250	12,50%
Law	740	54,01%	Territory	229	11,45%
Protection	484	24,20%	Residency	222	11,10%
Decree	474	64,05%	Exam	208	10,40%
Illegals	404	20,20%	Letter	192	9,60%
Person	345	17,25%	Support	189	9,45%
Internal	286	14,30%	Police	178	8,90%
Permit	283	14,15%	Citizenship	158	7,90%
Security	279	13,95%	Matter	140	7,00%
Europe	250	12,50%	Code	132	6,60%

### 3. Social Media Coverage

#### a. Pre-2013 Arrivals

During 2011 and 2012 the trends in the online world were still low, considering it was even the beginning of the utilization of the social media platforms. As it could be seen there is some kind of parallelism between the charts, as on both of them the term “Money”, as well as “Italy” are at the top of the list, while the term “Expulsion” is still on the lower parts. However, there are some differences too: the term Refugee had been

<sup>39</sup> ALGOSTINO, Alessandra. Il decreto “sicurezza e immigrazione”(decreto legge n. 113 del 2018): estinzione del diritto di asilo, repressione del dissenso e disegualianza. 2018.



utilized in the Comments, while the legislation still utilizes the term "*foreign*", a classic of the legislation of the XX century migration policies.

Percentage and number of the most used words in 2011 Facebook comments (total words : 441)					
Word	Amount	Percentage	Word	Amount	Percentage
Italy	218	49,43%	People	55	12,47%
Us	160	36,28%	Tunisia	50	11,34%
State	144	32,65%	Problem	46	10,43%
Refugee	131	29,71%	Berlusconi	42	9,52%
Money	109	24,72%	I	41	9,30%
Home	100	22,68%	Lampedusa	39	8,84%
Europe	95	21,54%	Expulsions	38	8,62%
Government	85	19,27%	League	38	8,62%
Left	63	14,29%	Law	30	6,80%
France	61	13,83%	He	27	6,12%

*b. 2013 Shipwrecks*

The Shipwrecks on the Lampedusa coast were a crucial moment in the evolution of new migration policies, as well as the social media coverage of such matter. In the comments regarding the new feed on such facts, as it can be seen, terms such as "*Money*" and "*Us/We*" are still present, but especially this last one had lost some ranks on the list, while terms such as "*Europe*" and "*State*" had acquired more ranks. Another point of interest is the change of the term "*Refugee*" with the one "*migrants*". There is then a disappearance of any mention of other countries (such as Tunisia or France), and finally, the commotion over the deaths in the Sea could be seen in the mention of the "*Funerals*" and mainly in the mention of "*guilt*". In the legal text word counting it can be seen the first important the importance given to the term "*Money*" and "*Funds*", and the terms such as "*emergency*", that describe a sense of need to act quickly over the situation, while terms as "*territory*" drop down on the list, and the term "*Europe*" is added to it. In a broader sense, it could be seen that the Government is here less interested in expulsion and more in "*responsibility*" and funding solutions.

Percentage and Number of the most used words in Facebook comments on posts regarding 2013 Shipwrecks (total word number :912)					
Word	Amount	Percentage	Word	Amount	Percentage
Italy	423	46,38%	Home	125	13,71%
Funerals	303	33,22%	Guilt	117	12,83%
Money	270	29,61%	Government	89	9,76%
Migrants	240	26,32%	Stop	76	8,33%
People	185	20,29%	Life	74	8,11%
State	152	16,67%	Problem	73	8,00%
Europe	138	15,13%	Buonisti (Commies)	71	7,79%
Us /We	137	15,02%	Integration	68	7,46%
Country	135	14,55%	Law	62	6,80%
Poors	134	14,69%	Sea	48	5,26%

c. *Aquarius case and 2018 legislation*

As the charts show there are quite some differences before the previous ones: in both of them the figure of Salvini is almost assimilated to the one of Italy, quoted even much more than the latter (indeed is the first time that a politician is so high in comment ranking); secondly the term “migrants” had changed again in “illegals”(“Clandestini”). It could be seen then that the Facebook Comments have a dichotomy between Us/them. The change in importance to Security lead to the utilization of terms as “Police”, “Exam”, “Protection”, as well as the utilization of the term “illegals” in the terms used in the legal text.

