



# Nationality-based representation of migrants in the Italian media: the case of Rainews

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Migration is a topic that has always been close to my personal and professional life. The constant reference to migratory routes and flows in this paper is linked to media jargon. I look at this phenomenon as a collection of individual stories. Each migrant is in fact a story in itself, which goes beyond trends and nationalities, but is made up of the events and goals of the individual, worthy of being heard one by one if there was a way.

## Abstract

This degree project aims to examine how the representation of migrants in Italian media differs according to their nationality. The new migration from Ukraine raised the problem of their different representations; a difference that existed before but now the media classification of migrants in first- and second-class is more evident and frequent. I engaged in a comparative content analysis of Italy's state online journal that examines both the representation of migrants from Sub-Saharan and Northern Africa and Southern Asia arriving through the Mediterranean routes and that of Ukrainian migrants. Through the notions of representation of otherness (the other as a foreigner to strengthen our identity) and of voice as a process (claiming the importance for the disadvantaged to express their needs), the representation of the two groups will be analysed. Critically, this analysis will find that according to the media perception, migrants arriving through the Mediterranean routes are viewed as outcasts and their voice is also underrepresented compared to migrants from Ukraine.

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## 1. Introduction

Italian coasts are the arrival point for thousands of migrants of Southern Asian (especially Afghans, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Indians), Sub-Saharan (Eritreans, Guineans, Ivorians) and Northern African (Algerian, Tunisian, Moroccan) nationalities arriving through three main maritime routes that originate in Libya, Turkey and Tunisia. (Il Post, 2019) The Libyan route, that of rubber dinghies that leave the coastlines of Zawiya and Zuwara, on the country's east coast, hoping to be saved on international seas by military ships or NGOs who rescue people at sea, is the most popular within Italian journals. In 2017, the Italian government agreed with Libyan militias to stop departures. In all, it is about 12-13% of migrants arriving by sea in Italy, the vast majority of whom disembark independently in small boats. Many of the migrants using this route are from Sub-Saharan Africa and have spent months or years in Libyan detention centers where they have been subjected to violence and torture; others are from North Africa (Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco) (Il Post, 2019). It is the Turkish one to be the most common maritime route into Italy. Thousands of migrants have come in small and medium-sized boats that sail from the Turkish shores of Bodrum, Izmir, and Istanbul, and arrive in Italy wherever they chance to be: in Apulian, Calabrian, and some even in farther Sicilian regions. Passengers on these small boats are often from Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan, with Eastern Europeans, particularly Ukrainians, serving as skippers. (Il Post, 2019) Lastly, migrants fleeing from Tunisia are directed to Lampedusa, a small Italian island some 140 kilometers off the Tunisian coast and more than 200 kilometers from Sicily. Small wooden boats travel from Sfax, Mahdia, Zarzis, and Biserta, carrying mostly Tunisians seeking better living circumstances, but also refugees fleeing from sub-Saharan African countries such as Eritrea, Ivory Coast, and Guinea. (Il Post, 2019)

Between 1997 and 2010, an average of 23,000 migrants from across the Mediterranean came to Italy each year. The number of migrants arriving in Europe via the Central Mediterranean route increased considerably in 2011, with 62,692 marine landings documented, up from 4,406 in 2010. In the years after 2011, arrivals were high, although they began to decline in mid-2017. (IOM, 2022) However, it is unclear whether this is attributable to a decrease in the number of persons arriving or to an increase in the

number of migrants intercepted at sea by North African authorities and/or more fatalities at sea. (IOM, 2022) In 2016, interceptions by Tunisian and Libyan coast guards accounted for 8% of all Central Mediterranean search and rescue operations, but by 2018, 49% of the total number of persons reported attempting to cross had been returned to Tunisia or Libya. This move may be ascribed to several causes, including the Italian authorities reduced maritime patrol area and the shift of EU/Frontex assets from marine boats to drones incapable of conducting sea rescues. (IOM, 2022)

Despite the COVID-19 emergency, 34,154 marine arrivals were recorded in Italy before the end of 2020. Only around 4,500 of those coming by water in 2020 were rescued on the high seas by authorities or non-governmental organizations (NGOs); the rest were intercepted close to land or came unnoticed. (UNHCR, 2022)

After the Russian military offensive in Ukraine, started on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2022, a new route began and has seen two million Ukrainians (almost 5% of the 44 million population) travel to Europe. Hundreds of thousands of children are among them, many of whom have been separated from their parents. (SkyTG24, 2022) With over a million refugees currently in the nation, Poland is the country that has taken in the most. Thousands more have sought refuge in Hungary, Slovakia, and Moldova. (SkyTG24, 2022) The Ukrainian refugees who have arrived in Italy by mid-April are over 91,000 (48,000 women, 10,000 men, and 33,000 minors). While the ones that arrived in 2021 from the above-described Mediterranean routes are over 67,000. (ANSA, 2022)

The arrival in Italy of one hundred thousand refugees in just a few months has forced the Italian reception system to cope with an emergency not seen in many years. (Luca Misculin, 2022) On the whole, the system has held up, thanks mainly to the efforts of the third sector and some particularities of the flow: a great many Ukrainians have been taken in informally by relatives or friends. It is interesting to note that Ukrainians do not have to make any request for protection in the country they arrive in: they are only required to report to the competent authorities, which in Italy are the police headquarters, without going through the so-called territorial commissions that have the task of examining requests for protection as in the case of other migrants. (Luca Misculin, 2022) Among the countries of origin of the asylum seekers who land in Italy, for example, are Afghanistan (a country ruled by a radical dictatorship) or Bangladesh

where ethnic minorities are often victims of violence. Police headquarters in March and April were sending back people who lined up expressing their desire to seek asylum, telling them they had to come back in October because now it was the turn of the Ukrainians. Even the few asylum seekers who manage to make an appointment with the police headquarters have to overcome many other obstacles and bureaucratic steps to obtain, for example, a tax code, which in Italy allows them to work and receive health care. Those who apply to the police headquarter for special protection (what used to be called a residence permit for humanitarian reasons and was abolished) should quickly obtain a social security number. In reality, some police headquarters do not issue the tax code, some do, and others still make problems and submit a question to the Italian Revenue Agency. Ukrainian refugees, on the other hand, are given a tax code when they present themselves at the police station to report and ask for temporary protection: the receipt of the request already contains a tax code. (Luca Misculin, 2022) The abolition of the residence permit for humanitarian reasons caused a significant decrease in the number of people allowed to stay in Italy with the result that track of tens of thousands of people was lost and they may be living illegally on Italian territory. (Misculin, 2020)

The new Ukrainian migration flow also raised a mediatic problem: that of the different representation of migrants; a difference that existed before but now the media classification of migrants in first- and second-class is more evident and frequent. Most of the focus from Italian online journals and TV news broadcasts has been in fact on the Ukrainian refugee crisis. The differences in the language and images used to portray this new migration route, in comparison with those used for the more traditional ones, have become clear in the eyes of Italian readers and TV viewers.

I therefore will begin this degree project with the following primary question:

*How does migrants' representation in Italian media differ according to their nationality?*

The related sub-questions are:

*How are migrants of Southern Asian and Sub-Saharan and Northern African nationalities arriving through the Mediterranean routes represented?*

### *How are migrants of Ukrainian nationality represented?*

Such questions are founded on the notion that media depiction of migrants is a complicated phenomenon that requires a sophisticated and comprehensive study strategy. Enhancing their representation would be a crucial step toward reversing their history of exclusion and framing in media because it could generate a critical mass of readers who can both influence internal organizational behaviour inside media and affect external society perspectives. However, a mere representation is insufficient since the qualitative description of persons frequently lags behind raw representation. For example, these trends were noticed in the literature study, where some portrayal of migrants was done by Italian media, but which still portrayed them as victims and passive actors. Given this dynamic, it is critical to map migrants' representation based on their nationality. My two-pronged approach in this study aims to capture the progress or lack thereof, that Italian media has achieved in terms of representing migrants of different nationalities.

