



HATE IS NOT AN OPINION

STUDY ON HATE SPEECH, JOURNALISM AND MIGRATION



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BRICKS

BUILDING RESPECT ON THE INTERNET BY COMBATING HATE SPEECH

National Study Italy

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
II. THE SITUATION OF THE HATE SPEECH IN ITALY	7
The data	7
The hate speech in the Italian legal system	8
The protection bodies in Italy	10
The case law	11
III. HATE SPEECH IN ONLINE COMMENTS	14
Introduction and methodology	14
Face to face and online conversations	15
Selected cases	17
First case study	17
Second case study	21
Third case study	25
Fourth case study	31
Fifth case study	34
Rhetoric of racist speech and communication functions	35
Profiles of the authors of the racist expressions	40
Concluding remarks	41
IV. THE ITALIAN JOURNALISM AND THE CHALLENGE OF ONLINE HATE SPEECH	42
Objectives and Methodology	42
Freedom of expression Vs Regulation	44
Journalists Vs social media managers	45
Informing Vs Involving	47
Quantity Vs Quality	47
V. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS	50
ANNEX	52
NEWSPAPERS' DATA	53
TEMPLATE OF THE INTERVIEW	54
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND LINKS	56

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this research is to use analyses of case studies and interviews of select witnesses and media sources to shed light on the phenomenon of online hate speech directed at immigrants, refugees, and minorities.

The spread of hate speech in Italy and how it is combated has been a focus of public opinion and political decision-makers for some time now, but it has taken on particular importance in 2015. The dramatic humanitarian crisis that has hit European and Balkan countries has dominated national media; and it is in this context of immigration at the global and national levels, of which newspapers do not always convey an accurate picture of what is happening, that incitement to racialized hatred against refugees, immigrants, and minorities is multiplying. Online media forums, comments on articles, and the Facebook pages of national and local newspapers are by now the virtual loci in which hate speech is spreading that targets refugees and citizens of foreign origin; however, this is unfortunately a phenomenon difficult to monitor and control. In 2014, UNAR (National Office against Racial Discrimination) recorded 347 cases of racist utterances in social networks, of which 185 were found on Facebook and others on Twitter and Youtube. In addition, there were another 326 in links that reproduced these utterances for a total of ca. 700 episodes of intolerance, with a growing trend in 2015. An analysis of the national legal context, of the government juridical entities, and entities for the protection of rights, shows a complex and controversial situation characterized by the absence of specific legislation on hate speech and by an open discussion on the blurred boundary between it and freedom of expression.

The object of the first part of the research was the monitoring of Italian news websites along with reader comments on the relevant articles that were directly or indirectly related to the immigrant population and the phenomenon of immigration. Significant cases of racist hate speech or incitement to hatred emerging from the community of readers were selected and analyzed. The analysis led to the identification of diverse types of comments based on the most frequently occurring language expressing racist attitudes. Beyond this, limited use was made of moderating techniques by the journals, which was examined in detail in the next stage of the investigation.

The objectives of the second phase of research had in common the need to know the various realities of journal editing in Italy and how these reflected or acted on the problems of managing their own communities and therefore on the compared or comparable cases of hate speech. What emerged from interviews with Italy's most important news media and with experts was a heterogeneous situation expressed in significant dichotomies. From freedom of expression to the need for regulation, from the role of journalists to that of social media manager, from the goal of informing to that of involving, we have compared diverse solutions on the part of editorial bodies, in a phase of experimentation characterized by the difficulty of adapting to digitalization.

The conclusions are focused on the need to radically rethink journalistic activity within the new digital framework, an activity not circumscribed by the printing or broadcasting of a piece but which continues in the flow of conversations that seek interaction with users and try to follow cues and suggestions for

new articles. Social media policy and active moderation that is prepared and participatory, as well as an inclination to the production of third-party content gathered from the flow of conversations – in short, a comprehensive interaction with the community – have become priorities. This requires social media managers, community managers, and content curators, but above all it requires every editorial entity to plan for and establish such professional roles through studying and understanding the new editorial dynamics that the digital revolution demands.

II. THE SITUATION OF THE HATE SPEECH IN ITALY

The data

The issue of the spreading of the hate speech in Italy and how to tackle it, attracts the attention of public opinion and policy makers for some time, but it has taken on a whole new dimension all along 2015. The serious humanitarian crisis which is involving European and Balkans Countries, is dominating the national news and, in this scenario, newspapers often do not render a proper picture of what is happening and, more in general, they do not offer a full imagine about migration phenomena at global and national level or about the multiplying expressions of racial hatred incitement against refugees, migrants and minorities. Fora of online newspapers, comments to articles, Facebook pages of national and local newspapers are now the virtual places in which the hate speech overflows targeting refugees and foreign citizens, and unfortunately this phenomenon can hardly be monitored and controlled. In addition to racist statements spread by common people, it should be added a typical Italian feature: discriminatory and xenophobic discourses, slogans and statements pronounced by public personalities or opinion leaders, that criminalize migrants and refugees and boost hatred towards whole communities or nationalities.

Given the complexity in tracking and monitoring the online hate speech, among the few data, which it is possible to refer to, are those collected by UNAR (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali - National Office Against Racial Discrimination), both through its Contact Centre and through its web monitoring activity. In 2014, UNAR recorded 347 cases of racist expressions on social networks, 185 of which on Facebook and the remaining on Twitter and YouTube. In addition, there were another 326 in links that reproduced these utterances for a total of ca. 700 episodes of intolerance¹. In its 2014 annual report, UNAR pointed out an increasing trend concerning this phenomena for 2015, affirming that offenses and stigmatizing messages towards specific national groups and minorities have been increasingly spreading through new media and social networks².

Other data have been supplied by OSCAD (Osservatorio per la Sicurezza Contro gli Atti Discriminatori - Observatory for Security Against Acts of Discrimination). In 2013, OSCAD reported 231 cases of discrimination, 65 of which concerned the web. They were mainly websites or Facebook profiles with a discriminatory content and those reports were forwarded to the Polizia Postale e delle Comunicazioni (Postal Police), the office which is technically in charge to receive these reports³.

Lastly, in 2014 the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe), which collects every year data on hate crimes in Italy both from government or civil society sources, recorded 596 hate crimes reported by Police forces (over 400 of which related to racism and xenophobia), in addition to other 114 cases reported by civil society organizations⁴.

¹ P. Andrisani, Dal contagio 'virale' al web marketing dell'odio razzista, in: IDOS (2015) Dossier statistico immigrazione 2015.

² P. Vulpiani, Le discriminazioni a sfondo etnico-razziale, in: IDOS (2015) Dossier statistico immigrazione 2015.

³ "Razzismo: dati Oscan, 55% discriminazioni avviene per motivi razziali", in: http://www1.adnkronos.com/Archivio/AdnAgenzia/2014/01/14/Cronaca/Razzismo-dati-Oscan-55-discriminazioni-avviene-per-motivi-razziali_143205.php

⁴ <http://hatecrime.osce.org/italy>.

The hate speech in the Italian legal system

In Italy, there is no specific legislation regarding hate speech, but there are a number of provisions related to incitement to racial hatred, propaganda of ideas based on racial superiority and hatred, insult, defamation and threats that are applied in hate speech cases and fill the gap resulting from the lack of a specific crime.

Article 3 of the Italian Constitution affirms the equal dignity and equality for all before the law, regardless of gender, “race”, language, religion, political opinion, personal and social conditions. Starting from this basic principle, during the years several laws have been approved and amended: they are the backbone of the national legislation concerning racial discrimination.

The first law about this issue was the ratification law of the International Convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, signed in New York on 7th March 1966⁵. In its original formulation, Article 3 of this law punished with imprisonment from one to four years “whoever spreads any form of ideas based on racial superiority or racial hatred”, and “who incites in any way to discrimination, or incites to commit or commits acts of violence or provocation to violence against some specific people only because they belong to a national, ethnic or racial group”. Members of associations or organizations with the goal to “incite hatred or racial discrimination” were then punished with imprisonment from one to five years.

A more comprehensive anti-discrimination law was issued in 1993, the so-called Mancino Law⁶, which extended the criminal repression to discrimination based on religion and distinguished the acts of “dissemination of ideas” and “incitement to discrimination”, for which a lighter penalty is provided, compared to those inciting to violence, or violence, or provocation to violence, that are more severely punished.

In January 2006, the Parliament passed a new law, promoted by the Government party Northern League, which has significantly weakened the punishments provided by Mancino law. Law 85/2006, in fact, further amended the previous law and particularly, in addition to a further reduction of the punishment (which is now alternative: imprisonment up to one year and six months, or a fine of up to 6.000 euro), the terms defining the crime have been modified: the punished crime is not “to spread in any form”, but “the propaganda of ideas based on superiority or racial or ethnic hatred”; no longer who “incites”, but who “instigates to commit or commits acts of discrimination based on racial, ethnic, national or religious grounds”; no longer who “incites”, but who “instigates to commit or commits violence based on racial, ethnic, national or religious grounds”. Currently the Senate is discussing a bill (already approved by the Chamber of Deputies) that should add homophobia and transphobia among the already existing aggravating circumstances. The bill contains also an article that would change the Mancino law in the sense that “the free expression of beliefs or opinions related to the pluralism of ideas does not constitute discrimination”, even if these ideas are “expressed in political, labour, cultural, religious organizations”.⁷

⁵ Law 13 October 1975, n. 654, <http://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:1975-10-13:654>.

⁶ Law 25 June 1993, n. 205, <http://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:legge:1993:205>.

⁷ “Omofobia, ok alla Camera con voti Pd. Pdl contro. Protesta del bacio del M5s”, in: *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 19 September 2013, <http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2013/09/19/omofobia-passa-legge-con-voti-pd-pdl-contro-protesta-bacio-m5s/716571/>.

In any case, and despite the amendments made, the Mancino law remains a fundamental tool in the fight against racial discrimination. Since anything is specified in the law regarding the means used for the dissemination and promotion of racist ideas, this also applies to the Internet, but the problem of identifying the “ideas based on racial or ethnic grounds” spread on the web remains complex, as it will be explained in the section dedicated to judgments.

Another instrument of the Italian legislation which can be useful to combat the hate speech on the Internet is the Criminal Code, which provides for “insult” and “defamation” offences. Article 594 of the Italian Criminal Code contains protection against the crime of “insult” and it states that who offends the honour or dignity of another person in his/her presence may be punished with imprisonment up to six months or condemned to a fine of up to 516 euro. The same punishment is applied to those who commit this kind of crime by telegraph or telephone, writings or drawings addressed directly to the victim. The punishment is increased if the offence is committed in the presence of many people. Article 595 of the Criminal Code focuses on “defamation” and provides for imprisonment up to one year or a fine of up to 1.032 euro for those who, talking to many people, offend the reputation of one or more persons. If the offence is made using the press or any other means of advertising, the penalty consists of imprisonment from six months to three years or a fine of at least 516 euro. If the offence is made against a political, administrative or judicial body or their representatives, the penalties are increased.

In the last years there have been several efforts to better regulate the hate speech on the web. The Senate approved in May 2015 the bill “Measures for protecting children for the prevention and fight against cyberbullying”⁸, which provides for the removal of offensive contents by the providers (users who are 14 years old and over can report offensive contents) or the report of the Privacy Authority. It also provides for a “warning procedure” in case of crimes committed by users under 14, where the police commissioner convenes the child with a parent. Another bill (the so-called DDL Campana) provides for the imprisonment from six months to four years for anyone who “causes a persistent and serious state of anxiety or fear or generates founded fear for its own safety” through a series of acts known as “bullying or cyberbullying”⁹. Lastly, it was presented a bill about “protection of personal identity on the web”, in particular for children, about the “right to be forgotten, update and correction of personal data”, which provides some provisions on defamation and insult, with a specific amendment to the provisions related to libel¹⁰.

In July 2015 the Italian Charter of Rights on the Web (Carta Italiana dei Diritti di Internet) was born, with the goal to offer a high standard set of principles and values in the access to and the use of the Internet. In its Article 13, the Charter addresses the safety on the web that is properly seen both as protection of infrastructures and as defence of people. The article states that “no limitation of freedom of expression is allowed”, but “it must be guaranteed the protection of the people’s dignity from abuses related to behaviours such as incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence”.

⁸ <https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/DF/302161.pdf>.

⁹ http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg17/lavori/stampati/pdf/17PDL0018680.pdf.

¹⁰ <http://www.repmag.it/rubriche/diritto-della-rete/item/64-una-nuova-proposta-di-legge-a-tutela-della-dignita-in-internet/64-una-nuova-proposta-di-legge-a-tutela-della-dignita-in-internet.html>

The most relevant legal instrument at international level is the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime of the Council of Europe. Entered into force in 2004 and ratified by Italy in 2008¹¹, it is the first international treaty on crimes committed on the web and other information networks. It is particularly important especially because of its Additional Protocol adopted by the Council of Europe in 2003, which focuses on the fight against cybercrime introducing the objective of combating any form of xenophobia, racism and denial of genocides. Italy signed the Protocol in 2011 but has not ratified it yet, despite several reminders of lawyers and activists who have stressed the need to transpose this fundamental instrument into the national legal system.¹²

The protection bodies in Italy

In Italy there are two main public bodies dealing with discrimination complaints: OSCAD (Osservatorio per la Sicurezza Contro gli Atti Discriminatori - Observatory for Security Against Discriminating Acts) within the framework of the Department of Public Security - Central Directorate of Criminal Police and UNAR (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali - National Office Against Racial Discrimination), which is part of the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

OSCAD was born in 2010 from the collaboration between the State Police and Carabinieri with the aim of promoting the right to equality before the law and protecting against discrimination all the victims of hate crimes. In particular, OSCAD receives reports and complaints by telephone or by e-mail from institutions, associations and private citizens; it also monitors the discrimination phenomena on grounds of “race” or ethnicity, nationality, religious belief, gender, age, language, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity. Among its tasks, OSCAD also activates, according to reports received, targeted interventions on the territory through the Police Forces and follows the evolution of discriminatory acts reported, it maintains relationships with associations and public and private institutions working on discrimination issues; it develops measures of prevention and contrast to hate crimes.¹³

Other reporting tools are made available by UNAR, the national body created in 2004 with the purpose of ensuring the effectiveness of the principle of equal treatment among people, verifying the effective application of instruments for the protection against discrimination and contributing to the elimination of discrimination based on “race” and ethnicity. UNAR collects reports, complaints and witnesses through a dedicated Contact Centre, accessible through a toll-free number and a website.¹⁴ It also provides assistance to victims of discrimination in proceedings conducted both at administrative and legal level. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of the Interior and the Department of

¹¹ 11Law 18th March 2008, no. 48.

