Linda Chervatin

The process of racialisation in the political, media and internet discourse in Italy and public policy

Introduction: The development of racism and contemporary narratives

This case-study explores the process of racialisation in Italy through a critical analysis of public discourse and policy. In order to understand the contemporary process some knowledge of Italian history is required.

The process of racialisation began in the middle of the 19th century straight after Italy's unification, when "stereotypical racial characters traits" divided the North from the South of the peninsula, in which the southern population remained devalued, derided and considered inferior and ignorant (Smith, 2014)(Lentin, 2004). Subsequently, the experience of colonialist expansion, revealed its brutality and violence under the Fascist regime; the white supremacy ideology was clearly promoted against the North-eastern African population through racial motivated attacks (Jedlowski, 2011). After the Second World War, fascist crimes were disregarded by Italian political exponents and colonialism remained in the public collective memory as an event in which Italian 'good people', were trying to export civilization (Villari, 2011: 6). Therefore, still today, Italian people struggle to admit that racism exists, and this affects its everyday victims (Jedlowski, 2011). Furthermore, according to Lentin (2004), Italian public discourse not only struggle to acknowledge a racist colonialist past, but also the existence of racism between Northern and Southern Italians; the latter would have been externalized and left distant in the past, as though it did not exist. Indeed, the pubic anti-racist discourse remains focused mainly on the struggle between fascists and partisans or contemporary anti-immigration politics (Lentin, 2004). This suggests that racism is obviously a matter of discussion in Italian society, nonetheless, it highlights that public discourse gives different weights to different part of history. If main anti-racist narratives are focused on specific events, hence upholding the whole past racist discourse unreported, it means that racism in Italy develops through a hierarchy of victims. Being a hierarchy, it suggests that there are implicit mechanisms of superiority that classify people. Italy would find it difficult to accept the 'other' by using a hierarchy of judgment of victims, as it happened after its unification, during colonialism, and still today through the immigration crisis. However, at present, the process of racialization suffer from huge changes in the way it is presented, due to the democratisation of society in which racism is not morally accepted and therefore remains hidden and denied by the public discourse. Indeed, the process of racialisation, due to mass immigration, shift from past narratives of

biological superiority, to the main contemporary narratives of economic burden and security. In public discourse, the denial of racism would therefore mix with demagogy causing not only prejudice and stereotypes as in the past, but also moral panic (Cohen, 1972) and xenophobia among the population. This has also brought changes over time, in public policy concerning the rights of immigrants and ethnic minorities, such as Roma and Sinti, and to the lack of improvement in adequate laws that punish racist attacks.

Italy presents multiple racisms, which can be explained through the polyracism theory, applied to the study of contemporary racialization processes in the Mediterranean area (Law, 2014). Indeed, if a Eurocentric approach and the post-colonial theory may explain racism against African or Asian people, they cannot explain racism against Easter European immigrants, Roma or Sinti, being these European citizens.

Specifically, Italy has been chosen in this case-study due to the rise of discrimination in contemporary public discourse and the consequent denounces of racist attacks (Magnani, 2011)(OCSE, 20140). Four

dimensions will be analysed in regard to the process of racialization, such as the political, mediatic and Internet discourse as well as public policy.

The political discourse and demagogy

The process of racialisation works in Italy through the use of demagogy in the political discourse, which is used increasingly from some politicians to gain visibility in the public opinion. The process of racialisation is mainly based on the argument over immigration where the main narratives are linked to immigrants' association to economic burden and security (Caviedes, 2015). According to Tamburini (2011), there is a sort of process at work, the dehumanization of ethnic minority and exploitation of scaremongering, which merge into the identification of ethnic minority as a social problem.