The qualitative research method is going to be a case study, being migrants' representation in Italian media according to their nationality. An online journal, Rainews.it, is a tool that is going to be used for the case study: more specifically, a content analysis of online articles reporting about migrants and refugees. Rainews is the freely accessible online news portal from Rai: the national public broadcasting company of Italy influenced by political forces in power. The articles which were taken into consideration were published in the months across the start of the Ukrainian flow.

The literature review discusses academic sources addressing the representation and portrayal of the refugee crisis in Italian newspapers. In there, I highlighted the main aspects of some of the most important academic sources addressing the topic of migrants' representation within Italian media as well as that of the different treatment of migrants according to their nationality. The attempted originality of this degree project lies in the fact that it has tried to bring together these two themes.

The theoretical framework addresses theories of the need for the other and of identifying it as different and confined to a frame to legitimize our own perceived culture



('representation of the other' theory) as well as notions on voice as a process and on the importance of giving the disadvantaged the chance of sharing their stories.

The results will be discussed through a comparative approach. A comparative analysis will be based on the two above-mentioned theories.

## 2. Literature Review

Migrants' representation in Italian media

Security and politicization

The 'European refugee crisis has been a central theme of political and media debate for several years, and as we have seen, Italy, as a key entry point into the EU, has been one of the countries most directly affected by the crisis. (Mazzara, et al., 2021) Since an increasing number of refugees have made the journey to the European Union, crossing the Mediterranean Sea or south-eastern Europe, Italian news has predominantly returned images of 'threat', of 'an army invading and besieging', and immigrants have been identified as 'illegal', 'irregular', 'illegal' or 'undocumented'. As in most European countries, the Italian public debate on migration has been consistently dominated by the 'politics of fear' and securitarian discourses advocated by far-right and populist parties. (Mazzara, et al., 2021) "The tendency to portray the immigrant as a criminal (or more rarely as a victim) and the securitization of immigration constitute two common, cross-media elements in many countries of arrival and transit." (Angeli, 2016) Furthermore, even though data shows that only a small number of entries into Italy take place by the sea, the representation provided by the media is often traced and summarised in the repetitive and recognizable image of immigrants who have just landed on the coasts of southern Italy and of rescuers and police forces engaged in helping them. An image that is linked to the narrative often faced with the phenomenon as a tale of shipwrecks and death. (Bruno, 2016)

Public discourse on immigration has also become increasingly politicized, and addressed as a major political issue. The far-right party, particularly the Lega Nord, has pushed immigration to the forefront of the political agenda and characterized the debate with populist rhetoric. It has consistently campaigned against immigration and multiculturalism over time, pushing an ethnic conception of citizenship (*jus sanguinis*) as well as opposing the concept of residential citizenship (*jus soli*). (Colombo, 2017) On the other side, the center left tolerates anti-immigration rhetoric and only infrequently embraces humanitarian viewpoints. Simultaneously, both center-left and center-right parties have effectively accepted the functionalist justification for immigration (necessary in terms of labor market shortages). (Colombo, 2017)

#### Framing

One of the most frequently used conceptual tools to understand media power is the frame. A frame is usually defined as an organizing principle that provides a context to communication and guides interpretation. By emphasizing or excluding certain information, it directs the way an issue is represented, favoring a certain interpretation and evaluation. (Mazzara, et al., 2021) The concept of framing is widely applied in migration issues and in this context, the most common framing has to do with the threats that migrants are believed to pose. Framing in the migration context operates on two main levels: the socio-economic level and the cultural-symbolic level. The first level concerns the group's competition in terms of work, housing, well-being, and security: a common framework is an economic crisis that brings with it the idea that there is no work for everyone, that there are no economic resources for migrants or that they can benefit from more rights than natives. At the second level, the most common frame relates to social identity and thus to elements such as language, religion, norms, and values of migrants that natives believe may pose a threat. (Mazzara, et al., 2021)

The foreigner represents a threat because he crosses the border of a socially constructed territory perceived as "ours", of a metaphorical space imagined as a "community". The theme of the border and in particular the maritime border is one of the main dimensions that characterize the Italian migration phenomenon. The most representative border of this phenomenon is that of the coasts of Sicily and in particular of the island of

Lampedusa, the border of the Mediterranean Sea itself, immaterial and uncontrollable by its very nature. (Bruno, 2016)

Real and false problems

Another issue with migrants' representation in Italian media is that readers and listeners are rarely informed about Italy's massive informal labor market, or the long-standing organized crime system that exploits immigrants and includes them in human trafficking. The media discourse on immigration rarely touches on those issues that would call into question the Italian system's involvement, which is the primary source of immigrants' precarious situation in Italy. Because migrants are the most vulnerable segment of the population, they suffer the most severe effects of Italian society's contradictions. (Campani, 2001)

If on one side the real problems are ignored, on the other, there is an unjustified problematization of migration, with the media referring to migration as an invasion, characterizing the presence of migrants in schools as a social and health problem, portraying migrants' citizenship rights as a controversial and potentially dangerous issue, and linking migration to the rise of crime and deviance in Italian society. (Montali, et al., 2013) Problematizing migration justifies the exclusion of migrants at different levels, including cultural, professional, and social. The media creates a climate in which the imposition of limits, prohibitions, and censorship seems a legitimate approach to solving the challenges related to the migration phenomenon. At the same time, since the technique of problematizing migration is not based on race, those who employ it can reasonably claim to be realists rather than racists. (Montali, et al., 2013)

Simplistic language

The representation of migration provided by Italian information is often simplistic and repetitive, probably to describe the issue in a way that is more comprehensible to the public and more addressable to policy-makers. This approach, however, cancels out the complexity of the phenomenon, such that, after decades, it is still defined as an "emergency" rather than a broad and articulated phenomenon. (Angeli, 2016)

Politics, which covers well over a quarter of the media agenda related to immigration, characterises the political debate in the Italian media by heated tones and positions that overlap almost entirely with the left/right line of the political spectrum. (Fondazione ISMU, 2020) This ideological polarisation tends to obscure the specificities and concrete contents of the news, to make the media the sounding boards of a political strategy of a permanent election campaign. This prevents public opinion from becoming autonomous, aware and properly informed. The resulting narrative has a simple and simplifying language, certainly not suited to the reading of a complex phenomenon that would require thoughtful analysis mediated by the contributions of journalists and experts. (Fondazione ISMU, 2020)

The media's hyper-simplification of migration contributes to a social portrayal of migration that is currently distorting real-life experiences to the point where the spectacularization of migrants causes problems in terms of negative self-representation. Furthermore, information regarding migrants reported in the media is frequently decontextualized, exacerbating the problem. The media does not push viewers to provide their opinions on specific themes, thus it does not set an agenda of concerns to consider so that the presentation of a topic does not lead to prejudice or influence a course of action, but rather helps to contextualize it. (Cava, et al., 2018)

A significant segment of the press tends to portray migrant groups as homogeneous, active forces intent on attacking Italian territory. Despite having distinct ideological/political orientations, they advocate similar anti-immigrant macro-level ideas by disguising the grounds for their mobilization (i.e., war, conflict). (Serafis, et al., 2021)

#### Influence on readers and viewers

There is a link between these bad media portrayals of migrants and the general view of "the other" among Italians. Different media are vital for the formation and replication of ideologies and prejudices that, for the most part, help to reinforce social relations of dominance and subordination, such as "nationals" vs. "foreigners." One could argue that the recurrence of negative media images has legitimized racist and xenophobic

discourses throughout time, influencing Italians' public perceptions and attitudes toward migrants and refugees and other minorities. (Shaw & Selvarajah, 2019)