¹² In March 2015, the Council of Ministers approved a bill of ratification of the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe’s Convention on Cybercrime (Disegno di Legge per ratificare e dare esecuzione al Protocollo Addizionale alla Convenzione del Consiglio d’Europa sulla criminalità informatica).

¹³ <http://www.repmag.it/rubriche/diritto-della-rete/item/64-una-nuova-proposta-di-legge-a-tutela-della-dignita-in-internet/64-una-nuova-proposta-di-legge-a-tutela-della-dignita-in-internet.html>

¹⁴ http://www.unar.it/unar/portal/?page_id=201.

Equal Opportunities establishes that the Police must report to the UNAR Contact Centre discrimination cases that fall under the civil protection and do not constitute crimes, while UNAR is obliged to report to the Police all hate crimes and racist acts of criminal relevance.¹⁵

The Postal Police (Polizia Postale) is the section of the State Police that specifically investigates on crimes committed on the web and consequently on hate crimes, even if there is not a specific section dedicated to hate speech. Reports to the Postal Police can be made in person, sent by e-mail or through a special online form. UNAR and OSCAD refer to the Postal Police all reports concerning discrimination and racist acts on the web.¹⁶

It is worth noticing that there are also several NGOs and associations, which play an important role in the prevention and fighting against discrimination. They are all enrolled in the Register of associations operating in the field of fight against discrimination and to the list of bodies entitled to legally act for protecting victims of racial discrimination.

The case law

The Italian case law on hate speech is quite rich in cases and in general there is a favourable trend of the Courts to incriminate hate speech cases, although most lawyers are contrary to face the problem by using the criminal justice and the hate speech still represents a controversial issue in the field of freedom of expression.

One of the most important sentences issued on this matter is that of the Supreme Court of Cassation which confirmed the conviction of Flavio Tosi, the current mayor of Verona, to two months of imprisonment for “racist propaganda”.¹⁷ The facts date back to 2001, when Tosi, as regional councillor, organized a petition to evict a Roma camp in Verona. The campaign, organized by the Northern League party, was called “Sign to send gypsies away from our city” and Opera Nomadi organization and some Roma and Sinti citizens sued the organizers of the campaign. In December 2004, the Court of Verona sentenced Tosi and other organizers of the campaign to six months of imprisonment and three years of disqualification from public offices for dissemination of ideas based on racial and ethnic superiority and hatred as well as incitement to commit acts of discrimination based on the ground of racial and ethnic origin. In 2007, the Court of Appeal of Venice reduced the sentence to two months of imprisonment, acquitting the accused from the charge of “incitement to discrimination”, while confirming the sentence for the organization of the propaganda of ideas based on ethnic and racial hatred and superiority. The verdict was then sent back for a new evaluation to the Court of Appeal that, in 2008, confirmed the crime of propaganda. In July 2009, the Supreme Court reconfirmed this decision.¹⁸ The importance of Tosi case is that for the first time an Italian Court embraced the theory of the so-called differential racism, believing that racism is not only perceived within biological-genetic theories but it also includes a cultural element.

¹⁵ <http://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/view/22039/>

¹⁶ <https://www.denunceviaweb.poliziadistato.it/wfintro.aspx>.

¹⁷ Supreme Court of Cassation, fourth criminal section, Sentence of 10th July 2009, no. 41819.

¹⁸ “«Idee razziste»: Tosi condannato in via definitiva. Lui: ingiustizia”, in: Corriere della Sera, 12/07/2009, http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2009/luglio/12/Idee_razziste_Tosi_condannato_via_co_9_090712034.shtml.

Among judgements specifically concerning hate speech cases on the web, it must be highlighted the sentence of the Court of Padua that in 2011 condemned a municipality councillor to the payment of a 4.000 euro fine and 6.000 euro for damages to the civil parties for carrying “propaganda of ideas based on racial hatred and incitement to commit racist acts”. The councillor wrote racist comments in his Facebook profile against Roma people.¹⁹ In 2013, the same Court sentenced to one year and half of imprisonment a Northern League councillor of a district of Padua: she committed the crime of incitement to racial violence against Cécile Kyenge, the former Minister for Integration, through a comment posted in her Facebook profile. Because of this episode, she was then expelled from the party.²⁰

An important decision of the Supreme Court²¹ extended the application of Article 416 of the Criminal Code on “criminal conspiracy” to hate speech perpetrated within virtual communities, blogs, chats and social networks. The Supreme Court stated that social networks and the internet are apt to spread messages aimed at influencing ideas and behaviours of the public opinion and, therefore, this kind of crime (which provides imprisonment from 1 to 5 years) applies to propaganda of ideas based on racial hatred and racial discrimination through these means. The first sentence that recognized the existence and the prosecution of a criminal organization constituted through the web was pronounced by the Court of Rome against the managers of Stormfront, a neo-Nazi website. This sentence, which established an important precedent in the struggle to cyber crime, convicted to three years in prison the managers of the forum who incited to commit violence based on racial, ethnic and religious prejudice, and exalted the superiority of the white race through the Italian section of the website.²²

Nowadays a very relevant issue in Italy concerns the online anonymity. The use of “defamation” to fill the legal gap resulting from the lack of a specific offence for the hate speech on the web, led to a kind of reduction of this offence when committed on the web. Every day the Italian Prosecutors receive complaints for defamation on the web, but in most cases they ask for the dismissal of the case on the basis of the so-called “objective desensitization” on the Internet. The web is currently a quite unregulated place and in most sites and blogs, there are not responsible directors. Anonymity gives to people who insult and threaten a kind of immunity, as the choice to remain anonymous reduces the credibility of the message and severely limits its ability to damage reputation. The level of credibility or significance of the offence also depends on the context, and in this case the context of the web reduces the credibility of the defamatory statement as well as its damaging potential for the reputation of people, resizing the offensiveness.²³ A sentence that goes against this interpretation and opens a way in the fight against defamation on the web, is a very recent verdict in which the Supreme Court noted, in the offense to a person through a post published on a Facebook wall, the profiles of the crime of aggravated defama-

¹⁹ ‘Vittorio Aliprandi condannato per razzismo su Facebook’, in: <http://www.padova24ore.it/politica/3994-vittorio-aliprandi-condannato-per-razzismo-su-facebook.html>

²⁰ ‘Tribunale di Padova: l’invito a commettere violenza sessuale nei confronti della Ministra Kyenge espresso attraverso i social-network costituisce un’istigazione pubblica alla violenza razziale’, in: <http://www.cirdi.org/?p=4788>.

²¹ Supreme Court of Cassation, Sentence no. 33179/2013, available at: http://www.asgi.it/wp-content/uploads/public/cassaz_33179_2013.pdf

²² Court of Justice of Rome, Sentence no. 884 del 8/04/13, available at: http://osservatorioantisemi-c02.kxcdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Sentenza-884.13-dell8.04.2013-1_stormfront.pdf

²³ Simone Alliva, ‘Omofobia e razzismo: ecco perché minacce e insulti sul web restano impuniti’, <http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2015/12/09/news/omofobia-e-razzismo-ecco-perche-minacce-e-insulti-sul-web-restano-impuniti-1.242753>

tion as it happens in the crime of libel . The aggravating factor is precisely identified “in the potential and ability of the media used for the offence, involving and reaching a number of people (...) thereby causing a greater and more widespread damage to the victim” .²⁴

Finally, it is worth highlighting problem of the so-called “hoaxes” on the web: the invented or and/or manipulated news to misrepresent migrants, refugees and other minorities and reinforce stereotypes that fuel hate speech. Although it is very complex to intervene against this kind of websites, because of the characteristics of the Internet as the anonymity, the simplicity to change web domain, the possibility of bypassing blocks etc., there have been cases in which justice moved. The managers of ‘Bufale.net’ web site transmitted a serious dossier full of analysis of the activities carried out by some sites and filed a complaint to the Postal Police against a real “organized system” which goal was to create and disseminate false information on the Internet to boost the traffic on the web and make a profit from it.²⁵ Another case involved a site in which news were manipulated and distorted in order to completely change the meaning, increasing racial hatred and inciting to violence: for this, a young man of 20 years old has been denounced for incitement to racial discrimination.²⁶

²⁴ Supreme Court of Cassation, Sentence no.24431, 12/02/2015,<http://www.penale.it/page.asp?IDPag=1198>.

²⁵ G. Zaccariello, ‘Bufale, la denuncia: “C’è rete siti web che guadagna su notizie false omofobe e razziste. Smentire non basta più”’, in: <http://www.il-fattoquotidiano.it/2015/10/03/bufale-online-la-denuncia-siti-guadagnano-su-notizie-false-omofobe-e-razziste-smemire-non-basta-piu/2091998/>.

²⁶ ‘Pubblicava bufale sugli immigrati, denunciato 20enne a Caltanissetta: “Lo facevo per avere più clic”’, in: http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2015/09/01/bufale-immigrati-denunciato_n_8069742.html.

III. HATE SPEECH IN ONLINE COMMENTS

Introduction and methodology

The qualitative research was focused on the monitoring of Italian on line newspapers and on comments of readers to articles directly or indirectly concerning the migrant population and / or the migration phenomenon. The objective of the research was to detect and analyse significant cases of racist hate speech or of incitement to hate developed among the community of readers.

From January to March 2015, five web sites of news reporting have been regularly visited, as listed below:

Corriere della Sera (www.corriere.it) ➤ online newspaper linked to the most widespread daily newspaper in Italy, Il Corriere della Sera. Director of the paper version: Luciano Fontana. Also the city editions of Rome and Milan have been monitored.

Il Post (www.ilpost.it) ➤ online newspaper since 2010. Director: Luca Sofri. It has a coverage at national and international level and was selected as autochthonous newspaper of the Web.

Il Fatto Quotidiano (www.ilfattoquotidiano.it) ➤ online newspaper born by the homonymous newspaper. Director of the paper version: Marco Travaglio. Director of the online version: Peter Gomez.

FanPage (www.fanpage.it) ➤ online newspaper spread at national level. Wide thematic coverage and particularly attention to soft news (entertainment, gossip, etc.). Director: Francesco Piccinini.

Il Tirreno (www.iltirreno.it) ➤ local online newspaper, with a wide regional circulation (Tuscany), related to the homonymous paper version. Director: Omar Monestier.

From free web surfing, aimed at identifying news with a thematic declination about “migrations”, 5 significant articles have been tracked down, both because they well illustrate some forms of “hate speech” and because they are appropriate to highlight different dimensions of the analysed issue. Since the articles respect a national newsworthiness, in agreement with European partners it was decided to track down an example of hate speech which had as object the terrorist attack in Paris against the Charlie Hebdo editorial office or facts directly connected to this event so as to allow the comparative analysis.

The following analysis arises from the selection, reading and interpretation of the conversations developed among the community of readers as comments to the newspaper articles. Comments are chronologically listed, as posts take the form of a “tit for tat” among readers: a kind of thread (clusters of conversations) typical of forums and newsgroups (Bennato, 2011), where each intervention can be referred to a previous one, or be released from it and follow, instead, a stream of thought that is all in the mind of the person who comment the article and finds in the written comment only a partial explanation.

Therefore, according to the specific context of the online conversations that will be briefly described below, the language and conversational modalities of selected comments have been analysed with a particular attention to the development of “hate speech” forms. In fact, we must point out that this research

is not simply a “social listening” survey on racist hate words, but rather an effort to face the problem of the “hate speech” focusing on two different dimensions: the motivations of those who use hate words and the connection between the journalistic text and readers’ comments to an article.

Face to face and online conversations

We often believe that dialogues established in the web are in many cases similar to the face to face dialogue because, with the progressive socialization to technological tools, the elements that allow us to transfer emotions, attitudes, implicit or explicit meaning of what we say, are commonly known and widespread. Punctuation, capital letters, bold type, the use of the so-called emoticons or graphic signs are some of the ways which can make more expressive the written text. However, even if in the verbal language we are never fully sure to find a total correspondence among what we said, what we wanted to say and what our interlocutor has understood, we are even less sure in the written communication on the web: even if the two interlocutors shared the same “grammar” – and therefore they both knew, for example, that a sentence written in capital letters means to cry it – it is possible to not well understand the tone and the meaning of the “cry” that our interlocutor wanted to express. Since in this study the modality in which a conversation on the web can lead towards the “hate speech” is very important, it seems necessary to fix what are in our opinion the main features of the online debate. In fact, besides using the entire available digital writing repertoire (words, punctuation, graphic signs and symbols, but also links, quotes, hypertext links, etc.), the comments on the web are:

Asynchronous: the dialogue on the web is not immediate, both because it is mediated – and thus it is important to consider the timing that the technological tool needs to send and deliver our messages to the recipients – and because the questions and answers can take place in a very long time. This feature would allow participants to take all the time needed to process a response, without this irritates other commentators or influences their credibility. In fact, when someone posts a comment on a web site, even if he/she is interested and eager for having some feedback from the community as soon as possible, does not expect other readers immediately express their reactions. This means that dialogues may develop even after days compared to the first post, but they can also last weeks or months and this refers to the characteristic below.