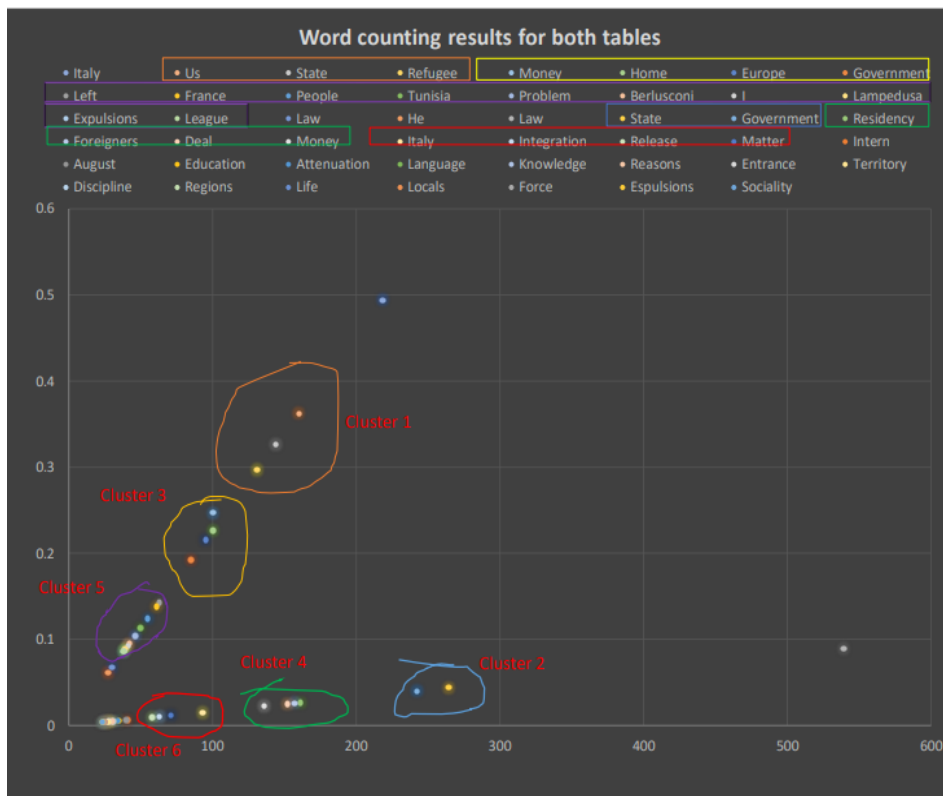
Percentage and Number of the most used words in Facebook comments on posts regarding the Aquarius case (total word number: 8250)					
Word	Amount	Percentage	Word	Amount	Percentage
to be	3970	48,12%	Europe	979	11,87%
Italy	3104	37,62%	Well Done	956	11,59%
Salvini	2195	26,61%	Ports	727	8,81%
Government	1408	17,07%	Nation	703	8,52%
All	1390	16,85%	Home	618	7,49%
Illegal Migrant	1309	15,87%	Good	592	7,18%
Them	1257	15,24%	Stop	586	7,10%
Us/We	1196	14,50%	Support	579	7,02%
People	1119	13,56%	Expulsions	508	6,16%
Vessel	1072	12,99%			