Experts advocate for a more humanitarian and empathic approach, in which migrants' views are heard and the causes (and processes) of migration are reported. It is deemed necessary to pay attention to language and avoid using demeaning or incendiary expressions, as well as to defend individuals who are in vulnerable situations. (Arcila-Calderón, et al., 2021)

Naturally, among Italian media, there is also a more positive representation that does not show migrants as a threat to security. Especially left-oriented media address actions of bigotry and intolerance, or the rights of migrants and ethnic-religious. Another hot subject is the influx of refugees into Italian land and their conditions as farmworkers. Regularization of domestic assistants and caregivers is the most talked-about subject (58.5%), followed by labor exploitation (17%), and there is significantly less debate about professional success stories (7.3%). (Vita, 2020)

Approximately 76% of news stories about immigrants provide information about their nationality, ethnicity, or place of origin. This confirms that immigrants are not seen as distinct individuals with their specificities, but as belonging to a given category. Immigration as an issue is seldom discussed in debates as much as other facts related to Italian society and although immigrants are present on the screens, they do not have the opportunity to express themselves directly: only 65% of the time are mentioned and only 25% are consulted or interviewed. (Maltone, 2011)

Positive signs come from the space given to migrants in news reports on economic and social topics (workers' rights, associations, trade unionism). There is also a significant presence of interviews with foreign nationals on events that affect them directly (terrorist events in their homeland, natural disasters, holidays, and festivities). (Caritas and Migrantes, 2020)

## First- and second-class migrants

Many researchers in migration and media fields fail to discriminate enough between various groups of migrants when investigating migration in the media. For example, little is known about intra-European migrants and how their representation compares to other types of migration. (Galyga, et al., 2019) However, research financed by the EU's Horizon 2020 program distinguished between migrant categories (namely, Eastern European and Middle Eastern Migrants) and compared their media portrayal in five different European nations. Geographical descriptive terms defined migrants' origin and location of residence as foreign to the host nation. Words like "other," "new," "foreign," "undocumented," or "illegal" and "irregular" also conveyed objectification by characterizing migrants as being opposed to the home country's values, conventions, and laws. Rather than referring to migrants from Eastern European nations by their specific nationality, the term "European" was frequently used to refer to migrants from Eastern European countries. This is symptomatic of media coverage that emphasizes commonalities throughout Europe rather than adopting othering techniques by exclusively referring to nations of origin. Nonetheless, for both groups, the discourse language demonstrated substantial othering tendencies by stressing the aggregate and abstract aspects of the group of "others." However, the propensity to othering was lower in Eastern European migrants. (Galyga, et al., 2019)

An article about British attitudes to migration from the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies found out that not only white immigrant groups are regularly favored over non-white immigrant groups, frequently by considerable percentages, by British immigration sentiments but Britons also discriminate against migrant groups within each racial category, resulting in an 'ethnic hierarchy' of immigrant groups that persists over time and through generations, generally favoring migrants from places with stronger cultural and political ties to the United Kingdom. (Ford, 2011)

Lastly, the Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor recently collected European journalists and media outlets utilizing racist language and emphasized the fact that Ukrainian migrants are civilized, as opposed to Middle Eastern and North African refugees, who have been labelled as terrorists and uncivilized. (EuroMed Human Rights Monitor, 2022)

Considering this state of the art on migrants' representation in Italian media and on the lack of comparison among groups of migrants when investigating migration in the media, this degree project's attempt of originality is to reveal the differences in the representation of the Ukrainian and central Mediterranean flows within the Italian press, through the use of a comparative case study of articles from Italy's state online journal. It will verify whether the two groups are put in the frame of the other as in the case of most of the reviewed literature, or if one of them is excluded from it because of its origin. It will attempt to understand if both are portrayed as passive agents, as it emerged from the literature review, or if one of them has the opportunity to express its needs, stories and aspirations as a migrant in Europe.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

To examine how the representation of migrants in Italian media differs according to their nationality, the theoretical framework will explore the notion of the representation of the other to identify the aspects that define that 'other' and, later on in the analysis, verify whether migrants from Mediterranean routes are confined into it and whether migrants from Ukraine are excluded. In this chapter, the voice as a process theory will also be discussed to understand the different ways in which the voice of the disadvantaged should be represented and, later in the analysis, verify how it differs for the two groups.

#### Representation of the other

Before looking at 'the representation of otherness' it is essential first to understand what the process of representation involves. As claimed by Hall, we give things meaning in part through the words we use to describe them, the tales we tell about them, the images we create of them, the emotions we connect with them, the methods we organize and conceptualize them, and the values we assign to them. Our active use of the code perpetuates interpretation – encoding, putting things into the code – and by the person at the other end interpreting or decoding the meaning. The meaning does

not reside in the object, person, or thing, nor does it reside in the term. We are the ones who solidify the meaning to the point where it becomes normal and inevitable after a while. The system of representation constructs the meaning. (Hall, 2013).

Denotation is the second stage of the representation process, and it results in a second, more detailed, and ideologically defined message or meaning when it is related to a larger topic by the reader. In a culture, bigger units of analysis – narratives, declarations, groupings of pictures, whole discourses that function across a range of texts, regions of knowledge about a subject that have gained popular authority – are frequently used to derive meaning. (Hall, 2013)

Producing meaning is thus dependent on the practice of interpretation, which is perpetuated by our actively utilizing the code – encoding, putting things into the code – and the person on the other end interpreting or decoding the meaning (Hall, 1980). However, because meanings are always shifting and leaking, codes function more like social conventions than immutable laws or unbreakable norms. As meanings fluctuate and slip, the codes of a society inexorably alter. The enormous benefit of the cultural conceptions and categories we carry about in our thoughts is that they allow us to think about things whether they are there, present, or not; indeed, whether they ever were or not. There are conceptions for our fancies, desires, imaginings, and 'real' items in the physical world. And the benefit of language is that our opinions about the world do not have to be private and silent. We may convert things into language and make them 'speak' by using signs that represent them - and therefore talk, write, and communicate about them to others. (Stuart Hall, 1997)

The difference is important because it is necessary for meaning to exist; meaning cannot exist without it. We understand what black signifies because we can contrast it with its polar opposite, white. However, while binary oppositions have the advantage of encapsulating the richness of the universe inside their either/or extremes, they are also a primitive and reductionist method of constructing meaning. (Stuart Hall, 1997) While we don't seem to be able to live without them, binary oppositions are often accused of being reductionist and oversimplified. There are extremely few binary oppositions that are neutral. The dominating pole of the binary is generally the one that encompasses the other within its sphere of activity. Between the poles of binary opposition, there is



always a power relationship. Things must stay in their designated position in stable cultures. Symbolic borders preserve the purity of the categories, giving civilizations their meaning and character. Many civilizations' withdrawal from foreigners, invaders, aliens, and others is part of the same cleansing process. All cultures rely on symbolic borders. Marking difference causes us to symbolically tighten ranks, strengthen culture, and stigmatize and exclude anything deemed unclean or deviant. (Stuart Hall, 1997)

Variations in people's looks are sometimes misinterpreted as inherent distinctions. These misunderstandings serve to both express and reproduce prevailing power relations. Hall advocates for more rigorous interactions with identity, representation, and contingency that recognize and appreciate diversity without essentializing it. (Hall, 2017)

The way a fully mediated society deals with the topic of the other may be used to measure the quality of the mediated world. The other is not just a "foreigner" but is rapidly becoming a "symbol" of alienation, especially linguistic alienation, and exclusion. (Couldry & Hepp, 2013) The content analysis will use 'representation as symbols of exclusion' as a category for analysing migrants' 'representation as others' because it encompasses different aspects of this concept (for instance, marginality and alienation). Moreover, among the sub-concepts of this theory, I considered 'exclusion' as being a macro-category in which, after reading and analysing the selected online articles, much of the text could fit and provide a consistent amount of data (while such a category related to race or security could not apply to the case of Rainews since this particular journal, in reporting the will of all political forces in power, tends to use a more neutral language and does not make such references as in the case of right-oriented journals).