Persistent: many areas of discussion (forums, blogs, social networks, etc.) allow dialogues to be stored and therefore to remain on the web for a very long time (forever? The right to be forgotten is an issue that has not yet found unanimity among legal experts...). Whilst this feature benefits the process of storage and availability of the data over time, at the same time it also creates a condition for the survival of the message regardless of the context in which it was received. Therefore, the possibility to read a sentence written on the web a long time ago can lead to misunderstandings or even to an “aberrant decoding”, if the reader does not deeply and extensively re-contextualize the general “climate” in which, at that time, the writing occurred;

Between unknown senders and receivers (but not anonymous!): Commentaries on the articles involve a variable number of speakers of which we know, or presume to know according to their profile indications: the name or nickname (in most cases online newspapers allow to use a nickname, although at the time of registration it is necessary to fill in a form in which forename and surname must be indicated), the gender declared or inferable from the chat, a picture of the profile, a geographic location. In some online newspapers it is possible to visualize other optional information that the user may have entered: among them, the most common is the profession or the company for which the user works. It is clear that no one can check the effective correspondence of the data declared by the interlocutors to their real identity, but a particular nickname or graphic symbol can shortly represent their “business card” and define the relationship modalities among readers. In addition, the “community of readers” of an online newspaper consists of both one-time and sporadic commentators and habitual readers who, comment after comment, tell about themselves much more than a brief presentation can do. Hence, although readers have few information about other commentators, they are not even totally anonymous. Nothing is known, however, about the audience who silently visualize written chats;

Inspired to the verbal communication: even for a “digital native” audience, the first forms of language learning took place through verbal tools, consequently the online conversation is developed in the same way as it was a face to face conversation. Therefore, on the one hand on line debates continue to draw inspiration from the verbal experience and from everyone’s linguistic behaviour - note, for instance, that in the comments the use of slang terms, the logic structure of the sentence, the formal correctness or grammatical mistakes reveal to readers some implicit meanings - on the other hand, a debate requires specific skills that not all participants have.
of the restriction of free expression of opinion.

SELECTED CASES

We are going to illustrate not all the cases of hate speech collected in the observed period, but only those cases which can better represent the phenomenon.

FIRST CASE STUDY



THE PROPOSAL

*The Councillor: “Roma people should manage the garbage recycling”. Controversy.
Francesca Danese, Social Policies: “They are good”, Marchini: “Are we on a TV show?”.
Erica Battaglia: “In line with European directives”*

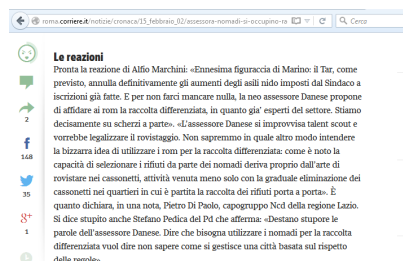
The first selected article appeared on “corriere.it” on 2nd February 2015 and concerns a proposal of the Councillor for Social Policies of the Rome Municipality. The value of the article is certainly positive, it is a proposal that, according to European directives, aims at promoting initiatives for the integration, even in the employment sector, of the Roma citizens in the area. Here are some sentences from the article that reports the Councillor’s statements:



“It is a question of skills”

Danese explained that “there is a problem of reconciliation with the City” because “many people accuse them of being thieves”: to face this situation “we have to do a different job, to restyle the reception policies, to talk to people, to see what they need”. “I’m doing a job concerning their skills and abilities: they are so good in collecting garbage, wastes and materials in disuse - the Councillor said - it would be important, and it had already passed in the Social Policies Committee, being able to give them the opportunity to work for the community and for the City of Rome, collecting this garbage and selecting it”. In this way, Danese specified, “we give a chance for a different employment integration. In some areas, we can even speak about toxic stakes, and then we should find a way to ensure that the waste that they can collect and separate can arise solutions that give a chance to find a job too”.

It is worth noticing the use of terms that evoke a positive feeling and a planning: “reception”, “speaking with people”, “skills and abilities”, “possibility”, “do a job for the community”, “generate solutions”. However the combination of “recovering waste and disused materials” with the Roma’s supposed skills and abilities highlights and reaffirms an existing stereotype, producing a negative labelling of the Roma population. The author of the article, from the formal point of view, does not comment the news and correlates the statements both of the Councillor and of the members of the opposition parties, of whom we report some statements:



The reactions

Alfio Marchini’s reaction is ready: “Another gaffe for Marino: the TAR, as expected, definitively stops the increase of nurseries imposed by the Mayor after registrations already made. And the Councillor Danese suggests engaging Roma people in recycling, as they are already experts of the sector. We are definitely on a TV show”. “Danese thinks to be a talent scout and would

legalize the rummaging. We would not know how to understand the bizarre idea of engaging Roma people for recycling: as it is known, the ability to select the waste by Roma derives from the art of rummaging in bins, activity failed only with the gradual elimination of bins in neighbourhoods where the door to door waste collection begun”. This is what Pietro Di Paolo declares, Ncd leader in Lazio Region. Even Stefano Pedica of the Democratic Party is amazed and affirms: “The Councillor’s words are wondering. To say that we must employ the Roma for recycling means to not know how to manage a City based on the respect of rules”.

The sarcasm that is possible to perceive in the statements of the members of the opposition parties ridicules the Councillor’s proposal: “another gaffe”, “we are on a TV show”, “bizarre idea”. The overall effect is to cancel the positive impact of the initiative and to shift the focus on the vicious association between Roma and waste, between Roma attitude in rummaging in bins and professional expertise on recycling.

THE FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

The following table highlights the “numbers” of participation:

Readers’ comments: 43

Shares on Facebook: 148

Shares on Twitter: 35

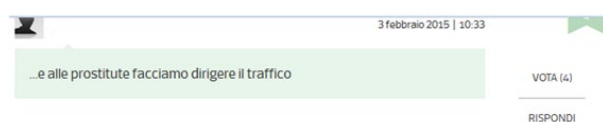
Shares on Google Plus: 1

Other:

The article got 35 votes, generating a prevalent feeling (46% of cases) of “anger” among readers

Comments

The 43 comments have been posted between 2nd and 3rd February, developing chats that in most cases were 3-4 lines long. The following comments are the most significant and show how simple is to pass from irony to sarcasm, and sometimes to abuse:



February 2015 10:33

... and prostitutes shall manage the traffic



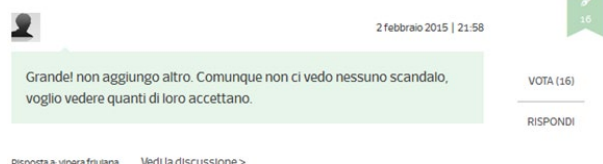
February 2015 10:29

It would be as to elect Dracula for AVIS president



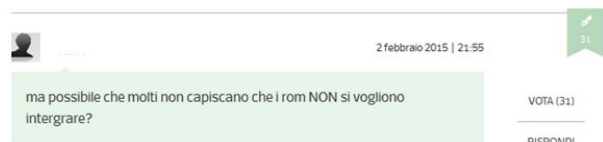
February 3, 2015 9:55

And let's go! Let's build some new cooperative ...
Shame on you



February 2, 2015 21:58

Cool! I do not add more. However I don't see any scandal, I want to see how many of them will accept



February 2, 2015 21:55

But is it possible that the most does not understand that Roma do NOT want to integrate?v



2 febbraio 2015 | 21:26

29

Io avrei un'idea che penso possa essere migliore. Rimandarli al proprio paese.

VOTA (29)

RISPONDI

Vedi la discussione completa >



2 febbraio 2015 | 21:25

37

In effetti dirgli che gli toccherà lavorare potrebbe essere un'eccellente soluzione per farli scappare dall'Italia come razzi. Non mi dispiace affatto questa idea.

VOTA (37)

RISPONDI



2 febbraio 2015 | 21:39

30

Be che c'è di strano ? Si auto raccoglieranno

VOTA (30)

February 2, 2015 21:26

I'd have an idea that should be better, I think: send them back to their own Country.

February 2, 2015 21:25

In fact, telling them that they will have to work should be an excellent solution to get them run away from Italy as rockets. I don't mind this idea.

February 2, 2015 21:39

Well, is that strange? They will collect themselves

Albeit in a general climate of criticism and scepticism towards the proposal, it is in the latter post that the offence against the Roma population sounds stronger as it recorded 30 votes of approval and consensus among the community. In fact, the comments against the initiative are more than those appreciating the objective, but some readers express their thoughts without insulting the Roma population; instead, what distinguishes some statements from the others is the recipient of the message: not politics or the proposal in itself, but the Roma community. In this thin dividing line, we can perhaps trace the frontier between freedom of expression – even disapproval! – and intolerant and offensive speech towards a group that, according to what we read in the article, is a passive subject of a political decision.

SECOND CASE STUDY

Arrigo Sacchi: «Vedere così tanti giocatori di colore è un'offesa per il calcio italiano»



Arrigo Sacchi: “To see so many coloured players is an offense for the Italian football.”

The second case is an article published in *Il Post*, on 17th February and concerns sports; in particular it reports the point of view of a well-known person in Italian football, the former coach of the National football team, Arrigo Sacchi, who answered a question about the situation of the football in Italy. His comment focuses on the presence, exaggerated in his point of view, of foreign players in the Italian teams, but the manner in which his ideas are expressed, and mainly the implicit meaning of his speech, shift the attention to racism:

«Io mi vergogno di essere italiano. Per avere successo siamo disposti a vendere l'anima al diavolo. Non abbiamo una dignità, non abbiamo un orgoglio italiano. Ci sono squadre con 15 stranieri, questo perché si mette il business al primo posto: e quando si mette il business al primo posto il calcio non può avere successo. [...] Oggi vedevo il torneo di Viareggio: io non sono un razzista – ho avuto Rijkaard – ma vedere così tanti giocatori di colore, vedere così tanti stranieri, è un'offesa per il calcio italiano»

“I am ashamed to be Italian. To be successful we are ready to sell our soul to devil. No dignity; no Italian pride. There are teams with 15 foreigners, that's because we put the business at the first place: and when we put the business at the first place the football cannot be successful. [...] Today I saw the Viareggio competition: I'm not a racist - I had Rijkaard - but to see so many coloured players, to see so many foreigners, is an offense for the Italian football.

The confusion between the status of foreigner – which is not always visible to a spectator! – and be black creates this ambiguity: is it an offense for the Italian football to have so many foreigners in teams or “to see” so many black players in the football field? And thus, after being charged of expressing an offensive and racist point of view, Sacchi replies:

«Sono stato travisato, figuratevi se io sono razzista. Ho solo detto che ho visto una partita con una squadra che schierava quattro ragazzi di colore. La mia storia parla chiaro, ho sempre allenato squadre con diversi campioni di colore e ne ho fatti acquistare molti, sia a Milano che a Madrid. Volevo solo sottolineare che stiamo perdendo l'orgoglio e l'identità nazionale»

“I have been misunderstood, would you believe that I'm racist. I've just said that I've seen a match with a team including four coloured boys. My history is clear, I've always trained teams with many coloured champions and I pushed teams to buy many of them, both in Milan and in Madrid. I just wanted to point out that we are losing the national pride and identity”

The statement does not clarify, indeed, it seems to achieve the opposite goal as he reaffirms that the statement came after he “saw” a team with four young black players. Certainly, the different ethnic origin is often visible, but the association black = foreigner and then black player = loss of pride and national identity generates many reactions among the community of readers. Can we identify some responsibility of the author of the article? The article is very poor and quotes almost exclusively these two statements, but it concludes with a comparison between what Sacchi said and a statement of the President of the Italian Federation of Football:

Another unlucky sentence like the Arrigo Sacchi’s one was pronounced by Carlo Tavecchio shortly before he was elected as president of the FIGC. Tavecchio was punished by UEFA for this sentence.

Una frase infelice come questa [era stata pronunciata](#) da Carlo Tavecchio poco prima che venisse eletto presidente della FIGC. Tavecchio è [stato punito](#) dall’UEFA per questa frase.

«Le questioni di accoglienza sono un conto, le questioni del gioco sono un altro. L’Inghilterra individua dei soggetti che entrano, se hanno professionalità per farli giocare, noi invece diciamo che “Opti Pobà” [nome inventato per un presunto giocatore africano] è venuto qua, che prima mangiava le banane e adesso gioca titolare nella Lazio e va bene così»

“The reception issues are a point, the football issues are another point. England identifies some subjects who enter to play football, if they are talented of course, on the contrary we say that “Opti Pobà” [an invented name for an hypothetically African player] is here, before he ate bananas and now plays for Lazio and everything is ok”

In this second case, the racist abuse is even more explicit: the invented name of a foreigner player - that the author of the article combines with the African origin - underlined by “eating bananas”, in the tradition of negative stereotypes and labelling of foreigners, aims at ridiculing the subjects whom we speak about as well as trivializing the issue. This association between the two persons, Sacchi and Tavecchio, strengthens the offensive meaning of the comments and gives a glimpse of a journalist’s position that is supposed to support some form of sanction to Sacchi, as well as it happened to Tavecchio.

THE FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

As shown in the table, the participation of readers, developed in 24 hours (from the morning of 17th February to the morning of 18th February) was intense and produced many shares on social networks:

Readers’ comments: 123

Shares on Facebook: 477

Shares on Twitter: 68

Comments

The reader’s comments begin few minutes after the publication of the article. Given that, there are no statements inciting hatred or explicitly offensive towards the foreigners. However, racism and the expression of own point of views are the focus of the debate among readers and it is pretty clear the reference to stereotypes and prejudices towards foreign players and, in particular, black players (ambiguity remains even in the comments!). Some comments try to bring to the surface the “unspoken” of Sacchi’s statements and the debate among readers becomes more intense:

• 9 mesi fa

Si può dire ciò che si vuole su quest'affermazione, ma chiunque abbia un fratello o un figlio che giochi a calcio sa che spesso ragazzi di colore vengono scelti da squadre di più alto livello perchè più prestanti e più fisici, a discapito di altri più dotati ma meno forti fisicamente. La fisicità fa da padrone rispetto alla tecnica, perchè a livelli giovanili il 'pezzo' è il modo più semplice per far la differenza in partita. E questa differenza deriva da fattori geografici, biologici, di etnia, quello che volete. Come le persone asiatiche hanno il taglio degli occhi diverso, le persone di colore (o nere, o negre, tanto qualunque modo si usi offende una parte del popolo benpensante) sono più prestanti fisicamente. Il problema che a mio avviso Sacchi voleva portare alla luce è questo: si cerca di prevalere con forza e fisicità, non con tecnica e gioco di squadra. O almeno non sufficientemente. E' un po' lo stesso discorso che ha fatto Caressa in un famoso collegamento ai mondiali, solo sostituendo 'quelli grossi' con 'stranieri' o 'di colore'. Non credo che Caressa odiasse 'quelli grossi'.

bring to light is the following: we try to prevail with strength and physicality, not with technique and teamwork. Or at least, not enough. It's the same statement that Caressa made in a famous episode during the World Cup, just by replacing "big ones" with "foreigners" or "coloured". I don't think that Caressa hated the "big ones"



• 9 mesi fa

L'equazione "neri" = "grossi e tecnicamente deboli" è falsa e razzista.