#### 4. Cluster Analysis

a. *Pre-2013 Arrivals*

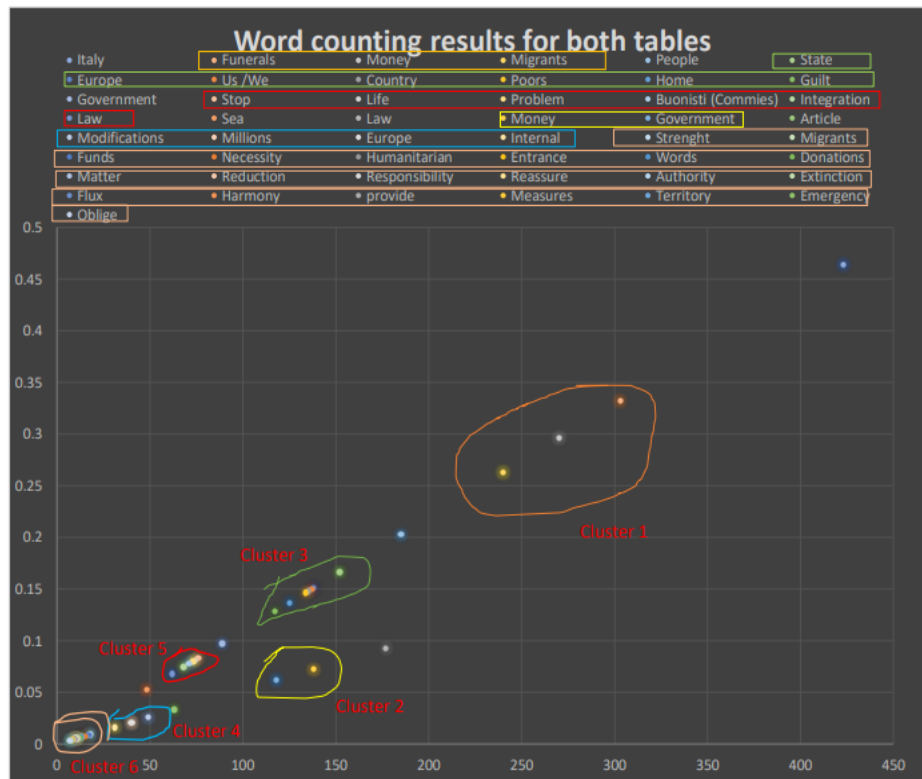
The series of terms mentioned in Cluster 1 and cluster 3, mention both the term "state", but while in the comments such term is in the relation between the terms "Us" and

"refugee", in the legal discourse it is more in relation with the term "government". The following Clusters (Cluster 2 and cluster 4) both mention "money" as a term, but while he comments line seems to refer to words such as "home", "Europe", "government", meaning, therefore, the economy in relation with the "natives", the legal series seems to refer to "money" in relation to the "foreigners", and the "deal" that as said it is mentioned in the laws to be made with them. The final clusters then relate different states and politicians and seem to address a solution to be foreseen in the comments, and mention the "expulsions" as well as the relation with foreign states such as "Tunisia" and "France". The legal changes in the final clusters instead report about the necessity of "integration" and mention "language", "knowledge" and other points that seem to be considered as necessary to deal with the migrants.