A negative picture of the others involves portraying them as unequal: "*the contemporary is conceived as an 'adversarial space,' fearful of contamination by the other.*" As a result of this negativity, hate politics emerge. "*The divisive discourse of being more marginal, more oppressed' is reinforced by the bureaucratic dogma of race and class in managing variety and difference.*" (Hall & Du Gay, 1996) The identification process is one of over-determination. "*It is subject to the play of difference, as are all signifying activities. It follows the reasoning of several people.*" As a result, it must make use of distinctions,

broad discourses, and limits. To construct and verify itself, it needs something distinct from it. (Hall & Du Gay, 1996) The concept of identity politics contends that a lack of sources of personal identification creates a need for reconstructing, if not inventing, local foundations for personal identity. The causes for identity politics include a psychological approach "*to maintain dignity and a feeling of rootedness in a period of fast change,*" a "*tactic of exclusion,*" a "*hate ideology*" and "*an expression of the collective strivings of the underdog.*" (Eriksen, 2014)

‘Representations as unequal’ will be the other category for analysing migrants’ representation as others. This macro-category, as for ‘exclusion’, was selected because of its broadness and capacity to embrace all other sub-concepts discussed by the related literature. It was also more referable to the articles and thus capable to encompass a more consistent amount of data.

This thesis’ starting idea is that the need of othering the migrant and of identifying him as different and confined to a frame to legitimize our own perceived culture will lead to a different level of voice among groups of migrants with different nations of origin. Therefore, a discussion of the voice as a process theory and the importance of giving the disadvantaged the chance of sharing politically conscious needs, ambitions and stories is going to follow.

Voice as a process

According to Scott's bottom-up development vision: communication should not spread information to influence people's behavior, but rather offer them a voice and allow them to express their needs. (Scott, 2015) Tufte believes that individuals must take a bottom-up, dialogic approach to growth. (Tufte, 2017). Newspapers addressing the refugees’ crisis should thus be a medium for voice expression on behalf of the refugees instead of merely reporting about them, but the starting assumption from this thesis is that they do only in some cases and for certain groups of migrants according to the perceived belonging to or exclusion from the frame of the other. ‘Needs’ will be the first category for the content analysis of migrants’ voices within the articles because they are a primary topic within the academic literature on the disadvantaged’s voice.

If we keep on looking at the dialogic method at large entails including the disadvantaged in policy development and execution. This may be accomplished through empowering communities. Instead of passively accepting others' judgments, development should teach the disadvantaged how to raise their voices, criticize, and ask questions. The oppressed ones face continuous socio-cultural and political struggles and for this reason, they try to find a way to overcome the powers ruling against them but do not always succeed. (Manyozo, 2016) Their interventions may look like sporadic attempts, detached from politics. On the contrary, they do derive from politics and they are a form of political participation. Those liberating the oppressed ones should be aware of this misconception and, in addition to that, should empower the latter with tools to create "better and more politically conscious" content. These contents should be the basis for building a real social change. (Manyozo, 2016) 'Politically conscious contents' will be the second category. 'Needs' alone would not be sufficient. Only discussing migrants' claimed needs and difficulties may be a too personal approach and would grab readers' attention without instilling in them any hint of protest. It would ignite indignation but it would last the time of reading, while a systematic politically conscious approach would raise more awareness.

A stronger "capacity to aspire" and "cultural capacity" from the urban poor can contribute to his social change. If the oppressed ones give voice to their aspirations and pride, they might be able to change their status and conditions. (Patel, 2016) And if they spread that voice, they might overthrow the policies and practices which impede their desired change. If the urban poor keep on aspiring, it means they still believe in a change and they are trying different options to overcome the numerous difficulties they face. Voice is necessary to give a form to these ambitions. However, it is necessary to provide advice about policy, to actualize the aspired change and not let the one in power act in place of the urban poor. (Patel, 2016) 'Ambitions' will be the third category for analysing voice as a process. 'Pride' was not included since many articles refer to migrants (from both groups) in the process of entering Italy and Europe. The timing would be too early for personal stories of successful societal or professional integration, while ambitions for their future as a migrant in Europe were more present.

Couldry makes a distinction between voice as a process and voice as a value. The former consists of giving an account of one's life and its conditions through a story or a narrative and listening to it. The latter means to promote the frameworks and resources that value these stories and narratives. (Couldry, 2010) In Communication for Development, voice is essential for dialogic and participatory development. Often voice as a process (giving people the chance of sharing their stories) is considered more important than voice as value (thus, the larger framework for recognition). (Tacchi, 2015) 'Sharing stories' will be the fourth and inevitable category, as giving the underrepresented the chance of doing it represents perhaps the basis of the voice as a process theory within Communication for Development studies.

A voice without a listener would not be sufficient. Although oppressed ones are given the possibility to give an account of their lives and conditions, they rarely do this in contexts where decision-makers can listen. Tacchi defines 'voice poverty' as the "inability of people to influence the decisions that affect their lives". Their voice, requests, and status are not considered by decision-makers because the poor do not have enough means to influence the political agenda. Self-expression and speaking about problems only to those who share the same problems are limitations. The decision-makers, the ones able to bring solutions, should be part of the audience. (Tacchi, 2015) However, even if reached, those in power share a similar denominator when criticized: despite having the resources to do so, they fail to act to improve livelihoods and address massive social inequalities question. In addition to that, the global movement demands action on the migration issues brought on by conflict and austerity. Research and practice of communication for development and social change need to focus not only on the cry for justice but also on the needs of those who have no voice. (Tacchi & Tufte, 2020)

#### 4. Methodology

##### Comparative case study

After having identified the frame of the other, on the basis of the representation of otherness, this thesis will now verify whether migrants of different nationalities arriving through the Mediterranean routes are confined to that frame and whether migrants from Ukraine are excluded. Also, based on the important aspects of voice as a process, the analysis will verify the different presence of it, according to the groups' nationalities.

The selected qualitative research method is a case study: that of migrants' representation in Italian media. Case studies permit to focus on descriptive research objectives, as the primary interest when using a case study as a research method is for the descriptive-interpretive aspects of the topic. It enables the research to focus on processes rather than specific variables, and a discovery-based rather than confirmation-based approach. (Blatter, 2008) The choice of case study as the qualitative research method for this project was due to its ability to reveal the nature of a phenomenon – that of the representation of migrants in Italian media - by observing it closely within the selected medium through a process of 'natural generalization'. (Blatter, 2008) Case studies, in fact, provide better insights into the detailed behaviours of the subject of interest. (Zaidah, 2007)

Through a comparative case study, the context and features of two instances of a specific phenomenon (media representations of migrants from Mediterranean and Ukrainian routes) are going to be examined in detail. This form of case study still strives for the “thick description” common in single case studies; however, the goal of comparative case studies is to discover contrasts and similarities across the cases. (Albert J. Mills, 2012) These discoveries are going to contribute to the confirmation of the theory that the new Ukrainian flow made clear the difference in the representation of migrants in Italian media according to their region of origin.

Comparative case studies tend toward an examination of the type rather than the outlier or extreme case. Selected cases must demonstrate enough commonality to allow for

comparison. The use of multiple instances within one case instead of multiple cases greatly reduces the confounding effects of different contexts. Notwithstanding the qualitative nature of comparative case studies, history, maturation, and instrumentation effects are all dangers in the case study comparison, particularly in time-lagged, cross-case comparisons. Strategies to overcome these include selecting cases from the same site, the same year, the same study, or the same context. (Albert J. Mills, 2012) Those potential risks contributed to the decision of analysing articles from the same online journal within a limited period (of six months).