The immigration 'problem' developed in the political debate, between the 1970s and the 1980s when Italy shifted from a country of emigration to one of immigration. After an economic recession in the 1970s, an informal sector developed through the subsequent decade, which flourished and took advantage from illegal immigrants coming from Morocco and Tunisia (Magnani, 2011)(OECD, 2014). In this period Italian political parties began to discuss the need of immigration control, being the flux of immigrants an "anomaly", due to the economic crisis and growing unemployment (Magnani, 2011: 647). However, the informal sector needed migrants, therefore, public discourse remained centered between an "economic demand" and policies to "block entries" (Ambrosini, 2013: 176). At the end of the 1980s, racist attacks against immigrants captured public opinion and media attention on the racism problem, which hit on the Italian 'good people' taboo, showing prejudice and intolerance in society. Many catholic and left-wing organisations dissented, protesting to push toward more rights for immigrants. In the 1990s, after the fall of the Berlin wall, immigration in Italy began to increase through the arrival of Albanians, Africans and Eastern Europeans. This was a critical period in Italy due to the rise of demagogy. Immigrants started to be portrayed by politicians as an issue, and a political competition emerged between parties, with the right-wing fashioning the problem of immigrants and social order, such as "racial conflicts, criminality and degradation" (Magnani, 2011: 650). Therefore, it becomes clear how immigration shifted from a main narrative of economic problem in the 1970-80s to a narrative of security problem in the 1990s (Caviedes, 2015). However, it must be said that not all politicians use immigration in negative terms; indeed, the left-wing claimed to be against the process of racialisation that was taking place, pushing toward responsibility, solidarity and the formation of a multi-ethnic society. In the late 1990s, new political parties developed, the Lega Nord of Bossi and Forza Italia of Berlusconi that shaped immigration over time, from an issue of social order to moral panic (Magnani, 2011)(Cohen, 1972). In almost twenty years six laws have been applied to give more rights to immigrants as well as to cut them; indeed, the perception of immigrants shifted through time following the political party in charge. Different categories of immigrants were created over time, defined as 'clandestine', 'irregular' and 'illegal' (Ambrosini, 2013). The highest point of demagogy was developed in the early 2000s, when the right-wing won the election with Berlusconi. In this period, the right-wing government took advantage of specific crimes committed by immigrants that shocked public opinion. The security discourse became therefore central, claiming "war on terror" (Magnani, 2001: 655) and constructing immigrants as "natural criminal" (Magnani, 2001: 658). In the late 2000s, the economic crisis pushed again toward a populist discourse of association between immigrants and economic burden, therefore, reaffirming the "own people first" narratives (Magnani, 2011: 658). Even if the left-wing tried over time to maintain its position toward a humanitarian and solidaristic view of immigration, it can be said that it shifted toward demagogy as well trying to gain more visibility (Magnani, 2011).

The immigration discourse has, therefore, been subjected over time to changes in the public political discussion. Immigrants became the main representation in Italy of victims and solidarity as well as 'problems' and hostility, as the contraposition to fascists and partisans and nationalists and communists. However, until the Italian government was represented by left-wing parties racism did not reach today relevance. There has been an escalation of the immigration flux together with the old struggle to accept the 'other', and strong nationalism have merged in an Italian identity crisis. In the latter, the development of right-wing parties has fed the situation taking advantage from vulnerable people, immigrants and Italians. Today demagogy varies, moving from theme to theme or interweaving them, alternating alarmism to reassurance. It is not clear if right-wing leaders identify themselves with the ideology they spread or this it is only an advantage.

Extracts from leading Italian newspapers articles are here reported in order to provide a better understanding of politicians public expression in Italy; from these the most significant includes, the ex Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's speech, who in 2010 claimed "a reduction of non-EU citizen in Italy means less forces that go to increase the multitude of criminals" (Corriere della Sera.it, 2010). Another discriminative statement come from the Minister of Interior Alfano who in 2014 claimed it was unacceptable for immigrants to take away jobs from Italians, with a need to guarantee and put the rights of Italian people before the ones of immigrants (R.it, 2014). While, the most over-represented racist claim comes from the Vice President of the Senate Roberto Calderoli, who in 2013 publicly insulted the ex Minister of Integration Kyenge, of Congolese origin, defining her as an orangutan (La Repubblica.it, 2013). Despite the comment, Calderoli has never been punished and this incident best represent the Italian lack of recognition of racism. However, these racist political expressions represent just a little part of what Italian politicians are accustomed to publicly express, indeed, according to Associazione 21 (2014), 79% of warning of hate speech is linked to statements through politicians' press organizations, of which 70% are from right and right-center wing.

Italy has been warned by international organizations, such as the ENAR (Baussano and Formicola, 2012), ECRI (2012), HRW (2011), CERD (2008) and UNHCR, (2012), worried by the racist and xenophobic political discourse. However, warnings are not respected by the Italian government, which fails to identify racism as a problem (HRW, 2011). The Italian authority minimizes racist violence, claiming that these are rare events, looking away from racist attacks toward ethnic groups, such as immigrants and Roma people, and reaffirming that Italy is not a racist country and that these are just marginal and refuted events (ECRI 2012).

In conclusion, it can be said that the process of racialisation has been subjected to changes during the past three decades, going from biological traits claims, to representation of ethnic minorities as a threat for Italian society to economy and security. Italy has been warned by International organisations to promote a multiethnic society instead of allowing the spread of racism and xenophobia in public speech. It must be also highlighted that not all politicians use demagogy, however, the denial of racism leaves racist and xenophobic political expressions unpunished through the indifference of the most.