6 ^ | v • Condividi



• 9 mesi fa

Aguero, Tevez, Dybala, Messi... Hai ragione: l'Argentina (che ha all'incirca un patrimonio genetico europeo e all'incirca la popolazione italiana) sforna campioni a decine (più di tutta l'Africa messa insieme) grazie alla prestantia fisica! Seramente, di cosa stiamo parlando? Dei neri che giocano perchè sono grossi e muscolosi? Degli italiani mingherlini e tecnici? Sono puri, semplici, stereotipi razzisti. I calciatori africani sono storicamente poco tecnici per un semplice motivo: in Africa ci sono meno scuole calcio. Vai a vederti i neri cresciuti con le giuste basi: Baldé Keita, Niang (Genoa), Babacar (Fiore), Yaya Toure, Pogba, ecc...

7 ^ | v • Condividi

First comment - 9 months ago

It is possible to say what we want about this statement, but anyone who has a brother or a son playing football knows that often black kids are chosen by high level teams because they are more performing and more physical, despite others more talented but physically less strong. The physical aspect is more important than the technique, because in youth football teams the "piece" is the easiest way to make the difference in the game. And this difference comes from geographical, biological, ethnic features, whatever you want. As Asian people have a different shape of the eyes, coloured people (or black, or nigger, whichever word you use, you offend a part of people) are more performing at physical level. In my opinion, the problem that Sacchi wanted to

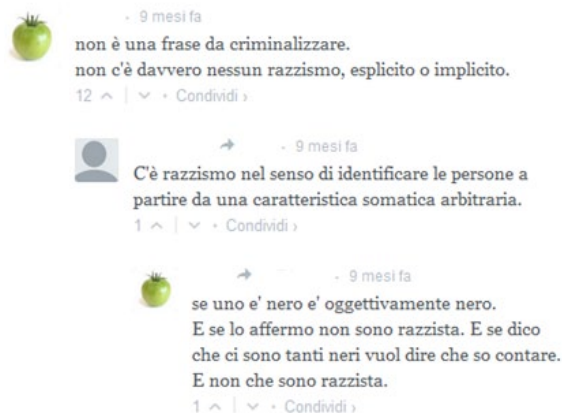
Second comment - 9 months ago

The equation "blacks" = "large and technically weak" is false and racist.

Third comment - 9 months ago

Aguero, Tevez, Dybala, Messi ... You're right: Argentina (which has roughly a genetic European heritage and similar to the Italian population) produces champions in dozens (more than all African countries together) through athleticism! Seriously, what are we talking about? About blacks who play because they are large and muscular? About the Italians undersized and technically strong? These are pure, simple racist stereotypes. The African players are technically less strong for a simple reason: in Africa there are fewer football schools. Go and see the black players who grew up with the right basis: Baldé Keita, Niang (Genoa), Babacar (Fiore), Yaya Toure, Pogba, etc ...

We are talking about an issue, the racist statements, that creates uncertainty and confusion among readers, above all since the use of a terminology that labels diversity is not synonymous of "racist thinking" for some readers.



First comment - 9 months ago

It is not a sentence to be criminalized. there's not any racism, expressed or implied.

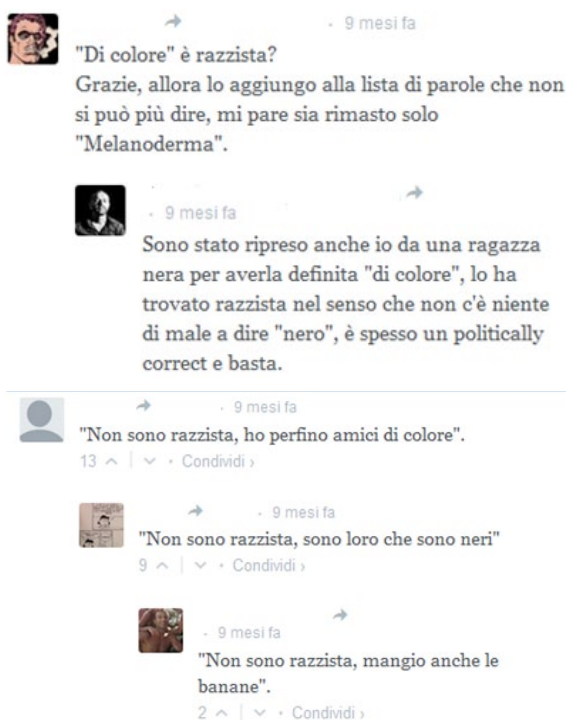
Second comment - 9 months ago

There is racism in the sense of identifying people from a somatic arbitrary characteristic.

Third comment - 9 months ago

if someone is black is objectively black. And if I affirm it I am not racist. And if I say that there are many blacks means that I can count. And that I am not racist.

So, besides the several comments aimed at interpreting and emphasizing one or another aspect of the sportsmen's statements, some readers better fit with an ironic and sarcastic register, highlighting sentences of common sense:



First comment - 9 months ago

"Coloured" is racist? Thanks, then I add it to the list of words that we cannot say any more, I think there is only "melanoderma" left.

Second comment - 9 months ago

A black girl has also pointed me because I called her "coloured", she found it racist in the sense that there is anything wrong saying "black". Very often it is just a politically correct and that's it.

Third comment - 9 months ago

"I'm not racist, I have even coloured friends"

Fourth comment - 9 months ago

"I'm not racist, but they are coloured"

Fifth comment - 9 months ago

"I'm not racist, I eat bananas too".

THIRD CASE STUDY

Terni, giovane sgozzato con una bottiglia: “Sto morendo, dite ai miei che gli voglio bene”

David Raggi ammazzato con una bottiglia rotta che gli ha reciso l'aorta alla gola. L'aggressione fuori da un locale, tra le ipotesi anche quella che la vittima sia stata colpita a caso tra la folla. Arrestato il presunto assassino: si tratterebbe di un giovane di nazionalità marocchina.



Terni – young boy killed with a bottle: “I’m dying, tell my parents that I love them”.

David Raggi killed with a broken bottle that has cut his throat artery. The attack was perpetrated in front of a nightclub; among the hypothesis there is also the possibility that the victim was struck randomly in the crowd. The alleged killer has been arrested: he would be a young man of Moroccan nationality.

The third is a case of crime news. In Terni, in the month of March, a boy was stabbed and killed, as quoted in the title and subtitle of the article published on Fan Page; the alleged murderer is a young man from Morocco, who irregularly lives in Italy. The citizenship and the status of the alleged murderer are shown both in the subtitle and contained in the article, as well as his name and surname, regardless of the consequences it may cause:

morto poco dopo. Dopo alcuni accertamenti, gli agenti di polizia hanno rintracciato un uomo sospettato di essere l'aggressore che è stato posto in stato di fermo. Si tratta di Amine Aassoul, marocchino di ventinove anni che al momento dell'arresto era a dorso nudo e ancora in evidente stato di agitazione. L'aggressore era stato espulso nel 2007, ma era riuscito a fare ritorno in Italia da clandestino, chiedendo poi asilo politico. La richiesta fu respinta.

[he] died shortly after. After some investigations, the policemen have found a man suspected of being the aggressor who was placed in custody. He is Amine Aassoul, Moroccan, twenty-nine years old who, at the time of the arrest, was shirtless and still in a visible state of agitation. The aggressor had been expelled in 2007, but he returned to Italy as an illegal, asking then for political asylum. His request was rejected.

Contrary to what the “Guidelines for the application of the Charter of Rome” (Linee guida per l’applicazione della Carta di Roma - page 7) recommend, the journalist gives details on the status of the alleged murderer so as to induce in the community feelings of hatred and terror. In fact, rather than emphasize the fact - then full-blown - that the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol, the author emphasizes his illegal status. A few days after the fact, another news has been reported by the same newspaper: the brother of the alleged murderer is now the victim of an attack by a group of boys.

Ragazzo ucciso a Terni, l'imam: "Pestato il fratello dell'omicida"

Il fratello del marocchino accusato di aver ucciso la scorsa settimana il giovane David Raggi a Terni sarebbe stato aggredito in un parcheggio da un gruppo di ragazzi.

Boy killed in Terni, the imam: "the murderer's brother was beaten up"

The brother of the Moroccan accused of killing the young David Raggi in Terni last week, would have been attacked in a parking lot by a group of boys.

The "Moroccan" label still remains so as to indicate the alleged perpetrator and the article continues to give information on the current victim of the incident:



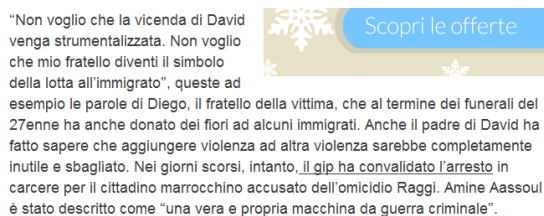
Imam del centro culturale islamico della città, Mimoun El Hachmi. Il fratellastro di Amine Aassoul, il marocchino accusato di aver ucciso con una bottigliata alla gola il 27enne David Raggi, sarebbe stato pestato da un gruppo di giovani. "Io ho parlato con il padre del ragazzo che mi ha raccontato quello che è successo – ha detto all'Adnkronos l'imam di Terni – Un gruppo di persone lo hanno picchiato ieri sera, per fortuna non è grave. Non è andato in ospedale e non vuole fare denuncia perché ha paura. Anche il padre ha paura per la sua famiglia". Da quanto si apprende, almeno per il momento, la famiglia del presunto assassino di David non ha sporto denuncia né alla polizia né ai carabinieri. Il giovane, che ha circa 20 anni ed è figlio della stessa madre (padre diverso) del presunto omicida di David Raggi, non si sarebbe rivolto alle cure del pronto soccorso di Terni e ora si troverebbe in Marocco.

The half brother of Amine Aassoul, the Moroccan accused of having killed David Raggi, 27 years old, with a bottle against his throat, would be beaten up by a group of young people. "I spoke with the boy's father who told me what happened – the imam of Terni explained to Adnkronos - A group of people beat him up last night, fortunately anything serious. He did not go to the hospital and did not want to report the aggression because he is afraid. His father is afraid for his family too". According to the last

news, at least for the moment, the family of the alleged murderer of David has not denounced the fact to the police. The young man, who is about 20 years old and is son of the same mother (different father) of the alleged murderer of David Raggi, would not be gone to the first aid station of Terni and now he should be in Morocco.

The vagueness of that "group of people beat him up", without any particular detail on the incident, associated to other elements, such as "he did not go to the hospital", "he does not want to sue", details repeated several times, give the idea that there is no certainty of what happened. Even the tense of the last sentence, "he would not have gone to the first aid station..." and "now he would be in Morocco" create an uncertain situation.

Then the article continues:



"Non voglio che la vicenda di David venga strumentalizzata. Non voglio che mio fratello diventi il simbolo della lotta all'immigrato", queste ad esempio le parole di Diego, il fratello della vittima, che al termine dei funerali del 27enne ha anche donato dei fiori ad alcuni immigrati. Anche il padre di David ha fatto sapere che aggiungere violenza ad altra violenza sarebbe completamente inutile e sbagliato. Nei giorni scorsi, intanto, il gip ha convalidato l'arresto in carcere per il cittadino marocchino accusato dell'omicidio Raggi. Amine Aassoul è stato descritto come "una vera e propria macchina da guerra criminale".

I don't want David's event to be exploited. I don't want that my brother becomes the symbol of the struggle against the immigrant", these are Diego's words, the brother of the victim who, at the end of the funeral of the victim, has even given flowers to some immigrants. David's father affirmed that adding violence to violence would be completely

useless and wrong. During the last days, the GIP (Investigating Magistrate) decided for the detainment of the Moroccan citizen accused of the Raggi murder. Amin Aassoul has been described as "a real criminal war machine".

This conclusion, in the way it is written without citing the source or specifying in what circumstances a similar definition was registered, labels in a brutal way the alleged murderer: “a real criminal war machine”.

We have highlighted a few sentences of the two articles that seem to be aimed at a sensationalist representation of the facts rather than at a respectful reconstruction of the role of all the actors involved.

THE FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

This case is probably the one that in the monitored period and in the selected newspapers mainly involved public opinion. Both the active participation of readers through their comments and the shares on social media have been really extensive. We distinguish between the first article (A - the murder of the boy) and the second one (B - the aggression towards the alleged murderer's brother):

Readers' comments (news A): 223

Shares on Facebook (news A): 33.432

Readers' comments (news B): 82

Shares on Facebook (news B): 3.089

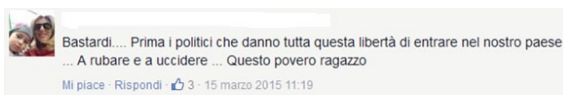
Comments

There are many cases of hate speech in the comments to the two articles. In some cases (not many, actually), readers followed the sequence of the news and commented both before and after the facts. Messages of condolences are combined with expressions of hatred, resentment and contempt towards both the case itself and towards what the alleged perpetrator represents: the Other, the stranger, the other who commits crimes and who lives illegally in a country. Insults and verbal violence are exemplified as follows through some selected posts:



15 March 2015 11:43

Dammed bastards immigrants, you escape from your Countries because of the wars and then you come here and do whatever you want



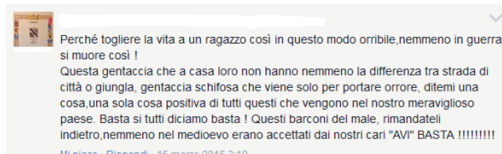
15 March 2015 11:19

Bastards First of all the politicians who give all this freedom to enter our Country ... to steal and kill ... this poor guy



March 15, 2015 9:41

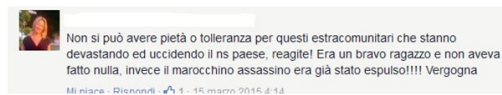
Let's begin to defend us by ourselves, alone!!! ..and then we will see if things change!!



that come just only to bring horror. Tell me one thing, just one positive thing about all these people who come to our beautiful country. Stop yes, we all say stop! These evil boats, let's get them back away, neither in the Middle Ages they were accepted by our loved, "ANCESTORS" STOP !!!!!!!