Therefore, the following chapter is going to present an iterative analysis of the two cases (representation of migrants from Mediterranean and Ukrainian routes) with a final discussion of the results through a comparative approach. The comparison will highlight the concept of 'representation of otherness', thus making evident the classification of first- and second-class migrants according to their nationality. The results of each analysis are not going to be pooled but a comparison of cases is going to be post hoc, like a comparative case study, and it will be provided within a comparison table.

My primary data set, which aimed to determine the substantive representation of migrants as others in major Italian broadcast online journals, catalogued and assessed central aspects of representation of others including the migrant as a symbol of alienation and exclusion and his/her portrayal as unequal. I gathered data from the Italian state online journal, Rainews, from November 2021 to April 2022. This journal was the ideal option given that Rai is the national public broadcasting company of Italy and one of the biggest broadcasters in the country, and I believed it to be more influential in building the Italian population's public opinion on migration. Almost all sectors of Rai depend on governing political forces, often with an informal "quota" system in which directors and responsibilities are divided between the parties. (Il Post, 2021) Since last year, the majority of political forces (from the right, centre and left wings) are in power (with one opposition party only, being the extreme-right *Fratelli d'Italia*).

Because case study as a method implies the need to select (and not create) cases through certain criteria, (Blatter, 2008) personal influencing factors could not be

controlled during the selection and exclusion of articles about migration from Rainews. Thirty-six articles were selected in total to have a consistent amount of data. I stopped adding new articles once I felt I had reached a satisfactory level of texts and coverage of topics related to the representation of others and voice as a process theory. I decided to have an equal number of articles for migrants from Ukraine and from the Mediterranean routes (eighteen each) for allowing an equal balance in the comparative analysis. The main reasons for keeping or excluding an article were its more or less relation and coverage of topics related to this research, to reach an academically solid amount of data to be categorized.

The articles were identified through the search function of the newspaper's website by entering keywords such as "immigration", "migration" or "refugees". The period of publication is across the military offensive in Ukraine to include a consistent number of articles on Ukrainian migrants. The articles were published between November 2021 and April 2022, thus six months, to capture any projected variation due to their varied authors, the variable intensity of migrant arrivals, or any other unobserved factors. If I merely choose thirty-six consecutive items, I might potentially have disproportionately focused press attention on an unusual issue (e.g., one massive drowning in the Mediterranean or a particular event within the military offensive in Ukraine). Such coverage may not have represented a statistically representative sample of migrants highlighted in regular news cycles. As a result, the generalizability of my results — the amount to which the tendencies I detect are representative of larger patterns — could have had a different outcome.

#### Content analysis

Content analysis was chosen as a method to reduce the data, make sense of it, and draw meaning from it (SAGE, 2012). Because the articles reflect many meanings and are context-dependent, the analysis across them produced codes that I am going to translate into themes. Categories are connected to the notions of representation of the 'other' (categories: representation as symbols of exclusion and as unequal) and voice as a process (categories: needs and difficulties, politically conscious contents, sharing of stories and aspirations) discussed in the theoretical framework. Video data included

within Rainews online articles, was transcribed and included in the data as the written text.

Once coding was completed, the collected data were examined to find patterns and draw conclusions in response to my research question. I discussed my interpretations of what the results mean and made inferences about the creators, context, and audience of the articles. According to the comparative case study, contrasts and similarities between the representation of migrants from Mediterranean and Ukrainian routes were identified for a final comparison of emergent themes and explanations. The comparison highlighted the concept of 'representation of otherness', thus making evident the classification of first- and second-class migrants according to their nationality.

For each group (migrants from the Mediterranean and Ukrainian routes), I collected and analysed two data sets: (a) migrants' representation as "others" in Rainews and (b) migrants' voices also in Rainews. My methodology for coding was developed through the theories of the representation of the other and voice as a process discussed in the theoretical framework. The methodology consisted of (a) categorizing migrants' representation as symbols of exclusion and as equal and (b) categorizing the representation of migrants' voice in terms of needs and difficulties, politically conscious contents, sharing of stories, and aspirations. These categories emerged from the theories of representation of the other and voice as a process: they were the main umbrella categories discussed within the literature on the two theories. I came up with these categories because they well-summarised each theory and ensured that all the different aspects of the theory were covered.

Once the articles were classified based on migrants' occurrence in the articles, they were entered into a table that allowed me to calculate the main trends in the representation of migrants. These trends make certain that conclusions are founded on patterns rather than anecdotal instances that merely reflect my personal bias or preconceived assumptions.



(A) Representation of the other:

My analysis of each article involved two stages. First, the articles were coded as to whether they were presented as symbols of exclusion, inclusion, or in a neutral manner. Second, they were coded as to whether they were portrayed as unequal, equal, or in a neutral manner.

(B) Voice as a process:

Analysis of each article involved two stages. First, I analysed how migrants' voices were presented: directly reported; indirectly reported by journalists, NGO representatives, local politicians, church representatives or civil society representatives. Second, I coded all voices who appeared in the articles according to whether they reported the following contents, which are strictly connected to the theory of voice as a process: needs and difficulties expressed, politically conscious content, sharing of stories and aspirations.

To avoid misunderstanding this sort of coding, I had to design a clear scheme from the start of the study endeavour. During my analysis, for example, the term "exclusion" needed to be refined and clarified, since I wondered on multiple occasions if, as an example, the "transfer to a quarantine ship for weeks" could be deemed "exclusion".

When creating a coding scheme, a pre-determined collection of categories used to capture features of voice as a process (for example, the "needs" or "aspirations" categories which were separated in the articles by a thin thread) was critical: each choice had to be mutually exclusive while still being jointly exhaustive. The former indicates that there is no overlap across categories and that no one sentence belongs to more than one category. Meanwhile, the latter indicates that the existing alternatives have exhausted all potential options. Unfortunately, it is impossible to predict data patterns before the research, and it is critical to be aware of the need to adjust methods for them to stay relevant. This is where reading and analysing the articles numerous times was beneficial, as it allowed for early detection of problems and procedure changes.

## Limitations

The fact that I only documented the representation of migrants from Mediterranean and Ukrainian routes in one online journal is a limitation for my research and the generated data set. Although I can document the difference in the representation of the two groups, I cannot specify the social factors that are causing them with any precision. In the absence of a more complex methodological design, as well as longitudinal data that can allow for the identification of causal processes, a solid theoretical framework was essential for making sense of empirical patterns and topics for future study. For this study, I used a framework that focuses on the individual (e.g., presence of voice) and social (e.g., portrayal as a foreigner) variables that impact the depiction of historically underprivileged groups of migrants. This methodology not only allowed me to build an elaborated interpretation of observed patterns but also gave me insight into processes at several levels of study that demand more attention and future research, particularly through the studying of additional Italian media and/or migratory flows.

The identification of these empirical trends served as a contribution to the Italian media studies on migrants' representation. However, despite these contributions, my data did have several notable limitations, primarily due to the small sample size in some of the categories I developed to assess the representation of otherness. Although thirty-six articles were coded in total, sample sizes for each coded category ranged extensively (e.g., for migrants of Southern Asian and Sub-Saharan and Northern African nationalities, 'representations as equals' were found in only two articles while 'representations as symbols of exclusion' were found in the majority of them). However, even in categories with relatively small absolute numbers, the proportional difference between the representation of migrants from Mediterranean and Ukrainian routes was indicative of unequal levels of representation.

## 5. Analysis

The analysis is divided between the two groups of migrants and, within each group, between the representation of the other and voice as a process. Afterward, a comparative analysis of the two groups of migrants will be discussed.

Migrants from the Mediterranean routes

A) Representation of the other

For the eighteen articles about migrants of Southern Asian and Sub-Saharan and Northern African nationalities (arriving in Italy through the Mediterranean routes), I took the parts of articles that referred to representation as excluded and unequal and put them on a table in different columns. I then labelled them according to the different categories (exclusion, inclusion, neutral; portray as unequal, equal, neutral).