Media discourse and racism

The process of racialisation works in Italy through the mediatic discourse, which use immigration as a source of sensationalism, causing alarmism in the population and an ethnicisation of social problems (De Marco 2015).

This media attention to immigration began in Italy some decades ago when Italy was prevalently a country of migration, and immigrants represented only a small portion of society. In the 1970s Italian media contributed to an emerging discourse on immigration that initially focused toward a distinction between 'foreigner', "the well-off expatriate" and "immigrant" the poor excluded worker '(Sciortino and Colombo, 2010: 97). This situation changed in the 1980s, following political and public interest on immigration, the media promoted "a vision of immigration far less centred on the labour market and enticing economic factors, and much more preoccupied with the impact of immigration on the social and cultural life of Italy" (Sciortino and Colombo, 2010: 102). The first association between immigration and crime as well as deviance, began in this period. In the 1990s, with the fall of the Berlin wall and the arrive of immigrants from Albania, Africa and Eastern Europe, new terms began to emerge in media such as difference between "legal and clandestine immigrant" or "evocative adjectives" like "slaves", "desperate", "displaced" and "phantasm" (Sciortino and Colombo, 2010: 107) (Caviedes, 2015). Between the 1990s and the 2000s right-wing parties emerged spreading a negative representation of immigrants (Caviedes, 2015). From 2001 following the terrorist attack to the World Trade Center in New York, new themes were again promoted by the media, such as a supposed clash between civilizations, Islam and the West (Cere, 2010). The 'other' is in this way not only is unwelcomed by the political discourse that claims they are involved with crime and unsustainable costs (Polchi, 2015), but also due media association, responsible fot terrorists attacks. In 2005, ECRI's report claimed that media used immigration to spread newsworthy stereotypes, warning against the publication of anti-Muslim material, by associating immigrants with terrorism and inciting racial discrimination. The result, still today, is an overlapping of two completely different events,

which would cause the rise of intolerance, exclusion and violence against ethnic minorities (OCSE, 2014).

The main narratives portrayed in the Italian media about immigrants are, therefore, focused on the economic burden and security similarly to the political discourse. This suggest that racism is reinforced and spreads everyday through an exploitation of the immigrants' depiction, which does not represent reality and creates a false imaginary, in which 'us' and 'them' are barriers to multiculturalism. Indeed, they redirect political discourse, reinforcing it and amplifying it. According to Caviedes (2015: 899), "the media is a protagonist in directing the tone of public discourse over immigration". Immigration is one of the most recurrent themes in contemporary Italian news, which are often in the front page of newspapers. In 2015, the Associazione Carta di Roma (2015a) reported that there has been a record of news concerning immigration with an increase of 80% on newspapers and 250% on TV news. Being in the middle of an immigration crisis and with Greece one the European countries closer to North Africa and Syria, it is probably not surprising. However, immigrants are continuously portrayed negatively, with 47% of titles promoting alarmism and moral panic (Cohen, 1972).

The common stereotype that Italian media uses, is the association to foreigner with criminals and specific ethnicities to each kind of crime, hence worsening prejudice against 'others'. This prejudice would result greater when there is a lack of contact with individuals from an ethnic minority, therefore taking an indirect approach through media. At the same time prejudice decrease when a direct contract emerges. However, it can be said that there is a substantial difference between newspapers and TV channels in the broadcasting of information; for example, Il Giornale and Libero or Canale 5, Italia 1 and RAI are used to create an association between immigrants and order, while La7 and La Repubblica, the opposite (IlBo, 2012). According to IlBo (2012), the media is accustomed to depict a distorted and manipulated reality, in which the percentage of crime is the same but the intensity of how it is represented tend to show a higher impact. Substantially media has a tendency to repeat the same news many times, appearing each time more dramatic.

Journalists search for sensationalism causing a mediatic national pressure on people. News follows several standard of newsworthiness such as novelty, immediacy, dramatization or personalization in which an event becomes news (Wolf, 2000). The role of words is important for journalists who create news as well as for listeners who construct their reality through information. Journalists use simple effective terms to create an impact on listeners, in which a single event is transformed into a social problem. Terms such as 'umpteenth', 'trail', and 'invasion' penetrate the imaginary of public opinion. News is therefore magnified, becoming a popular cliché. It must be said that media do portray immigrants in a more positive manner but this occurrences are rare and they cannot change the common imaginary already created (IlBo, 2012).