March 15, 2015 3:19

Why to take the life away from a boy in a so horrible way... neither during wartime it is possible to die in such way! This bad people who, neither at their home, do not see the difference between a city or jungle road, filthy bad people



March 15, 2015 4:14

It is impossible to show compassion or tolerance for those immigrants who are destroying and killing our country, react! He was a good boy and he didn't do anything wrong, on the contrary the Moroccan murderer had already been sent off !!!! Shame



March 15, 2015 5:34

Let's do as in America ...shot him in his headNow we will have him in the national prisons at our expense



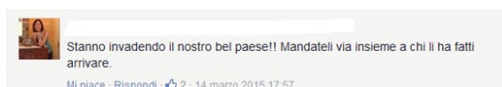
March 15, 2015 5:29

The amazing thing is this Moroccan had also asked for political asylum in Italy! Political asylum to do what? Killing people? We should start to be inflexible with those who take advantage of the Italian reception in order to break the law



14 March 2015 18:09

But how is it possible to do such a thing??? !! It is not even imaginable to consider him as a human being! I wonder that there is the death penalty for such cases!



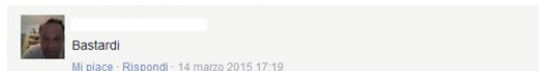
14 March 2015 17:57

They are invading our beautiful country!! Send them away along with those who brought them in.



14 March 2015 17:46

I bet the authorities will release him soon? I wish him the crueller pains in this world for this dammed filthy drunkard!!!



14 March 2015 17:19

Bastards



14 March 2015 19:07

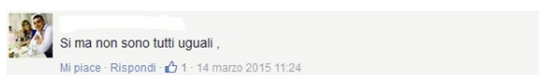
Do you want all these monsters in our country? Have the coherence to complain now, but also complain whenever rabble arrive in Italy. Otherwise there will be ALWAYS such cases. National Resistance



March 14, 2015 7:57

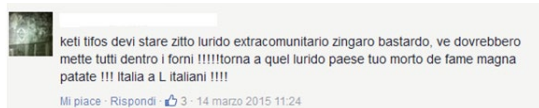
I would have killed the Moroccan. This filthy. It sucks. This sick people out of Italy. Animals out!

Among the comments, more or less in line with those already mentioned and others that express solidarity and sympathy to the family of the killed boy, it is possible to hint some comments of people with foreign origin who express their point of view. Users railed at a reader in particular:



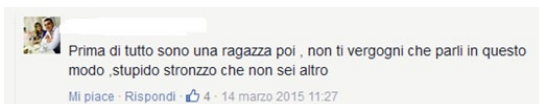
14 March 2015 11:24

But they are not all the same



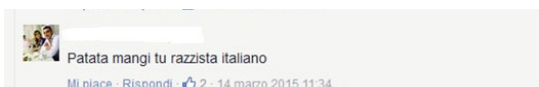
14 March 2015 11:24

you must shut up filthy immigrant bastard Gypsy, someone should put all of you inside the ovens !!!!! come back to your dirty country starved to death eating potatoes !!! Italy to Italians !!!!!



14 March 2015 11:27

First of all I am a girl, then are you not ashamed to talk like that, stupid and asshole you are



14 March 2015 11:34

you eat potatoes Italian racist

Even in this case, there is not any moderation or form of intervention by the editorial staff, despite the offences become very serious and the racist hate speech is not clamped down, except for those limits that the community of readers can create by their own. In fact, in front of other comments by the reader of foreign origin, some readers always answer to her with anger and aggression, but trying to explain their point of view, without personally hurt her.

A few days later, the second article stimulates a large participation of readers, with a hotly worded and sometimes sarcastic debate. Some readers have the doubt that this second event has not taken place:



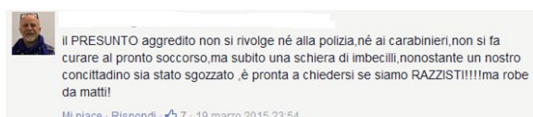
19 March 2015 17:47

This is beautiful and it is almost the Italy that I dream for the future I would beat up from the son to the grandmother, all Moroccan Maghreb Negroes Chinese etc away from Italy....



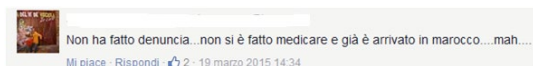
March 20, 2015 5:09

It looks like an unfunded story ... beaten up and then he comes back to Morocco ... but he does not go to the hospital! It seems to me that the Country is in solidarity with them ... why they do not show what they have done ???????



19 March 2015 23:54

The ALLEGED attacked does not address to the police, he does not go to the first aid station, but suddenly a group of idiots, despite one of our fellow citizen has been killed, is ready to wonder if we are RACIST !!!!! crazy!



19 March 2015 14:34

He did not report to the police ... he did not receive any care and he has already arrived in Morocco ... mah ...

FOURTH CASE STUDY

**Addio Italia, immigrati tornano a casa.
'Business difficile e giovani senza futuro'**



Goodbye Italy, immigrants come back home. “Business is difficult and young people don’t have a future”

This case study concerns the phenomenon of migrants who come back to the countries of origin, which seems to grow. The article was published on 8th March on the online newspaper *Il Fatto Quotidiano*. To be consistent with the Charter of Rome (Carta di Roma), the journalist underlines the phenomenon quoting the point of view of some former immigrants who, for different reasons, left Italy and reports, putting them between quotation marks, their statements. Interviewees are men and women who have had business activities and have lived for a time in Italy; they are craftsmen, researchers, professionals and freelance, with educational qualifications and important professional experiences. Despite a proper and respectful analysis of the topic, reader’s comments are sarcastic towards the phenomenon and migrants as well.

THE FORMS OF PARTICIPATION

Readers participate in different ways to the sharing and processing of the text, using not only Facebook and Twitter, but also Google Plus and expressing their comments with elaborate speeches, citing statistics, as well as links and historical references. In the table, it is possible to analyze the numbers of participation. It is worth noticing that, compared to other newspapers, *Il Fatto Quotidiano* intervenes in the chats removing unacceptable contents. In this case 13 comments have been censored:

Reader’s Comments: 968

Shares of Facebook: 1.900

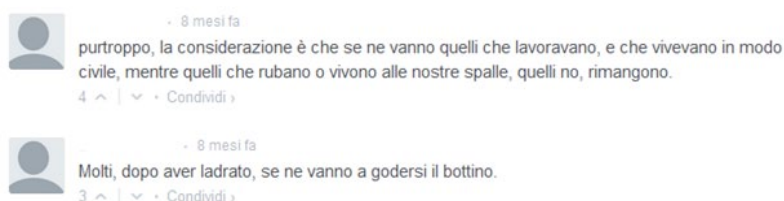
Shares on Twitter: 226

Shares on Google Plus: 148

Comments

As mentioned above, the comments reported in this case study are many and pretty elaborate, with long statements and descriptions of the different points of view and wide references to the Italian political scene. Among them there are “allegations” to the newspaper to publish articles (such as the analysed

one) for other reasons: political consensus, legitimacy of immigration policies, pure exploitation or do-goodery. In a heated debate about responsibility and guilt of the different actors and institutional subjects cited by the readers, there are offensive comments and comments which reflect in any case a feeling of intolerance towards immigrants. For instance here are some comments which, once again, use a stereotyped and denigrating language:

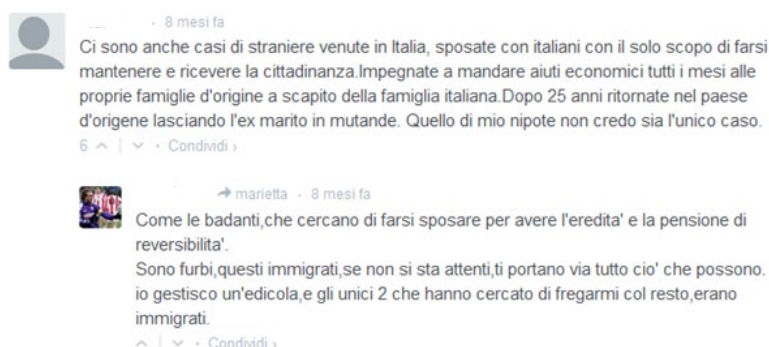


First comment

Unfortunately, the consideration is that only those who worked and lived in a civilized manner left, while those who steal or live behind us, those ones don't leave, they remain

Second comment

most of them, after stealing, leave to enjoy the loot



Third comment

There are also cases of foreign women who came in Italy, got married with Italians with the only goal of getting maintained and receiving the citizenship. Engaged to send economic aids every month to their families of origin at the expense of the Italian family. After 25 years they come back to their country of origin, leaving their former-husband without anything. It's my nephew's case, I do not think it is the only one.

Fourth comment

Like caregivers, who try to get married for the legacy and the survivor's pension. They are clever, these immigrants, if you are not careful, they take away you everything they can. I manage a newspaper stand, and the only two who have tried to cheat me with the change, were immigrants



→ marietta · 8 mesi fa

Hai ragione da vendere, più se ne vanno meno parassiti da cui guardarsi

2 ^ | v · Condividi »

Fifth comment

You're right, the more of them leave and the less parasites to watch out



· 8 mesi fa

Mah! Per me questi immigrati sono solo dei parassiti.

Dicono che l'Italia, dopo 10/15 anni che ci hai vissuto, è diventata casa loro; ma appena inizia la crisi se ne scappano.

Della serie, sfruttiamo finché possiamo..poi chi se visto, se visto.

Siamo tutti capaci a far così.

1 ^ | v · Condividi »

Sixth comment

Mah! For me, these immigrants are just parasites. They say that Italy, after 10/15 years that they have lived here, has become their home; but as soon as the crisis began they run away. That's sounds as "we exploit it until we can" ... then goodbye. Everybody can do like that.

Thieves, cunning people, parasites, exploiters are some of the terms used to characterize immigrants. Tones are certainly rude, but it is necessary to emphasize that the action of censorship of some comments by the editorial staff may have hidden even more violent statements as well as hate speech comments.

FIFTH CASE STUDY

Charlie Hebdo, è caccia ai due killer nel nord della Francia

La polizia francese ha pubblicato le foto segnaletiche dei due presunti attentatori, sono due fratelli franco-algerini di 32 e 34 anni, Said e Cherif Kouachi. Incerto il ruolo di un 18enne in stato di fermo. Intanto una nuova sparatoria a sud di Parigi terrorizza i francesi.



Charlie Hebdo, two killers hunting in Northern France

French police published the mug shots of the two suspected bombers; they are two Franco-Algerian brothers of 32 and 34 years old, Said and Cherif Kouachi. Unsure role of a 18 years-old in custody. Meanwhile, a new shooting in the South of Paris terrifies France.

The beginning of 2015 was marked by the terrorist attack to the editorial staff of the satirical newspaper “Charlie Hebdo” in Paris. A tragic event, with strong global repercussions, which saw the overlapping of journalistic voices and information flows generated by web users. However the media uproar, which involved even the surveyed newspapers, did not lead to particularly significant cases of hate speech. Maybe the community of readers monitored had been absorbed by other priorities, rather than commenting the articles or expressing, even violently, their point of view. Other priorities or, perhaps, other dedicated places, such as social networks, in which shares and debates were numerous.

Nevertheless, in the days following the events in Paris, during the search of two suspected bombers, we have selected an example of comment, which shows remarkable characteristics and can be assimilated to racist comments. The comment is partially “inspired” by an article published on Fan Page on 8th January, which collected more than 10.700 shares on Facebook. The post was published by an Italian reader emigrated in Japan who, starting from the facts of Paris, criticises the “Western” way of life. In particular, he opposes the Japanese “paradise” to the current situation in Italy and rails against specific ethnic groups to whom he addresses a highly derogatory offence. It is clear that in this case, the space of comments is a pretext to reveal its own hatred towards a country and some people living there, without any particular relevance to the subject of the article. The next comment by another reader accentuates the tone of criticism and contempt.



First comment

Oh my God! How disgusting is living in the West. Now I am in Japan. Here it is a paradise on earth. Here Gypsies, Moroccans, Afghan, Bangladeshi etc ... do not exist. Only the thought of coming back to Italy in the middle of that putrid people makes me siiiiiick!!!!

Second comment

You are definitely right. Italy has become a big ‘cloaca’.

Third comment: Lucky you...

Although the comment did not generated further statements, we cannot know how many times it has been displayed by the readers. The number of “likes” received - 5 in total, is meagre. From such an example we may ask whether the indifference of the community of readers had a limiting effect of inhibition and therefore further expressions of hatred did not occur; at the same time there are some doubts about the suitability of keeping the comment published on the page, without any editorial intervention, a comment that does not contribute to the development of a debate, nor is particularly relevant to the subject of the journalist.

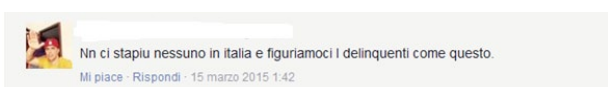
Rhetoric of racist speech and communication functions

The selected comments are indicative of a situation of distress, a difficult coexistence, a fear of the foreigner, perceived as hostile, threatening, aggressive which in the comments becomes controversy, lament, arrogance, hate speech. In the previous analysis we highlighted only examples of hate speech comments, ignoring many comments carrying positive frame of interpretation and legitimizing the presence of foreigners. But there is no doubt that the conversation on the web about this issue brings to a faster, hasty comparison and therefore to an exacerbation of the point of view and that readers tend to radicalize their positions. Concerning the case studies, we tried to analyse a sort of typology of readers based on the most frequent rhetoric of racist discourse. In fact, each point of view on immigration reveals an adhesion, more or less explicit and more or less aware, to the “vox populi” that occurs in chats about migration. As “racist” is a little-used epithet, we have found those roots of legitimacy of one’s thought so as the reader feels “entitled” to contribute. The following statements are, for several reasons, linked to the rhetoric that is usually attributed to the racist hate speech such as “I am not racist, BUT ...” which, as many experts have pointed out, only confirms the label from which the authors of the comments want to escape. An example taken from the case studies underlines this thought that, in different forms and modalities, is frequent also in the cases studied:



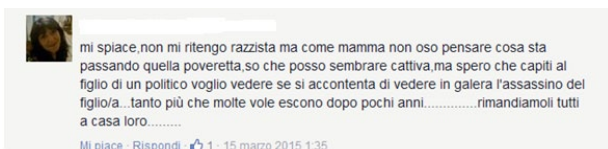
March 15, 2015 1:43

They are racist because they attack us, however he must rot in prison !!!