Representation as symbol of <b>social exclusion</b> , <b>social inclusion</b> , <b>neutral</b> (Mediterranean routes)	Representation as symbol of <b>social exclusion</b> , <b>social inclusion</b> , <b>neutral</b> (Ukraina)	Portray as <b>unequal</b> , <b>equal</b> , <b>neutral</b> (Mediterranean routes)	Portray as <b>unequal</b> , <b>equal</b> , <b>neutral</b> (Ukraina)
<p>transferred to the quarantine ship</p> <p>rescued by members of the Guardia di Finanza and the Harbour Master's Office</p> <p>Tunisian Coast Guard stopped eight irregular migration operations. A total of 57 migrants were detained. reports were made to the judiciary.</p>	<p>the queues of Ukrainians waiting to cross the Polish border are about 50,000. this is not a political issue, there are no rejections. The Polish government has simplified access procedures for those fleeing the war, it is a matter of structural difficulties. Border stations are extremely small and controls take time</p>	<p>that number then is not 'cold', but has faces, small, gnarled hands, smiles, eyes bleary in the waves of the Mare Nostrum.</p>	<p>until a fortnight ago, these people were playing tennis, going to the hairdresser, shopping, going to school, in short, they were living a life like ours. The war has overwhelmed their lives. This also explains so much sympathy and solidarity</p>

1. Part of the table created for analysing the otherness frame within both groups

Parts of articles corresponding to the same category were then grouped. Main topics within the same category were derived and they will follow below.

## Exclusion

The main topic that emerged within the 'representation as a symbol of exclusion' category was the struggle in trying to be included, confirming what was previously discussed within the representation of the other theory in the theoretical framework: as claimed by Eriksen (2014), 'identity politics include a psychological approach to maintain a feeling of rootedness in a period of fast change, a tactic of exclusion, and an expression of the collective *strivings* of the underdog.'

Symbols of exclusion were found in more than half of the articles and the majority refer to the migrants' very collective struggling *even before they entered Italy*: most recurring themes were their transfer to the quarantine ships, the stopping of irregular migration operations and the rejecting of requests for disembarkation by Tunisian and Maltese authorities. Other topics were NGOs rescuing ships being at sea for days in search of a safe port or Italian authorities refusing to give any information to them on shipwrecking boats and ignoring their call to launch a rescue operation, thus forcing shipwrecked people in need of urgent treatment to endeavour extreme long onboard retentions.

Representations as exclusion within the eighteen articles continued even once migrants arrived in Italy, contributing to making the other not just a foreigner but a symbol of alienation (Couldry & Hepp, 2013). These representations mainly had to do with migrants' integration struggle: vulnerability not taken care of promptly, representing a very serious burden on the success of autonomy pathways; the many obstacles that prevent applicants and holders of international protection from really enjoying rights; lack of EU's forward-looking and inclusive common policy on migration; the loneliness, after the pandemic, of forced migrants deprived of a network of family and social relations. The transfer to overcrowded hotspots in Lampedusa was another recurring topic, thus, combining 'exclusion' with the 'technique of problematization' (Montali, et al., 2013) which justifies racism through realism.

Nevertheless, migrants of Sub-Saharan and Northern African and Southern Asian nationalities were not just represented as symbols of alienation. They were represented as symbols of inclusion in the country as well in two-thirds of the 18 articles. However, it must be noted that discourse on inclusion was mostly limited to the mere rescuing

and first necessary medical care operations. Discourses of inclusion in the sense of integration were present in two articles only but integration was put in terms of an ideal and future policy (no personal stories or examples of inclusion were made): one article mentioned a group of asylum seekers traveling on a charter flight, and after their arrival being able to follow the integration path within a community; another article wrote about an NGO implementing projects to help refugees enter the world of work and construct social relationships.

The topic of the border, and more especially the maritime border, described within the literature review as one of the elements of the prevalent representation (Bruno, 2016), also prevails in Rainews. The media discourse about migration is developed around the real Sicilian borders, which become an imaginary border, that of the frame of the other. The symbolic frame is supervised by another metaphorical border: the surveillance system (quarantine ships, authorities rejecting disembarkation, denials to Libya) is added to the main information consisting of landing news. This territorial feature alludes to a perception of migratory flows that is still obviously one of urgency, as if the reality of migration is not one of a starting point but of a landing site. Discourses on inclusions and exclusion are stopped at the border. Media discourses on migration cannot be internalized in the Italian public discourse. They do not go beyond the rescuing and first medical operations or the transfer to hotspots. This creates a constant feeling of emergency (Angeli, 2016) and portrays not only migrants as foreigners instead of individuals but also the reception at the borders of the country in Sicilian hotspots as the maximum concession of integration.

#### Equality

The negative picture of the other and the portrayal as unequal, caused by nationalism and bureaucratic dogma of race, class, and gender (as claimed by Hall & Du Gay (1996)) was not retrieved within the articles, probably because of Rainews' editorial line of neutrality. However, migrants were almost always represented as neither equal nor unequal. Their portrayal not as migrants but as individuals (as mothers, children, with a family and loved ones) was retrieved in two cases only. Nevertheless, these representations of equality were not made about migrants already living in Italy (as

discussed above, the articles' discussion stopped at the maritime borders), but about *missing* migrants who never arrived in Italy:

In 2022 dead or missing migrants in the central Mediterranean amount to 215: people swallowed up in the deep blue, mothers with children, children leaving alone, sons, and fathers. (Rocchi, 18.03.2022)

Every report of missing migrants represents a grieving family searching for answers about their loved ones. (Rocchi, 18.03.2022)

#### B) Voice as a process

For analysing voice as a process, I took the parts of articles that included interviews, declarations, or quotes and put them on a table. I then labelled according to the identified codes that came out from the voice as a process theory discussed within the theoretical framework: needs and difficulties, politically conscious contents, sharing of stories and aspirations. Then, parts of text corresponding to the same category were grouped and the main topics within the same category were derived.

CATEGORY	MEDITERRANEAN ROUTES	UKRAINIAN ROUTE
<b>Migrants</b>	<b>0:8:</b>	<b>22</b>
Needs and difficulties	0:8:	travelling with children; loneliness; not knowing where to go, no money and passports
Politically conscious contents	0:8:	gratitude toward Europe for welcoming them
Sharing of stories	0:8:	children as main reason for deciding to escape; journey from Ukraine to Europe, feelings of fear during journey; final destination and relatives in Europe; difficulties with escaping from Ukraine; feelings while leaving Ukraine, feelings towards family members who stayed in Ukraine; difficulties with hearing from parents in Ukraine; gratitude towards hosting family; destroyed house; starving and thirsty conditions before leaving Ukraine; support from European companies, volunteers, civil society; entrusting children to strangers; hiding fear from children
Aspirations	0:8:	just willing to leave the war behind; no hope for the future; going back to Ukraine
<b>NGOs representatives</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3</b>
Needs and difficulties	search and rescue activities; safe migration route; safe port; safe disembarkation mechanism; migrants' medical	Food; hygiene products, medicines; psychological support

2. Part of the summary table created for comparing voice of the two groups of analysis

It emerged that migrants arriving through the Mediterranean routes appear to be less legitimated to express it than Ukrainian migrants. More specifically, not a single migrant from the Mediterranean flow has been interviewed in the articles (confirming migrants' lack of opportunity to express themselves in Italian media (Maltone, 2011)). For them, the majority of voice comes from NGOs which mainly report migrants' difficulties such as trauma, dehydration, violence, etc.:

It's cold here at night, and the situation on board the ship is becoming more and more complicated. We are asking the Italian government for a safe port. All the people on board are tired and exhausted from the long sea journey and the stay in Libya was characterized by violence and torture. There are people with trauma or chronic diseases and several cases of malnutrition. (Rainews, 27.01.2022)