Against this mediatic looting, however, there are many ONGs and organisations that work towards fighting the problem, supporting Italians against prejudice and xenophobia and ethnic minorities for additional rights. In 2011, the Associazione Carta di Roma, was created by an agreement between national journalists to promote information concerning the real nature of facts about immigration and ethnic minorities, educating both journalists and students to the importance of honesty and truth. Several ONGs are now concerned with divulging correct information, as well as supporting immigrants, Roma and Sinti. Recently with the support of the UNHCR, a reliable and independent portal where facts and data can be checked was created in order to fight the distorted perception of immigration and immigrants, and stereotypes (Associazione Carta di Roma.org, 2016).

In conclusion, it is plausible to say that the mediatic discourse concerning immigration results voluntarily distorted, to capture listeners and readers attention. Social reality is therefore manipulated, to create sensationalism that unfortunately increases xenophobia and racism against the 'other'. Many Italian ONGs work to inform and educate Italian people against prejudice and discrimination, which it is a difficult task, being the media a reflection of a demagogic political discourse. Media and politics find themselves interwoven between main narratives and themes, which are worsened in contemporary society by the advent of technologies such as the Internet.

Internet discourse and racism

The process of racialisation work in Italy through the Internet discourse, as a possible result of the public and mediatic discourse, focused on the 'problem' of immigration. The main narratives are re-proposed on the Internet, spreading virally on the Net, finding in this medium a new opportunity of expression amongst webpage, blogs and social media sites. Indeed, political and media discourse

becomes on the Internet well-structured and effective in capturing the common reader, instilling feelings of hate or disgust (Andrisani, 2011).

International organizations and national ONGs are worried by the rise of racism on the Internet, from the growing proliferation of new websites and blogs inciting hate and racist social media comments (ENAR, 2011). Through UNAR, the Italian government admits that the problem is increasing as in 2012 84% of racist attacks came form the Web (Fondazione Ismu, 2012). The police try hard to keep this situation under control, through the procedure of obscuring and removing online content deemed discriminatory. However, the Internet has the peculiarity of being so vast that it becomes impossible to appropriately manage. To this issue, it is also linked the free speech debate that does not define a clear boundary between the right of expression and the hate speech (Jubany and Roiha, 2015). Still, people have learned ways to avoid direct expression of hate, using mimetic terms and arguments with double meanings; therefore online moderators or online police may struggle to decide (Hughey and Daniels, 2013). Nonetheless, Internet messages spread over time without stopping, being virtual, they remain written in cyberspace until they find the next reader (COSPE, 2016). Some newspapers, such as Il Tirreno, expressed strong indignation after receiving racist comments, publicly admitting their exasperation for such readers' behaviour and the refusal to accept it (Il Tirreno, 2015). This is a contemporary problem concerning Internet, which has on the one side simplified human life through interconnections, and on the other, worsened it through the rapid spread of discrimination.

A recent analysis of Facebook posts examines and explains how public racist discourse becomes more effective and well-structured, aiming to misinform and instill disgust and refusal of immigrants and Roma (Orrù, 2014). Orrù (2014) argues that posts are usually divided in six basic types of visuals by a stylistic feature, in which images, headline and texts are chosen meticulously to raise emotional reactions. The main themes present on Facebook posts concern "illegals arrivals and expulsion, crime and deviance, struggle for material resources, denial of racism" (Orrù, 2014: 120). The Illegals arrivals and expulsion theme is focused on the immigration debate in Italy and it highlights number and statistics of immigrants, dramatizing events and expressing danger and alarmism. Orrù suggests that there is a "conceptualization of migratory processes in media and political discourse" (Orrù, 2014: 121), underlined by a good use of words that are few but effective. The second theme, crime and deviance, associates crime with immigration, which emulates media representation and over-exaggerate it. On these posts illegal status and nationality are emphasised by the portrayal of immigrant as perpetrators, confirming negative stereotypes and providing a "sense of oppression and victimization" (Orrù, 2014: 126). The third theme, the struggle for material resources concerns "housing, jobs, welfare and social security" and it is a topic used since the 1990s (Orrù, 2014: 124). In the Italian public opinion austerity measures, high unemployment rate and welfare cuts have created a perception in which immigrants are competitors in a 'war of poor'. Images and texts have the purpose "to generate negative feelings and resentment" through a comparison between "us" and "them" using specific terms such as spending, poverty and unemployment (Orrù, 2014: 125). Housing is the most used topic in which Italian people embed their anxiety of loosing a privilege given instead to immigrants, instilling "fear and insecurity for the future" (Orrù, 2014: 125). According to Orrù (2014), "contrast is among the most popular discursive strategies in racist discourse" (Orrù, 2014: 126). The last theme, denial of racism represents the refusal to be portrayed as a racist avoiding public blame. In this topic "cultural or economic factors" appear "reasonable" causing the refuse of race as motivation (Orrù, 2014: 128). In addition to denial, reversal is another strategy used to express racism, without considering racist the people, the Italian become victims of immigration.