March 15, 2015 1:42

Nobody lives in Italy any more, much less criminals like this one



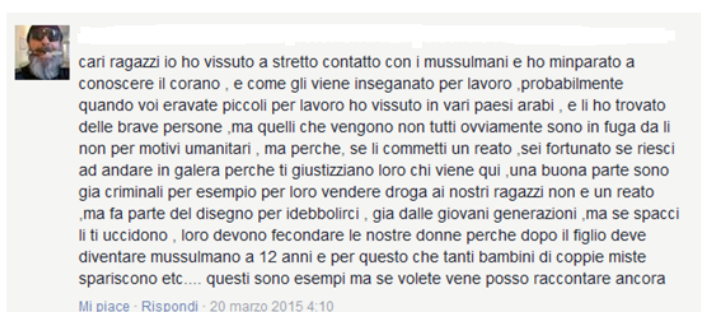
March 15, 2015 1:35

I’m sorry, I do not feel racist but as a mom I don’t dare to think what that poor woman is feeling now, I know I can look bad, but I hope that it happens to a son of a politician, I want to see if he is

happy just seeing the murderer of his son/daughter in jail... especially if they go out after few years as it happens many times.....let’s get them come back home

I know them

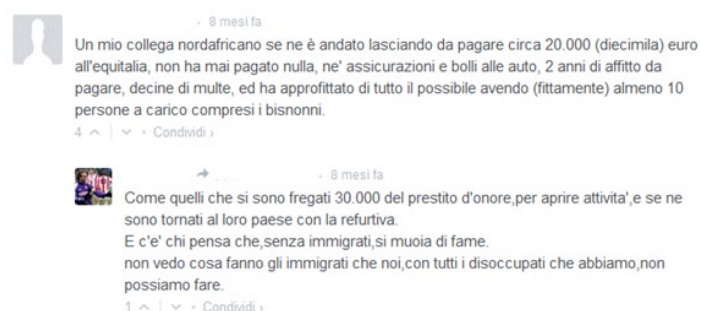
“I talk like this because I know them” is one of the strongest roots of legitimacy of the thought. Some readers preface by saying that the expressed point of view is the result of a personal experience - in a foreign country, with foreign friends, etc. - and therefore it is more aware. The author of the comment presents himself/herself as “expert on the issue” and on this condition he/she bases the credibility of his/her point of view and tries to gain trust and confidence within the community of readers. However, as in the following example, this supposed “knowledge” of immigrants is a way to draw distinctions between “Us” and “Them”, with a superficial description of this described “Otherness”.



First comment

Dear guys, I used to live in close contact with Muslims and I learned about the Koran and how it is taught, probably when you were young, I lived for business in several Arab Countries, and I have found there good people, but those who come are not obviously all escaping from their countries for humanitarian reasons, but

because if you commit a crime there, you're lucky if you can go to jail because they execute you, most of the people who come here are already criminals for example, to sell their drugs to our children is not a crime, but it is part of the design to weaken us, starting from the younger generations, but if you push there, they'll kill you, they must inseminate our women because after the child must become a Muslim when he will be 12 years old, that is why so many children of mixed couples disappear etc. these are examples but if you want I can tell you many more.

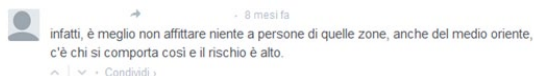


Second comment

A colleague of mine, who is North African, left without paying about 20,000 (ten thousand) Euros to Equitalia, he has never paid anything, nor insurance and tax for the car, 2 years of rent to pay, dozens of fines, and he has exploited anything possible having (thickly) at least 10 dependents including great-grandparents.

Third comment

As those who have cheated 30,000 of loan of honour, to open business and they have come back to their country with the stolen goods. And some people think that, without immigrants, we starve. I do not see what immigrants can do that we cannot do, with all the unemployed people.

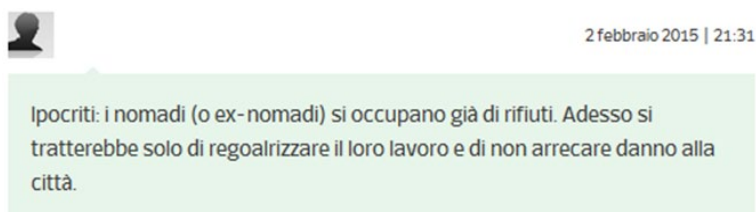


Fourth comment

In fact, it is better not to rent anything to people of those areas, even from the Middle East, there is someone who behaves like that and the risk is high.

I say what other people think

“If other people do not express racist ideas, it is because they are hypocrites. I am not. So I do”, this seems the logical sequence of thought of those who refer to the rhetoric of the ‘hypocrite conformist’. The source of legitimacy is the supposed greater sincerity and honesty of those who express their contempt and dissent, even if in a “hot-blooded” way. Allegations of this type of readers are addressed towards other citizens, towards the politicians who don’t want to see the obvious and who, due to opportunism, don’t say what they “really” think, towards those who hide behind a ‘too indulgent’ thought. Therefore, according to this logical scheme, an hypocrite thought.



February 2, 2015 / 21:31

Hypocrites: Roma people (or former-Roma) are already working on waste recycling. Now it should be opportune just to regularize their work and to not damage the city.

They force me to be racist

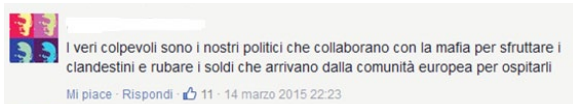
“I would not be racist, but other people force me to be like that ...”; this rhetoric is often accompanied by criticism and controversies towards the “system” – political, institutional, judicial, economic, the Government – or towards some politicians of the recent past or of nowadays, to whom blames and responsibilities are attributed.

The author of the comment is urged to express his/her own hostility, in an offensive way, by “external forces” to his/her will and thereby legitimizes his/her aggressive and violent behaviour. Sometimes this rhetoric is used to affirm his/her own political beliefs and the hatred expressed towards migrants is a specious way to express contempt towards a political party. The author needs, in these circumstances, to answer to the silence or to the non-activism of the institutions, so he/she gets angry with immigrants because he/she considers them a “punishment” that we deserve somehow, as Italians, citizens of a politically weak and passive country. Therefore, in this rhetoric two different dimensions of racist discourse converge: the first one towards the migrant itself and the second one towards the ‘opportunistic’ migrant who managed to seize a chance within the ‘flaws’ of the country.



March 14 2015 22:47

Why they do not bring them back to their countries
... Italy, with this policy, made us racists ...



March 14 2015 22:23

The real guilty are our politicians who collaborate with
Mafia to exploit illegal immigrants and steal the money
coming from the European Community to house them



March 14 2015 21:03

Our politicians killed him. They allow these people
ruining our country. I'm sorry forgive me thank you
I love you.

If these are the most frequent rhetorics of the detected hate speech, it is necessary to analyse what are the communicative functions at which the racist discourse seems to aim. We associated some of the functions of the communication according to the traditional Malinowski's classification to what we found in the case studies, in order to define a classification of the authors of comments expressing intolerance or hatred towards ethnic diversity or the migration phenomenon.

Pragmatic function ➤ Communication may intend to produce or coordinate actions, to act in a concerted way with other people, thus to promote or favour the action or it may be itself an action that will produce real effects. In the reported comments, all the exhortations to “do” something towards (against) immigrants are gathered into this kind of function; they are imperative statements like “we rise up!”, “let’s kick out them”, “send them away” that can have even stronger and violent tones.

Identifying function ➤ In communication, our identity is expressed: we show others who we are and we present an image of us. This is done intentionally when we use terms and concepts that reveal the way we would like others to see us or talk about our status, our social roles; but it also occurs in an indirect and unintentional way whenever we show constitutive aspects of our identity. Most of the collected comments tend to perform this identity function and many can be the elements that an aggressive and racist speech wants to see recognized by the community: from the bravery of saying to the rationality of doing – “they should all be exterminated”, “it is necessary the death penalty!”, “I would beat all of them up” – but also the reader who considers him/herself as a cultured person and supports his/her own ideas with data and historical circumstances or the sarcastic person who wants to inspire a feeling of sympathy in the community – “Foreigners go?!? Noooo, now that we could fire them as we want!”, or again, the person who wants to show some wisdom: “we are not surprised if racism is rampant among Italians: foreigners have never brought anything good”.

In this group all readers declare, more or less explicitly, their political identity, so as the offense towards other readers or towards immigrants is intended to express a political statement.

Social function ➤ Interpersonal communication can be designed to establish relationships; it can be used to create, maintain or change social relations and the mutual recognition among people. Similarly, in the online chats, talking with other people, sharing their own points of view can represent a goal in itself as well as a supplementary function. The author of a comment needs to express his/her own opinion because he/she is searching for a sharing in the Other: not necessarily an agreement –to communicate means to share, not to have the same idea - but sharing a personal feeling, regardless of the reactions that such sharing could generate. This function seems to be well expressed in these comments aiming at “opening the eyes” to other readers: “but don’t you realize that they are invading us?!?”, “don’t you notice that we cannot even walk in peace on the street?”.

Profiles of the authors of the racist expressions

Comments to articles come from authors who want to be part of a debate as to express an emotion or a thought or to take part in a conversation, addressing their own message to a specific member of the community. Therefore some forms of “communication to” and “communication with” coexist: in the first case, the post will be published after the other comments, following a time sequence, while in the second case it is a virtual discussion, recreating a kind of a face to face conversation. In both cases, there are no particular personal characteristics of the authors of comments: men and women, with different political ideas, resident in different Italian regions (these data are available only in some websites), of different ages. They are in most cases Italian citizens, although in the monitored cases there were some comments by foreign citizens, currently on the Italian territory, or citizens of Italian origin who moved long time ago to a foreign country.

As noted above, for the purposes of this research, we have underestimated the positive comments on migration and migrants: positive comments have been numerous and often written in opposition to the more aggressive comments from which people want to dissociate themselves. We cannot assess whether and how the presence of these comments is useful to balance the tone of the discussions; but we can affirm that a moral and benevolent vision towards migrants or comments aiming at emphasizing only the positive aspects of migrations sometimes stimulates even more offensive answers.

It is worth noticing that even among racist hate speech different “profiles” of authors of comments can be traced, according to all the ‘weak’ signals that a comment can reveal. It is relevant, especially for the purposes of a hypothetical moderation by the editorial staffs, to identify some profiles of authors of comments:

Resigned: their expressions conceal a criticism to the country, a disappointment towards politicians, who should have done something for them and did not improve their quality of life. The resigned are those who, in this specific context and mood of opinion, pick on immigrants, but in the future they could express hatred against any other “scapegoat”. Some readers, for example, attribute to foreign people some generic “sins” such as: stealing jobs to Italians, littering the city, exploiting the country, etc .

Angry: behind some comments, it is possible to read a polemical and rancorous approach towards a non-management of migration flows. The angry don’t insult the migrant in him/herself, but what he/she represents. They express an angry point of view and vent their feelings, emotions and the discomfort of a forced cohabitation that, above all, has not been managed by institutions. The angry tend to highlight the “more favourable” treatment that local and national administrators concede to immigrants in comparison with natives: if they commit crimes, they are not adequately punished, if they are involved in tax evasion, they are not persecuted, etc.

Aggressive: this attitude is not supported by real contents. Migrant is violently attacked - without having a specific knowledge or making ethnic differences - with a derogatory and offensive “verbal” behaviour, a negative, hard and unchanging labelling. The aggressive person rails against the foreigner, with a particularly abusive terminology, criticizing: health conditions, morality, civic behaviours, somatic and physical traits, opportunism (mainly economic), cultural marginality and low intelligence, occupation and invasion of a territory which does not belong to them and much more. It is among these readers that racist hate speech becomes more difficult to manage or handle, because the aggressive does not see in migrants a person whom to deal with, but only an obstacle to be removed.

Concluding remarks

This first step of research highlights some important connotative aspects about online chats, that will be further clarified and deepened by the following analysis of the interviews to journalists and professionals. Firstly, in the reported cases we didn't notice a frequent use of moderation instruments by the editorial staffs, not even when the language becomes heavily offensive. Some newspapers censored a single comment, but they left all related comments, creating thus a real difficulty in reading and reconstructing the debate. We never identified other “active” moderation instruments, i.e.: an explicit intervention of an administrator or moderator who brings the discussion on acceptable tones or who reminds readers to use appropriately the space for comments. The “pro-active” moderation instruments are absent too; they aim at encouraging the peaceful dialogue among readers or at enabling and legitimizing some comments which can be more useful and constructive for the debate. Consequently it emerges that the space dedicated to comments to the articles is quite free: here, it is possible to say less or more everything, without the attentive presence of the editorial staff. We can also examine whether the community of readers have a sort of “self-made” tools for the management of the debate as well as natural antidotes to the ‘racist disease’. According to our research, we noticed that more objective and aware interventions can shift the tone of the conversation and weakening, thus, the intensity of statements, as well as those comments aiming at achieving a position of mediation between two extreme points of view. However, such behaviours, in order to be effective, must be supported by specific “structural” moderation instruments, activated by editorial staffs and not entirely left to the good will of a single reader.

A further observation concerns the type of selected articles: we chose to analyse not only crime news or law reports (there was no lack of these kind of articles during the 3 months of monitoring), because it is well known that, concerning a violent event, the emotional involvement is stronger and therefore even the reaction of the community presents more dramatic and drastic tones, as the case of Terni has emphasized. However, we wanted to represent the hate speech even through other issues: sports, social policies, demographic and cultural aspects, in which the racist hatred can arise in response to a statement pronounced by a public body, a political or institutional actor and so within a particular framework of the issue given in the article, but also as an instinctive expression of a reader who expresses a feeling of hatred regardless the way in which the topic is expressed in the article. It is possible to state that, although the news stories intensify and boost aggressive comments, no specific topic is free from such risk and the newspapers must be responsible of monitoring the quality of the debate.