*b. 2013 Shipwrecks*

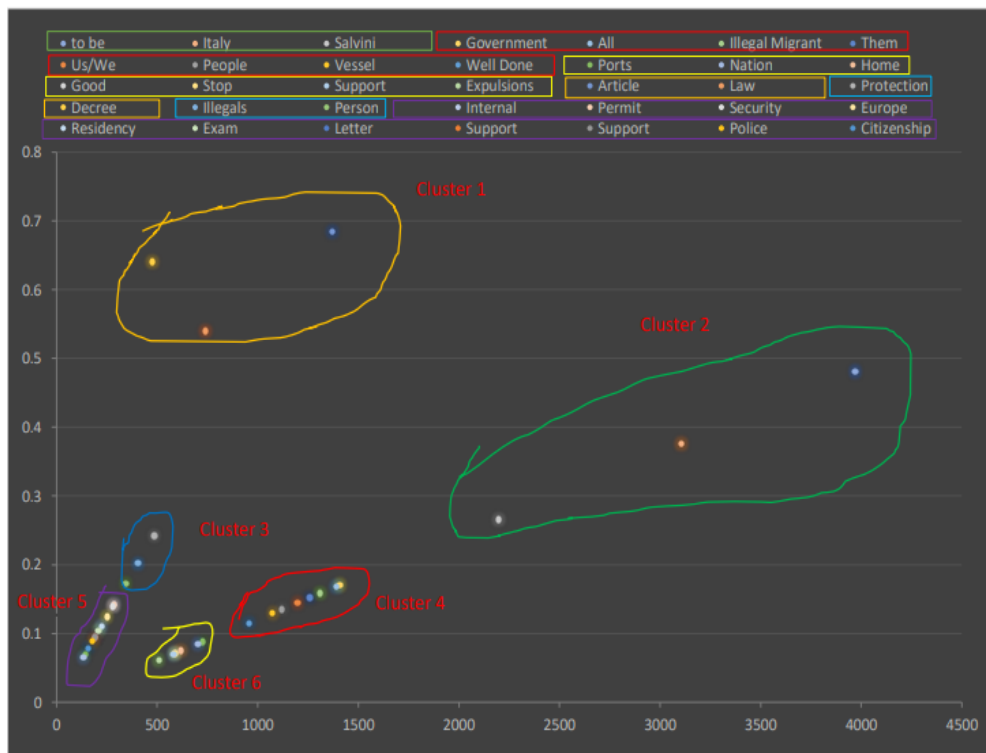
The two initial clusters have in common the term "money", but in the Facebook comments, the first cluster (cluster 1) contains even description of the "funerals" and "Migrants", while in Cluster 3 and Cluster 4, we could see from a side the emergence again of the term "we" in relation with terms such as "home" "Europe" and "guilt". It is interesting to notice that the term "home" and "Europe" was even in relation with the term "us" back in the comments in 2011, but the relation with "money", now in the first cluster, had changed with the term "guilt". The clusters in relation with the legal changes as said have in common the utilization the term "money" especially in comparison with the term "Government", As well as terms such as "Europe" and "internal" in Cluster Five, that represent a more interested in what is internal the border and not just the borders interpreted as an external one. Another interesting component is seeing how the terms "Migrants" had entered inside the legal documents in relation with Cluster 6 in which terms such as "Emergency", "humanitarian" and "Necessity" seems to delineate a new approach to the problem, which consider the humanitarian



and emergency side. In the same cluster words as “harmony” and “strength” then seems to delineate the objective of the laws took under consideration, and it's interesting to imagine how such is intended to be obtained through strength.

*c. 2018 case Aquarius*

The analysis of the cluster related to the Comments reveals two important features: as said in the same cluster (Cluster 2) the terms “Italy” and “Salvini” could be seen quoted together, and subsequently in cluster 4 it could be seen how the term "nation” goes hand by hand with the term “Home" and "port", and in Cluster 3 the term “government” is in relation with “Illegal migrants", "them" and “we”. It is clear if we analyze such a term that in Cluster 3 there is mention of the dichotomy between us/them. In the legal terms took under consideration this time there is no mention at all of the previous economical terms, but much more of "police", "security" and "exam", that would aim to give more relevance to the narrative to police authority as well as to border controls.



## Chapter 6: Qualitative analysis in the stages of the crisis

### 1. Problematization in the different stages

#### *a. Analysis of the evolution of the problematization in the migration policies during 2011-2013*

As we had seen the terms "money", as well as the economical perspective of the problem, is central in the tables we had seen previously as well as in the cluster analysis. This economic problematization was continued until 2013, In which the various shipwrecks seem to have shifted the perception of the problem: the terms "*migrants*", "*funerals*" and "*guilt*" seems to evidence a humanitarian side of the crisis besides the economical. In the same way, the problematization from the policies seems to follow the same narrative enforcing the concept of the necessity of humanitarian intervention. Another component of the Cluster is even the term "*us*" or "*we*" that seems to raise when in relation with a foreigner, and that is close to the term "*state*" and "*home*". As we had seen a "*deal*" was created in the legislation of 2011-2012 to try to empower the control over the integration of the foreigner: the first act of integration is the one of a "*deal*" based on gaining credits from the state authority and avoiding the loss of the same. Here we could see how the idea of a normal business deal, is changed for guaranteeing the possibility of residence for a migrant. However, all this had changed in 2013, in which new events had triggered the necessity of reevaluating such a problematization, and a humanitarian stance had started to take over in Italy, however such a change is not detached by an economical evaluation but seems to be an acknowledgment that the economic problematization needs to be understood from a humanitarian perspective. It could be seen indeed with the formation of the INMP the term "*migrant*" was strictly related to their economic conditions: it is indeed interesting how much this new humanitarian point of view is still grounded even on an economic one, grounding their need for help in the necessity of giving the possibility of a working environment and economical safety.