NGOs also report their own difficulties: long waiting before being authorized to disembark, navigation difficulties, and no collaboration from authorities. They also mostly criticize Italian and European authorities:

Concrete action to reduce the loss of life in the Central Mediterranean route through search and rescue activities and a safe disembarkation mechanism by international law; almost a billion euros is what the Italians pay for an agreement that does not stop the tragedies at sea. More than 8 thousand deaths along the central Mediterranean route since 2017, which appeals to Parliament, on the eve of the anniversary of the signing of the Memorandum, for immediate revocation of the agreements with the Libyan authorities. (Rocchi, 18.03.2022)

Few times migrants' voices are indirectly reported by journalists in their articles. Migrants' difficulties and stories about their migration journey, but also strong life stories of kidnapping and violence are reported. As an example:

Saif's journey lasted two years, "a few days after arriving," he says, "after keeping me in the garage of a house where dozens of other migrants were locked up, they took me to Tripoli in the boot of a car for 37 hours with just bread and water". He ends up in the hands of traffickers who ask his parents for money to get their passports back. In the meantime, Saif works on a construction site. After 15 days, another armed group kidnapped Said and demanded ransom from his parents. (Rocchi, 31.01.2022)

The only represented politician's voice was more politically conscious:

Here we continue to do our part amidst a thousand difficulties, even though the Italian government and Europe seem to have forgotten Lampedusa and the Lampedusians. But we cannot go on alone for much longer. (Rainews, 25.01.2022)



Church's representatives' voice was limited to a few cases and more politically conscious:

The humanitarian corridors are the first step in a broader project, a piece of a reception system that focuses on solidarity, which Europe should take on. (Rainews, 21.11.2021)

Migrants from Ukraine

A) Representation of the other

Even for the eighteen articles about migrants from Ukraine, I took the parts of articles that referred to representation as exclusion and as unequal and put them on a table in different columns. I then labelled them according to the different categories (exclusion, inclusion, neutral; portray as unequal, equal, neutral). Parts of articles corresponding to the same category were then grouped. Main topics within the same category were derived and they will follow below.

Inclusion

Ukrainians are never represented as 'others', but almost always as symbols of inclusion (except for four neutral articles). Inclusion in articles about migrants from Ukraine took numerous forms: the most recurring ones were favourable policies (governments simplifying access procedures for them), existing contacts in Europe of relatives and friends ("*my husband's company provided us with accommodation in Austria*" (Cecconi, 2022)), numerous donations ("*a lot of international support. necessities have come from other countries*" (Albensi, 2022)), the variety of reception solutions (in central stations, in hotels or a Congress building in Lithuania, Poland, Romania), volunteers' help (with housing, long-term integration, hosting families, help to get the document to be in Italy legally) and help for the children. Within Rainews, they are automatically not touched by the frame of the other and of exclusion (Couldry & Hepp, 2013) but their flow is portrayed as one direct human corridor, where all steps are well-organized, that goes

from Ukraine to Europe where they are immediately *incorporated* (in some articles already *integrated*), into our society.

#### Equality

Ukrainians are never framed as unequal, but representations of equality were found in almost all of the eighteen articles (except for four of them which were neutral). Ukrainians cannot be in the 'adversarial space' fearful of contamination by the other (Hall & Du Gay, 1996), because they play our sports and do the same things (*"going to the hairdresser, shopping, going to school, in short, they were living a life like ours. This also explains so much sympathy and solidarity"*, says the president of Italian Community of Sant'Egidio (Fabiani, 2022)), some used to work in a post office or a food market. They own pets and bring them along. Videos show a family reuniting in Poland at home with little cousins playing and sisters in a moment of refreshment at the table. Ukrainians are fathers (*"seeing the pictures of a father who put his wife and child on a train, I felt I had to do something, having the chance to have a big house"*, says an Italian volunteer (Monni, 2022)) and women like us (*"Alina started crying when she realized she had forgotten Women's Day. Last year she received a bouquet from her father and gifts from other relatives"* (Rainews, 08.03.2022)).

#### B) Voice as a process

Even for migrants from Ukraine, I took the parts of articles that included interviews, declarations, or quotes and put them on a table. I then labelled according to the identified codes that came out from the voice as a process theory discussed within the theoretical framework: needs and difficulties, politically conscious contents, sharing of stories, and aspirations. Then, parts of text corresponding to the same category were grouped and the main topics within the same category were derived.

Ukrainian voice is more personal and migrant-centred. The majority of interviews are given by migrants themselves. However, contrary to Scott's bottom-up development vision where communication should allow people to express needs (Scott, 2014), few of them talk about these or about their aspirations for changing their status and conditions,

as they should (Manyozo, 2016). In fact, they are mostly asked about their personal stories:

For my son, it is an adventure but when he wakes up, he asks when we are coming home. At first, we were afraid but now this is our family. (ed. referring to the Italian hosting family) (Monni, 2022)

What we had to eat we shared. Grandma dreamt of bread at night because there was a time when we didn't even have bread and there was nowhere to buy it. At the theatre, some volunteers cooked for us but it was the same for everyone. I have a kidney problem and I can't eat like the others but I ate anyway but I was sick. We took the water out of the radiators. We collected it when it rained and then from the snow. (Farnè, 2022)

The NGOs' voices are rarely present and it is mostly about migrants' needs (food, medicine, psychological support). Also, NGOs seem to show more satisfaction with the European action for Ukrainians (*"A decisive choice was the one made by Europe with the introduction of so-called temporary protection for refugees, for all the refugees from the war in Ukraine"* (Fabiani, 2022)), as opposed to that for the Mediterranean routes.

Ukrainians' voice is in some cases indirectly reported by the journalists. Migrants' difficulties and stories of their migration journey are told with a more heroic narrative in comparison to the other analysed group: men staying in Ukraine to fight, Ukrainian women saving their own children and those of strangers:

Anna has traveled more than 1000 km from Italy where she works. Her husband cannot leave Ukraine, he is on the list of men who can be recruited. Desperate, he left his children with this woman he had just met. In this war, she has already become a second mother. Without saying a word, she accepted to take two children by the hand, put a phone number in her pocket, and a solemn promise: to take them to safety. (Dipoppa, 2022)

Another difference with migrants from the Mediterranean routes is that for the Ukrainian route Italian journalists themselves are present on site: they can thus report first-hand on overcrowded trains as human corridors or the well-functioning reception system in Italy or in other European countries where they travel to:

The Congress building in Riga has become a big reception center where Ukrainian refugees register in Latvia to get free accommodation in hotels for up to three months. Children watch cartoons to forget the fear. (Lo Bello, 2022)

Church representatives' voice was limited to few cases also for this group of analysis. They mainly discuss Ukrainians' needs and difficulties. Lastly, civil society representatives mostly claim more support for Ukrainians in terms of legal status and recognition.

Comparative analysis

The above analysis highlighted the concept of 'representation of otherness' for migrants of Northern and Sub-Saharan African and Southern Asian nationalities, making clear the classification of migrants into first- and second-class migrants. My approach to data collection and analysis identified trends in the different representations of migrants according to their nationality in Italy's state online journal. For example, I was able to observe that migrants from the Mediterranean routes were far more likely to appear on the news as symbols of exclusion, while those from Ukraine as symbols of inclusion and equality. In addition, I found considerable variation in voice as a process, with migrants from Ukraine having the highest proportion of appearance on videos and texts. These results are going to be interpreted in the following paragraphs.

A) Representation of the other

Based on the theory of the representation of the other, this analysis showed that some migrants, because of their origin from Sub-Saharan and Northern Africa and Southern

Asia, are represented as others. The studying of the representation of the two groups of migrants also showed that voice is represented for first-class migrants and not for second-class migrants.

As explained, the new Ukrainian route raised the problem of the different representations of migrants in the media, a problem that existed before but the new flow made it much more evident. We only now realised the different representations of migrants from Ukrainian and Mediterranean routes.