IV. THE ITALIAN JOURNALISM AND THE CHALLENGE OF ONLINE HATE SPEECH

Objectives and Methodology

The second phase of research is aimed at analysing the different experiences of the Italian editorial staffs and how they have so far thought about and faced the management of their own community and, therefore, the cases of hate speech.

We have contacted the main Italian newspapers so as to highlight the best practices of hate speech prevention and management. We have interviewed 4 directors / editors, 3 responsible persons in community management, 3 experts in social media strategy, 3 bloggers of national newspapers, 2 representatives of associations working on media and immigration, 2 public bodies (OSCAD and UNAR). The newspapers and the key informants²⁷ were selected from information gathered in the first phase of research and in order to identify “best practices” that can be an incentive and inspiration for other initiatives at national level and beyond. The interviews were conducted face to face when possible and by telephone as an alternative, during the period April-October 2015.

The discussions with professionals were aimed at exploring their point of view on specific issues, particularly on two dimensions:

- The management of the online newspaper. The first dimension concerns the context. We wanted to see what kind of and how many professionals are involved in the community management of the online newspaper and / or of its social networks, and to understand the editorial staff’s objectives concerning the relationship with users and readers;
- The management of comments and racist hate speech. Focusing on the object of the research, we gathered practices experienced by interviewees for the management of comments, especially when they result in offenses or in the use of impolite terms. Within this dimension we focused, whenever possible, on experiences of management of chats about the immigration issue, also in order to understand whether there are peculiarities about this issue in comparison with other topics.

The dimension of management has been associated to the paths of the editorial staff in order to understand if the current way of working of each newspaper had been preceded by other kind of experiences, such as failed attempts or different organizational structures experienced in the past. Since we conducted semi-structured interviews²⁸, in which the layout of the interview was just a draft, much of the collected texts includes information related to interviewee’s professional background that it is not reported here, but can be important, mainly for the difference between interviewees linked to traditional journalism and “digital natives” journalists who started their profession only (or primarily) on the web. The collected data are analysed by identifying significant dichotomies that have crossed all, or almost

²⁷ Attached to this report the list of the interviewees.

²⁸ Attached to this report the layout of the interview.

all, the opinions. They are the common threads on which the analysis of the professionals most frequently focused and about which we noted different and heterogeneous points of view, as a sort of continuum between the following dimensions.

Freedom of expression Vs Regulation

The web and even more the social networks are often indicated as the ‘disintermediation’ place, the direct relation and therefore, the close meeting between sender and receiver, in a possible alternation of roles between information producers and consumers. Even when this meeting takes place in an organized and managed environment, such as a newspaper where the journalist – sender has a clearly defined role, there is still the possibility to add points of view, testimonies and comments to news. Thus, we discussed about this point with the interviewees.

Many of them agree on the need for a different interpretation of the relationship between readers of the online newspapers and readers of newspapers in paper format. However, open positions toward readers’ comments, in the name of freedom of expression, are alternated to restrictive attitudes towards readers’ participation. For some interviewees, the journalist is the first responsible for the way an article is written and published: the President of the Charter of Rome, for example, believes that a reflection on this issue should be arisen within the community of professionals, on the opportunity to publish news which report offensive and racist sentences and statements. Journalists deal with this problem every day: a blogger of *Il Fatto* believes that the best way to prevent manifestations of hatred is giving the information as correctly as possible, showing the facts in their objectivity. Also the Director of *Espresso* online agrees with this opinion and adds another related aspect: the community of readers is selected by the journalistic style of the newspaper. He believes that in the online newspapers of the *Espresso* Group there have not been many cases of hate speech precisely because the editorial style of the news and the journalists’ way of interpreting the profession led to a “selected” audience. In-depth analysis, surveys, not “shouted” tones allow a respectful discussion of each issue and the reader will tend to adapt to it. In any case, the increased attention that the journalism is turning to these prevention aspects and the reflection that is arising in recent years within the professional community represents small but clear signs of change. That is what the National Secretary of ANSI (Associazione Stampa Interculturale- Intercultural Press Association) emphasized: “Finally at least a part of the world of journalism has realized that it is not correct to give space to hate speech. Everyone must do its work on this, starting from the single journalist who writes an article”.

Concerning the opportunity to intervene or not in the conversations commenting the articles, we have recorded positions that are located from the maximum opening pole, in the name of freedom of expression and speech, to positions placed on the opposite pole, i.e. the necessary intervention, even using instruments with strong incisiveness within the community.

A blogger and journalist working for *Fan Page*, for example, is placed on the first position: comments must be completely free because this is the spirit of the web, as it is important that each reader feels free to say what he/she thinks, without filters or interference. In his experience, except for rare occasions, he tends to not intervene with limiting instruments, such as debate regulation or censorship. Also the *Espresso* Group has an open attitude: accepting, for example, a broader language in readers’ comments

compared to what is allowed in articles written by the editorial staff, because readers express themselves as in everyday life and the web should be able to show this variety and heterogeneity of expression of forms and modalities. It was asked both under what circumstances they established some limits, as well as what is the “limit” of tolerance: a blogger explains that he intervened applying censorship when readers expressed insults and unfounded accusations against him or other specific persons or when Jewish shops and their addresses have been mentioned. According to Espresso, it is necessary not to intervene as much on the expressed thought – although offensive for someone – but rather mainly on the modalities of expression. An emblematic case, cited by the staff of La Repubblica about the illness of the former secretary of the Democratic Party (Partito Democratico), that triggered very violent reactions on social networks of all newspapers, so as to highlight the transversal nature of certain aggressive attitudes.

Other points of view on this issue gradually move from a fully open attitude towards the need of forms of regulation that are more or less strict and the use of tools aimed at preventing and, in extreme cases, when hatred comments have already emerged, handling the most violent and offensive chats. Below we list the regulation tools mentioned by the interviewees, which are the solutions actually adopted by the newspapers they work for, or which would be necessary to adopt according to their point of view:

- **Public Rules or Policy:** the first instrument is a set of provisions establishing criteria and modalities of interaction between the editorial staff and the readers. A “netiquette”, as that produced by La Stampa, which teaches readers to interact on the web and ‘to behave’ in the spaces for comments, with a smart and engaging language such as the language of comics. Or a “public policy”, as the policy on the website of Il Fatto Quotidiano, which regulates comments. Establishing rules allows to reply to users according to shared practices, avoiding then arbitrariness.
- **Active moderation of the debate:** according to the interviewed experts, interventions by moderators are necessary to protect readers. Intervening and regulating the debate prevents unmanageable situations: if readers have the perception that exists a form of control by the newspaper, maybe they are “forced” to express themselves in a more correct and respectful way, at least according to the experience of some social media managers. Even the social media team of La Stampa agrees: “It is important to show that there is a regulating work; in this way, users become less aggressive”. Furthermore, according to La Stampa, interventions must be prompt, so as the tones of the debate do not reinforce each other, in an escalation of verbal violence, or even insults. Also at the newspaper Il Tirreno, experience taught that the moderator’s active intervention helps to calm the debate. The director stated: “When there are some comments, let’s say, over the top, the editorial staff intervenes with a first warning; then the comment is made not visible and the debate usually tends to polarize. Users handle it on their own and usually it is not necessary any other kind of intervention.” Sometimes the newspaper’s Director intervenes, creating an even stronger effect than an intervention by a moderator.
- **Pre-moderation:** some newspapers decided to analyze all comments, before their publication. This is the case of Il Fatto Quotidiano: starting from the spring 2014, all readers’ comments must be approved. The pre-moderation is facilitated by a platform / alert that is based on a customised algorithm and a users’ categorization, corresponding to different levels of control.

- **To move the debate on newspaper's social networks:** La Stampa closed comments on the website and all moderation efforts are focussed on Facebook. The motivation behind this decision is that a newspaper is legally responsible for the contents of its website²⁹, as confirmed by UNAR experts. According to one of the interviewed experts, this is a defeatist choice, since it means that the newspaper is not able to handle interactions with readers on its website. However, this is a choice that other newspapers adopted at international level, in some cases changing their minds³⁰.

- **Commentators' 'classification':** for a newspaper, knowing users and the commentators' community is certainly an important step, in order to become aware of its own public and therefore to be able to prevent "hot" situations, as defined by a social media strategist: "most of the work must be dedicated to the study of users, so as to create a real database of the "hard core" of authors of comments".

- **Forbidden words and automatic replies:** these resources are used by most of the interviewed newspapers, because they allow to detect hate speech and reply automatically, simplifying the work of the staff in charge of the community management. They use customized and constantly updated computer management systems in order to reply in a more functional manner to the newspaper's needs and editorial approaches.

- **'Censorship':** this is a central issue, which has been analysed in all interviews and represents the opposite of freedom of expression. In the continuum between these two poles, there are several choices that editorial staffs can take and censorship is usually limited only to extreme serious cases, a sort of extrema ratio. One of the experts believes that it is still important to reserve the right to delete comments and ban users, when they violate rules clearly laid down by the policy. "This concerns the quality and the reputation of the newspaper".

Journalists Vs social media managers

The current situation of the websites' comments management as well as of newspapers' social networks presents a highly heterogeneous scenario: the practice shows that the newspapers' internal organization is more influenced by the specific context of the editorial staff –or by its organisational modalities, resources and biography – than by a shared vision about online journalism, that would be useful to adopt in order to better manage the interaction with the community of readers. This is the reason why the structure chosen by newspapers is highly variable and closely linked to the newspaper' subjectivity. The first distinction concerns the body responsible for moderating comments to the articles: some newspapers prefer an in-house management, others entrust the management to an external team or a specialized company. These are the cases of La Repubblica and Il Fatto Quotidiano. In the first case, a team of 7 people, employees of a private company, works on the moderation of the comments on the web site and on the pre-moderation, approving each time the comments before publishing them. In the second case, moderation is entrusted to an external company with a team of 2- 3 people, who work from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. The choice may depend on many criteria, which however have not clearly emerged

²⁹ <http://www.dimt.it/2014/09/10/la-responsabilita-del-direttore-di-testata-giornalistica-on-line-orientamenti-giurisprudenziali-e-prospettive-di-riforma/>

³⁰ <http://www.wan-ifra.org/reports/2013/10/04/online-comment-moderation-emerging-best-practices>

during interviews. Sometimes it seems linked to a specific strategy aimed at distinguishing between moderation of comments on the website - managed by external subjects - and community management on social networks, which requires a more active involvement and therefore a greater awareness and closeness of moderators to the newspaper's objectives and "mission". According to the President of Charter of Rome Association, Giovanni Maria Bellu, these choices are also influenced by an important economic factor: only a few newspapers can afford a dedicated staff, especially for the work of scanning and pre-moderating each comment.

Furthermore, what are the skills needed for moderation? According to the interviews, there are three distinct types of professionals used by newspapers for managing and moderating chats:

1. Editorial journalists: in this case the activity is carried out by journalists who write the articles, or journalists who are members of the editorial staff. This is the case of Gruppo Espresso: "the management of the social networks and the community concerns the entire editorial staff. We chose not to have ad hoc professionals for a specific decision to involve the whole editorial staff in the interaction with readers. This is because the "tone of voice" must be the same as that of the newspaper and it is important that journalists are directly involved in launching news and managing comments". This modality seems to be consistent with the above-mentioned statements of the Director: an open-minded attitude of Gruppo Espresso towards readers, which does not mean a constant work of replying to readers. Even La Stampa has recently turned to an in-house team of journalists, after experiencing in the past an outsourced management: "We chose to have all people with a journalistic background, for social media too, both for the selection of the news to be published on social networks and for the ability of replying to readers." The choice obviously fell on journalists with a strong expertise on online journalism and social media management. A similar situation was found at Il Tirreno, where there are 3/4 journalists who work mainly on comments and social networks management. There is also an external service for the website and Facebook page management.

Even a digital newspaper as Il Post does not have a dedicated team, journalists of the editorial staff deal directly with readers. For over a year, the pre-moderation has been adopted on the website and sometimes comments are visible only after few hours.

2. Mixed group of journalists/web professionals: this is the approach adopted by Fan Page, which created a "social media staff" composed of 10 people with a strong experience both in journalism and social networks: they regularly exchange and collaborate with the editorial staff. The director told us that, since its launch, the newspaper has focused on social networks and consequently this choice generated an organization of the editorial staff based on a close relationship between this latter and the social media staff. This is a bidirectional relationship: the social media staff identifies the trending topics and the editorial staff stresses the most strategic contents. The two staffs are different and have a different expertise, but in this collaboration and constant exchange it seems to appear a new idea of journalism and newspapers, in which the web redraws practices, relationships and competences.

3. Social media team: it has skills only related to digital environment, as it is made up of people who have a specific expertise on the web. This kind of professionals are often required by newspapers for the management of their social networks: for example at *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 5-6 persons (who are not journalists) manage the Facebook page of the newspaper as well as the personal pages of the most important journalists of the newspaper. There is no active moderation of comments on social networks, most of the work is based on the forbidden words and messages are directly sent into spam. The social media editor of *Il Fatto Quotidiano* announced that, starting from 2016, a new project aimed at a greater involvement of the community will be launched. From the beginning, *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, even if it is published on paper, has focussed its editorial strategy on its web version and many efforts and resources have been invested in creating a community.

Informing Vs Involving

Journalism is born for the need to disseminate news and to provide information, but may these ones be the objectives of an online newspaper? This is an apparently ordinary question which has no shared answers among professionals and, even less, in the purposes of newspapers. In fact, if the web and especially the social web is born with the intent of the highest circulation of data and information and with the inclusion of non-univocal information flows, journalism must adapt its productive and organizational approaches to this new relational environment. This, however, means dealing with active and participatory communities of readers, to be involved and not just to be informed.