b. *Problematization during 2018 crisis*

During 2018 we could then notice that the divide between Us/them is recurring more thoroughly (indeed the term “Us” and “them” are near in their ranking). This relation is interesting as it creates a differentiation between that “them”, considered as the “other”, that transforms in the term “Illegal” the term “Migrants”, therefore an outsider not only in culture but even in legal terms. As said by Ruth Wodak, the concept of identity is deeply relational, and “never signifies anything static, unchanging, or substantial, but rather always an element situated in the flow of time, ever-changing, something involved in a process”<sup>40</sup>, she had theorized that to obtain both an individual and a social national identity a shift of “blame” inside a narrative “Us/Them” is required, and here it could be seen in the shift from the “refugee issue” to the “illegals issues”. The identity problematization seems to raise in 2018 too: We can see indeed the term “nation” is still not quoted in the 2011 or 2013 lists and instead, it emerges clearly in 2018. This means a concept broad and permeated of identity as “Nation” had created itself, and it's interesting to see it in relation to the Us/Them relationship. The change in definition from “migrants” to “illegals” was respected by the amendment to the laws of the time as if to underline such differences and such underlying narrative. As said in the same years “Security”, “Territory” and “Protection” had been central in the legislation narrative in 2018, while in the prior one the concept of “territory” was marginal (2013) or absent (2011). In 2018 the state control is developed over the people that were arriving that needed to be controlled in their flux and their new life as a refugee in the Italian state<sup>41</sup>. Another interesting part is the difference between the 2013 legislation and the 2018 one based on “harmony” vs “security”. The two sides represent the two different types of problematization: the more “economic-humanitarian” one which ground itself in its concept of having to exchange and

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<sup>40</sup> WODAK, Ruth. The discursive construction of national identity. Edinburgh University Press, 2009.

<sup>41</sup> It is to note how much in 2018 legislation terms as “Control”, “police”, “permit”, “authority” appear while they were not present in the changes introduced to the border control and the immigration policies during the previous years.

distribute the different people as well as considering them in their economic condition of “*new poor*”, and secondly the more “*Criminal one*”, that instead aim to consider the “*other*” as a deranged individual, a criminal that needs to be controlled constantly by the eye of the state, and that is not welcome<sup>42</sup>.

## **2. Discourse Ethnographical Analysis of the stages**

### *a. economics threats and identity terrorists*

The analysis of the term ranking, as well as the clusters in the first stage narrative before 2013, had reported an evolution on the narratives of the two sides of our research: we had seen an economic problematization, then a more humanitarian one, and finally what we could call an identity one. We can see a practical representation of such development (from commodities to terrorists) in the data we have collected from the social media feed and reaction to them: the terms related to economy and money had been reported since 2011, even before a proper Us/them narrative had perfectly generated (as we had seen it could be found just in 2018 and 2019 datasets). Not only do the terms and the cluster seems to suggest how an economical narrative was developing both in legislation and in the social media comments, but how the economic terms were central even in the integration process foreseen until that moment<sup>43</sup>. Indeed, the central problem even with the laws created is not the cultural aspect, but the necessity of recognizing the poorness and contrast such poor-economic status of the migrant. In this way, the problem of the migrants is always interpreted in the economics behind it, and less in understanding their cultural background. In the same way, in 2018 onwards, it could be found a more militant approach towards criminalization of the arrivals and anyone that shows any charity towards them (such as Ong). Identity and national narratives could create aggregation towards metaphors and narratives as well

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<sup>42</sup> It is maybe interesting to quote the fact that in 2018 during the contestation to the Salvini Security operations on border controls, the opposite political side (the so-called “buonisti”), would normally show a sticker or a slogan that quote “refugee welcome!”, utilizing an opposite approach: they are not considered as “illegals” but as “refugee”, and that is the reason why they would be accepted by them.

<sup>43</sup> Indeed it was that conceived the idea of a “deal” between the migrant and the state based on credits and debts.



as the commodification of the “*other*” describing his or her features as the one of a good that needs to be exchanged.