The reasons for a more dramatic, personal, empathic communication for migrants from Ukraine could be due to Ukrainians being excluded by the frame of the other, as opposed to migrants arriving from outside the continent through the Mediterranean routes, whose presumed cultural contamination, risk shaking our identity, once they leave the Mediterranean Sea, symbolizing the frame of the other. This confirms the tendency found in the literature review to portray migrants as homogeneous forces intent on attacking Italian territory (Serafis, et al., 2021).

This project confirms the framed representation of migrants arriving through the Mediterranean routes as others within the Italian press and their portrayal as passive agents with no possibility to express themselves (Maltone, 2011), which emerged from the scholarly work surveyed in the literature review. The representation provided by Rainews is also traced and summarised in the repetitive image of immigrants who have just landed and of rescuers engaged in helping them, linked to the narrative of shipwrecks and death (Bruno, 2016). On the contrary, the perceived exclusion from the frame of the 'other', seen in migrants from Ukraine, contributes to migrants' more active role in their representation, as well as to a more humanitarian and empathic approach (a lower propensity to othering in Eastern European migrants was also found within the literature review (Galyga, et al., 2019)).

The continuous migration flows from the Mediterranean Sea, with the different cultures, languages, and customs they bring could destabilize the Italian readers because they require change and adaptation. It is far more accommodating to see the other as a threat to our self-perceived uniqueness. On the contrary, the new migration flow from Ukraine is made up of persons from the European continent itself, whose stories,

journeys and past are more similar to us and thus more relatable. Consequentially they are allowed to resonate more within articles and videos portraying their escape.

#### B) Voice as a process

Politically conscious voice finds no space in this group's representation. The stories of migrants of Sub-Saharan and Northern African and Southern Asian nationalities (however reported by NGOs and not by the protagonists) include rescuing scenes of such terror and drama that they take over their long-term social needs. Salvation is all that is being told. The massive presence of death and thus the lack of the most fundamental human right, that of life, leaves no room for discussion of other types of human rights. No aspirations nor pride is reported as there is a room just for the simplest needs: shelter from the cold or landing on dry land.

The absence of society's last ones - migrants arriving through the Mediterranean Sea - and the predominance of the NGOs could be due to NGOs being the penultimate ones: they are often left alone with little support from institutions and ignored requests for listening and collaboration, and long navigation in difficult conditions.

Reporting migrants through the voice of NGOs, local politicians, church representatives, and journalists maintains a detachment between the reader and the migrant. The latter's needs seem to belong to an indistinct group of people and are not concretely perceived as real ones (as opposed to the majority of Ukrainian women in the articles, they do not have a face nor a name). This gives the reader a rhetorical perception, similarly to what happens with reading the numbers of the dead, shipwrecked, or missing migrants: they are not perceived as people but as numbers. The reader does not impersonate them but forgets that number shortly afterward. Talking about the migrants through the voice of the rescuers facilitates the lack of guilt and of motivation to act. It slows down that voice from reaching the reader or even more the decision-makers because it is the same as dozens of other voices, reported in dozens of online journals. The voices of the rescuers speak of emergencies, of urgencies, of pressing needs (medical treatment, a blanket for the cold, psychological support), but they push the reader to a passive listening that is anything but urgent.

On the contrary, Ukrainians' needs are mixed with life and escape stories. They are more fictional, way more detailed. They arise more emotions and represent more suffering. They are stories of husbands left to fight, relatives under bombing and young children as the main reason for deciding to flee. That of Ukrainian migrants is more of a narrative of heroism, generosity, humanity and pride (*"Ukrainian migrants show great dignity in facing such a dramatic situation"*, states an Italian NGO representative (Fabiani, 2022)).

The main distinction between the voice of the two groups is that the Ukrainian migrant represents him or herself, while the migrant arriving through the Mediterranean routes is represented by the NGOs. This contributes to the perception of the Northern and Sub-Saharan African and Southern Asian migrants as the other, as different, whose direct voice is not worth but can be reported through a voice, that of the aid worker from the Global North, which is more similar to us as readers. The Ukrainian voice, even if it is a foreign one like the Swahili or Bangladeshi, it is more similar to ours and, within the articles' texts and videos, it does not need filters apart from an interpreter or translation.

The voice of the migrants arriving through the Mediterranean Sea would be superfluous: there are first the difficulties for their rescuers to deal with. Migrants' needs can be interpreted by the NGOs, whose cries for help and requests to be heard seem to be ignored by the decision-makers. Not giving a voice to the migrants from the Mediterranean seems part of the strategy of invisibility, of the lack of adequate solutions to a "problem", an emergency, which, as known, is not a problem nor an emergency, but rather a lasting and constant phenomenon produced by structural causes in the countries of origin (economic crises, wars, violations of rights, etc.). A phenomenon that given its magnitude, we do not know how to deal with and prefer to ignore. However, even Ukrainians' needs are excluded: the account is more about their stories of migration, confirming findings from the literature review about migrants being portrayed as victims and passive agents by journals that are not willing to address migrants' capacity for decision-making.

## 6. Conclusion

In answering the question of whether migrants' representation in Italian media differs according to their nationality, this thesis highlighted the concept of 'representation of otherness' for migrants arriving through the Mediterranean routes, making clear the classification of migrants into first- and second-class migrants. The identification of these trends adds a contribution to the studies on migrants' representation within Italian media, by showing an unequal level of representation of migrants from Ukrainian and Mediterranean flows: I was able to observe that the latter are far more likely to appear on the news as others, while those from Ukraine as symbols of inclusion and equality. Migrants arriving through the Mediterranean routes are represented as symbols of exclusion even before entering Europe: the news reports them as isolated in quarantine boats or as waiting for days on NGO ships before the authorities allow them to disembark. Inclusion in Italian society is left out by the media narrative, or when rarely present, it is put in terms of an ideal and future policy. On the contrary migrants from Ukraine are portrayed as everyday people and their inclusion is represented through images of massive solidarity from European NGOs, institutions, and civil society.

In addition to that, I found considerable variation in voice, with migrants from Ukraine having a much higher proportion of appearance on videos and in texts and a higher chance of sharing their stories of migration, as opposed to migrants of North and Sub-Saharan African and South Asian nationalities whose voice is never directly present within the articles but is echoed by that of their saviours. The absence of society's last ones and the predominance of the NGOs could be due to the latter being the penultimate ones: they are often represented as left alone with little support from institutions and long navigation in difficult conditions. Moreover, talking about the migrants through the eyes of the rescuers reduces guilt and willingness to act. Because migrants' voice is similar to that of many other voices in other online journals, it slows down that voice's ability to reach readers and, more importantly, decision-makers. There are no aspirations or pride reported because there is only enough space to meet the most basic needs such as refuge from the cold or landing on dry land. This leads to the impression of Northern and Sub-Saharan African and Southern Asian migrants as the



other, whose direct voice is unimportant and can be relayed through the voice of an aid worker from the Global North, who is more comparable to ours. The Ukrainian flow, on the other hand, is made up of people from Europe itself, whose stories, journeys, and histories are more similar to ours and hence more relatable. However, they are frequently questioned about their personal experiences and few of them express their needs, ambitions for the future, or claims, corroborating the literature review's findings about migrants being portrayed by Italian media as passive agents.

Although I was able to document the difference in the representation of the two groups, I could not specify the social factors that are causing them with any precision. This leaves room for future research, which could also possibly consider additional Italian (or European) journals and migratory routes.

Based on the theory and practices of Communication for Development, this research denounced a case of *global* injustice – that of the refugees' differentiated representation based on their nationalities – from a *local* perspective, that of Italian media. Following the multidisciplinary basis of ComDev which draws on development studies, sociology and cultural studies, this project engaged with questions on society, media and development and wondered on the cultural and political power that is lying behind the unequal representation of disadvantaged people and their stories.

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