Quantity Vs Quality

For newspapers, the “traffic” generated by the negative comments can be convenient, as some choices of *La Repubblica* and *Il Fatto Quotidiano* seem to confirm, or it can be considered as a disturbing element, a “noise” to be avoided, as at *La Stampa*. Regarding this aspect, it is not easy to understand the real positions of the newspapers and it is not possible to consider just statements, but it is necessary to analyse the strategic choices. Digital journalism has not yet given a specific answer to this question and we record different positions among the analysed newspapers. *Il Fatto Quotidiano* is an emblematic case because its community is extremely active both on the web site and on the Facebook page and aggressive behaviours are tolerated. This style, which is the same in the editorial approach, has a positive feedback on social networks, where denouncing articles and strong tones generally receive great sharing. The responsible person for the coordination of the social media staff of *Il Fatto Quotidiano* emphasizes: “We share only our news, without any tricks, such as the ‘sentence of the day’ or other initiatives aimed at attracting clicks”.

Even *La Repubblica* on Facebook seems to aim at obtaining big numbers: according to a daily planning of posts, the staff alternates political and economic news to soft news of the “right-hand column”³¹. These latter are superior in numbers and initiatives such as the ‘sentence of the day’ with related images are launched and shared among users. As regards news that may trigger a passionate debate among users, the position of the newspaper is neutral: “Usually articles of *La Repubblica* deal with topics properly, so we can easily re-launch all articles, without fear of reactions”. Anyway, the team affirms to avoid conflicts and debate at any cost.

³¹ Right-hand column (colonna di destra in Italian) refers to the column of the online edition dedicated to the so-called soft news, lighter topics such as gossip, curiosities etc.

The interviewed experts agree on the importance of the quality, rather than focusing only on numbers. It is important that the newspaper focuses on the type users it wants: “a large number of readers who post many negative comments is not useful, neither in terms of marketing. The reputation is fundamental, because only faithful readers buy the newspapers and make subscriptions, not those who write comments on the web page to denigrate articles”. This point of view is expressed by many community managers, who believe that the care, the “curation” of the community is essential in order to maintain a high reputation. Even some specific choices that seem to be contrary to the strategy of increasing users (i.e. ban of users) are dictated by this motivation.

Specificity of the “migration” topic

During the interviews, a specific question was aimed at investigating how the news concerning migrants, refugees and minorities are managed both on an online newspaper and on social networks and once again the answers were different. Many interviewees defined migration as a “hot” issue, able to awaken instinctive and emotional reactions in the readers.

Il Fatto Quotidiano website hosts many bloggers, among whom there are some journalists with a strong experience on topics related to migrants and refugees. One of these bloggers decided to work for this newspaper, as she believes that it is important to speak to a various audience, so negative comments are taken into account: “I try to answer when the number of comments is not too high and if there is the possibility to establish a constructive dialogue. However, the criticism very often attacks the private life of the writer, his/her choices of life are questioned, and at this point the dialogue does not make any sense”. The tone of comments is often very aggressive, despite the moderation work is guaranteed by an external company.

Fan Page publishes a lot of articles on migration issues, including ad hoc surveys, without fear of negative comments that sometimes this topic can provoke. The director believes that “comments on this kind of news are often the expression of ‘gut feelings’ and therefore they must be published”.

La Stampa staff admits to analyse accurately the news on this topic and to evaluate their publication. Sometimes they took the decision not to re-launch some news on Facebook in order to prevent heated debates, as in the case of a video of a policeman beaten by a Roma girl. In other cases, there was a clear stance in stopping racist comments³², such as in the case of an article about a Roma girl with a very high IQ, in which the social media staff intervened: “Dear readers, just after few minutes the publication of this article, the first unfailing racist comments appeared. As we said in the past, we do not tolerate such comments on our page: those who insist despite our warnings will be banned”. *La Stampa* social media staff also invited the community to “isolate this kind of “opinions”, to avoid answering and to report abuses to them by private mail. This practice is cited as a positive one in the #nohatespeech campaign promoted by the Charter of Rome³³, European Federation of Journalists and Articolo 21, aimed at preventing the spread of hatred as an ethic responsibility of journalism.

³² <http://www.cartadiroma.org/news/hate-speech-la-stampa-decide-di-cancellare-i-commenti-razzisti-e-bannare-gli-autori/>

³³ <https://www.change.org/p/nohatespeech-giornalisti-e-lettori-contro-i-discorsi-d-odio>

At La Repubblica, staff members affirm that they don't adopt special precautions for the re-launch of news on immigration, because these issues are properly treated by the newspaper. This reflection introduces the very broad issue of the importance of a balanced narration, which avoids alarmist tones and dangerous generalizations and in particular of how newspapers should report the hate speech. About this point, the President of the Charter of Rome believes that it is a very complex issue which deserves a reflection by journalists: "First of all, it is necessary to evaluate if there is a news item and then how to describe it, to take on the responsibility of reporting some statements (and how to do it)". Concerning this last aspect, that would need an in-depth analysis, see the test developed by Ethical Journalism Initiative³⁴, an instrument for journalists which helps them in this kind of evaluation.

³⁴ <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/en/contents/hate-speech-a-five-point-test-for-journalists>

V. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Discussion on the web involves conversations that are especially rapid and perfunctory, and they therefore lead to exaggerations of one's own point of view, and the comments received tend to radicalise one's own positions.

In the cases examined, we noted the infrequent use of moderating techniques on the part of journalistic editorial boards, even when the language was very offensive. Some of these entities censured a single comment but allowed the related comment string, thus making it difficult to reconstruct the debate. We have never been able to identify other 'active' methods of moderation, that is, of explicit intervention by an administrator or moderator that restored an acceptable tone to the discussion or warned readers that they must observe proper use of the comment space. There was a similar absence of 'pro-active' methods of moderation for facilitating a calm discussion among readers or emphasising and legitimising some of the more edifying and constructive comments.

We ask ourselves whether the community of readers has 'self-created' methods for managing the debate and is able to create natural antidotes to racist outbursts. We do not think this is possible. In order to be effective, such behaviour must in our opinion be supported by specific 'structural' instruments of moderation made available by the editorial bodies and not only left to the good will of the individual reader. No area issue is invulnerable to hate speech, and it is the duty of editorial entities to monitor the quality of the discussion generated regardless, at times, of the news covered. Rules of engagement have to be defined in a clear and manifest way in the milieus in which all the exchanges take place and in which the flow of information unfolds.

Above all, it is social media policy that is needed as well as active, prepared, and participatory moderation along with providing third-party contents emerging from the flow of conversation. There needs, above all, to be a comprehensive interaction with the community. For this, use has to be made of professionals and of instruments of information and management that study, interrogate, and include the interlocutors. The frequent commentators, even if partly anonymous, can be studied, but we also need to thoroughly understand the diverse publics that silently view the written conversations.

From the case-study analyses cited, but also from the comprehensive management of the cases themselves, either from the journalistic point of view or in the case of the (non-) management of comments, what emerges is the still very great difficulty experienced by the editorial entities in fully comprehending the digital phenomenon as well as the lack of attempts to work together to create a new shared and inclusive digital culture.

In the new digital framework, journalistic work does not end with the printing or broadcasting of a piece; the work continues in following the flow of conversations; it is manifested in many different ways: in soliciting replies and opinions from the users through reading comments on the piece; in soliciting interaction with the users by responding or having the interested parties respond to the comments expressed; in gathering together cues and tracks for developing in-depth journalistic analyses; and in listening, reading, and evaluating conversations that originate online in response to the piece itself.

The rules of access and participation in conversations must be explicitly declared at the outset on every bulletin board or login page of an information site. A procedure must be spelled out and shared with one's own community in setting the standards for access to bulletin boards and in regulating the management of such conversations. In this way, possible violations of the rules, comments that incite to hatred, or, still more, manifest and consciously posted online 'trolling', can be publicly removed, even banning the disrespectful user or users, or, if dealing with genuine crimes, reporting the behaviour to the public authorities. Such incremental steps require competent and properly trained personnel. Ideally, these should be journalists who add to their own professional capacities the skills necessary for adequately governing the digital flow.

The need therefore is for social media managers, community managers, and content curators. But, most importantly, in each editorial entity such roles must be anticipated and created by studying and understanding the new editorial dynamics that the digital revolution requires. And the editorial entities ought not simply to use pre-existing external guarantor figures or outsource these roles, because this kind of professionalism is fundamental to the new digital culture in every sector and thus also in the information sector.

It is very interesting to see the reintroduction in Italy of guarantor figures mediating between information organs and their own readers such as the ombudsman, the reader manager, or the public editor, as has been defined by the newspaper *La Stampa* in Turin. *La Stampa* recently appointed the journalist Anna Masera to perform this role. She is an expert in digital journalism and was, also in *La Stampa*, the first Italian journalist to perform the function of social media editor in a news organisation. In terms of the role of reader manager, we would refer to the passage from the book curated by Anna Meli for Franco Angeli, *Europa Media e Diversità*, citing the example of the Spanish daily, *El País*, which as long ago as 1985 established the professional role of reader manager: 'to guarantee the rights of readers, to respond to their questions, to their complaints, and to collect suggestions for the contents of the newspaper, and to monitor whether the treatment of information is compatible with journalism's ethical and professional standards'.

ANNEX

List of interviews

Who	Position	Journal	Date
Carola Frediani, Nadia Ferrigo, Social media staff Francesco Zaffarano		La Stampa	07/04/15
Alessio Balbi, Daniele Tempera, Social media staff Sara Bertuccioli		La Repubblica	23/04/15
Omar Monestier	Director	Il Tirreno	29/04/15
Valentina Vellucci	Social media strategist	MagillaGuerrilla	31/03/15
Saverio Tommasi	Journalist/ Blogger	Fan Page	21/05/15
Valeria Brigida	Journalist/ Blogger	Il Fatto Quotidiano	12/06/15
Erika Farris	Journalist/Blogger	Il Fatto Quotidiano	10/04/15
Marco Buemi	Expert	UNAR	28/05/15
Giovanni Maria Bellu	President	Associazione Carta di Roma	04/06/15
Francesco Piccinini	Director	Fan Page	14/07/15
Beppe Severgnini	Journalist	Il Corriere della Sera	29/06/15
Marco Pratellesi	Assignment editor	L'Espresso online	04/09/15
Vincenzo Russo e Coordinatrice società Akinda	Social media editor and Akinda Coordinator	Il Fatto Quotidiano	30/06/15
Paula Baudet Vivanco	National Secretary	ANSI	09/09/15
Lucia Gori	Secretary	OSCAD	01/10/15
Luca Sofri	Director	Il Post	17/04/15
Pierluca Santoro	Marketing and Communication Advisor		12/10/15

NEWSPAPERS' DATA

Newspaper	Likes on Facebook	Website
La Stampa	470.470	624.036
La Repubblica	2.493.005	1.700.486
Il Tirreno	174.583	
Fan Page	5.183.479	490.659
Il Fatto Quotidiano	1.801.919	480.472
Corriere della Sera	2.029.805	1.349.791
L'Espresso online	357.665	449.007
Il Post	216.102	

Source: Facebook data as at 3rd February 2016, 11:00 a.m. Data on websites from Audiweb research and DataMediaHub analysis on 16th March 2015.

TEMPLATE OF THE INTERVIEW

Common issues:

STRUCTURE OF THE NEWSPAPER - history of the “web experience” of the magazine. How many people are working there, how, time, tasks / skills? (Try to understand from the beginning if, in addition to the interviewee, there are other key persons involved in managing the interaction with readers)

KNOWLEDGE OF THE EDITORIAL “WEB COMMUNICATION MIX”: THE SOCIAL CHANNELS USED BY THE NEWSPAPER - Explore which, how, how long and why these social channels have been chosen. Each channel has its own objectives or the purpose is common to all? How do they differentiate the contents? Which is the channel mostly used by the readers to interact with the newspaper? (Collect some data about the followers, daily number of accesses, sharing, comments, etc.)

The following questions are designed for different types of interviewees:

For social media managers:

1. SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER: an autobiographical profile, in order to understand his/her experience, the ‘route’ that led him/her to this role and how he/she built this competence. Description of his/her daily routine.

2. MANAGEMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH READERS: The objective is to understand the strategy of the newspaper and the ‘style’ of the relationship with readers (formal / informal, hierarchical / cooperative, etc.). Who are the readers of the newspaper and how do they interact (eg. Are stimulated or moderated? Commentators are always the same or the community is large and changing? Which are the issues that involve the larger number of readers?). The access and the use of the space is somehow “regulated” by the magazine? What is the attitude of the social media manager towards the conversations among readers? (Eg. They are totally free to express their views, he/she intervenes and moderates, does a sort of ‘censorship’ ...)

3. HATE SPEECH: The interviewer should let the interviewee tell about one or more experiences regarding hate speech he/she or the newspaper experienced, describe what happened and how they reacted to it. If they haven’t experienced hate speech, the interviewer asks what they would do in case of hate speech. Explore whether the respondent knows particular management tools used to manage the online debate at national or international level, and what he/she thinks about the phenomenon of hate speech.

For editors in chief:

1. STRATEGY OF POSITIONING OF THE NEWSPAPER/MAGAZINE ON THE WEB AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA: if the newspaper/magazine is printed, what are the differences between the paper and the online versions, also in the composition of the editorial staff? What is the relationship between the online and the paper editorial staffs? How do they organize the presence of the newspaper/magazine on social media? What are their future prospects in the digital field? Web allows a greater involvement of the community of readers: what are the benefits and risks of that?

2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOURNALISTS / STAFF AND READERS: are there guidelines or indications for journalists when they deal with migrations/minorities issues? If some readers post insulting comments to an article, how should journalists behave?

For journalists' bodies/ journalists' associations:

HATE SPEECH: Is the issue of hate speech recognized and tackled in the world of journalism, especially online? Is there an ongoing reflection on this? What's your position towards the boundary between free speech and hate speech? Are there regulatory mechanisms for tackling hate speech? Do you know good practices or tools to combat it at national or international level?

For national/local bodies on racism and discrimination:

STRATEGY OF THE BODY ON THE ISSUE OF ONLINE HATE SPEECH: Are there data or monitoring systems on cases of online hate speech? What kind of initiatives have been carried out? Do you know good practices at national or international level? Where is the line between free speech and hate speech?

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