*b. The Hyperreal Social Media Society*

While as said the social media environment would have a partial relevance in the 2011 legislation considering the number of Facebook accounts in that time, it needs to be

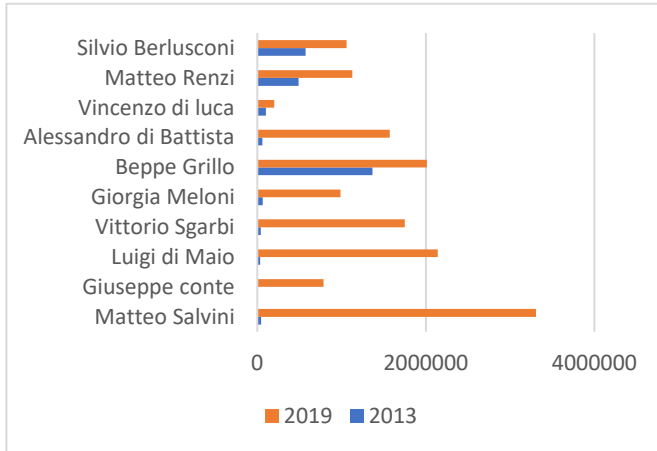


Table 7. Number of followers of Italian political figures profile

stressed that such relevance was surely coming forth in the 2018 legislation. In 2011 and 2012 the political figures than would not use social media to declare their opinions, as they would prefer to use old media such as television interviews or debates; however, from 2013 the utilization of social media was getting more and more relevant, and in 2018 the followers skyrocketed, resulting in

greater use of social media for spreading political messages. Indeed, the number of Facebook users in Italy during 2011 (when we had first taken the data for our research), is between 15 and 20 million subscribers. The amount of population in Italy was 59.879.469, therefore the number of users is between 25% and 35% of the total amount of population. Instead, if we look at the number of Facebook users in 2018, they were 34 million, and the population in Italy is 60,627,291. In this way, the Facebook users were almost 57 % of the population. In this way, we can assume that the propagation of news and the creation of narrative could be decisive in 2018, but the relevance in 2011 and 2013 is questionable, and probably the narratives that we had found in parallel were so due to other media, such as Televisions, Radio, etc. Instead, the harsher "security" policies that were empowered in 2018 could have been influenced by the social media narrative, creating, therefore, the possibility of influencing the actual empowerment of particular state-law solutions in the off-line world.

## Chapter 7: Conclusions

The present study had the aim of noticing any relation between social media narratives and the one that would happen in the offline world legislation during crucial moments in the Italian migrant crisis. We had found data that seems to report the existence of a problematization of the public opinion, initially in a more economical way and then much more criminalized (with the scope of achieving identity on a national level). This problematization in some ways seems to have influenced the changes in political migrant policies. The raising of the Us/Them narrative and the criminalization of the "other", had led to changes in the surveillance implant underlying the legislation (especially related to border control). As it could be seen legislation has changed through the same narrative: not only the "*illegals*" were now being defined as such, but it was incremented the "*security*" as well as "*police*" control and checks over them, while the integration measures were lowered. However, the study we have performed both on a quantitative and a qualitative level is still little in comparison to the broader aspect of the crisis. For example, we just took into consideration Facebook comments: but what about Twitter and YouTube? Secondly, the comments we had analyzed are related to particular cases, not to the analysis of the whole of them and the immigration in general during the years 2011 to 2019; in the same way, just 10 newspaper feeds had been analyzed (the more followed and utilized one by the public opinion), but this need to be harmonized with the whole of them (especially the regional ones that could help in having different narratives on a national and local level). Taking into consideration therefore the necessity in narrowing down this research on particular cases and media, as well as perspective, the reification that initially was reported by Shatz and Branco, could have taken place (at least partially) in 2018 and 2019, as the comments seem to prove in relation with the legislation that was subsequent such cases. The relation between social media and the possibility of their active political and legal ability to change a legal framework of reference in such a quick way (in this case we talked about a period of 6-7 years), could reports about the possibility of a new level of "living law"

that not only raise in online spaces but that has the same narrative behind it, and that is able therefore to change the society following its shape and rules.

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