In addition to social media posts, there are also websites and blogs that build their news and stories on misinformation. Events are distorted and manipulated or just invented. For example, in 2015 the police arrested an Italian student for his racist online activity. Fake news were shared on social media, reporting on his blog crimes allegedly committed by immigrants or Roma. The student claimed his unique intent was to gain monetary benefit from the quantity of sharing. Indeed, fake news have a tendency to become extremely viral as well as attracting many racist comments (Di Fazio, 2015).

What becomes interesting about this episode is the way in which people today identify business through sharing of racism. Meaning that in Italy people are attracted from a certain sort of news, making them feel frustrated and angry, therefore showing that scapegoats are needed not only by politicians but also the population. Yet, it is interesting to observe how people fall for fake news, sharing and commenting them, without asking questions about reliability, and sources. As an

example, one of this fake site cites "Catania: teenager burned alive by immigrants because Christian" (Bufale.net, 2015), which would appear quite impossible to have happened in the first place.

Cyber racism could be caused by an online disinhibiting effect (Suler, 2004), which would cause the expression of prejudice to develop without control as opposed to real life; however, this cannot explain why people believe in recognisable fake news. This may be explained by the multitude of information that people absorb everyday through Internet causing a weakening of their critical thinking. People are, therefore, persuaded to racist posts due to a large use of online activity and exposure to discriminatory contents (Rauch and Schanz, 2013).

In conclusion, it is safe to say that the process of racialisation finds in Internet its major allied, to foster and reproduce racism. While people' real intention and aim when creating posts, webpages or blogs is not entirely clear, being political or economic, Internet becomes a vessels in which racist and xenophobic discourse finds its major amplification outside political and mediatic channels.

The inadequacy of policies to tackle racism

The process of racialisation works in Italy through a lack of adequate policies, which would implicitly support the reproduction, reinforcement and spread of xenophobia and racism among Italian society. This could be the result of the denial of racism, which would allow flaws in the legal system and weak laws against discrimination (Scagliotti, 2011).

An increase of racist and xenophobic episodes in Italy has been left suspended between the public association of immigrants and Rom with economic problem and security, and the minimization or denial of them. A negative portrayal of immigrants and Roma people together with the denial of racism would merge into an institutional discrimination, denying policies and services to improve their quality of life as well as inclusion in society (HRW, 2011). This highlights how immigrants who suffer from racially motivated, physical or psychological attacks, result undervalued as human beings, left abandoned to themselves without adequate rights and protection. In Italy, the most dehumanized and affected by political and mediatic discourse are Roma and Sinti people, portrayed as living through illegality and crime, and who are denied the most important services (UNHCR, 2012).

The most important Act tackling racism in Italy is the Mancino Law applied in 1993. Nevertheless, it is rarely used to punish episodes of racism, either from public institutions or private citizen. Problems in the application of the Mancino Law concern not only the denial of racism but also its several limitations. Indeed, the Mancino Law is applied only when a racist attack is uniquely associated to racial motivation, but it is neglected when perpetrators have more than one motivation (ECRI, 2012). For example, during a racist attack if the victims have committed something illegal, perpetrators are not charged with the aggravated racial motivation (HRW, 2011). Moreover, police reports usually fail to specifically record the type of racist attack. As an example, in 2008 112 incidents were reported to the police, of which only 14 for assault and 15 for graffiti, leaving all other cases unspecified (HRW, 2011). Another limitation of the Mancino Law is the lack of records relating to the ethnic group of the victims, making specific counter-measures impractical (CERD, 2012). In addition, having Italy began to record racist attacks, partially and in a relative recent time, a limited collection of data is available. Therefore, the real size of racism remains unknown, negating the complete analysis of the problem (HRW, 2011). This explains one of the bases of racism denial, which is justified by a low rate of incidences and a failure to recognize it as a priority problem. The denial of racism of the public institutions fail to ensure that police and judges have adequate formation, and this result in the minimization of attacks, discrimination and lack of credibility of the victim's experience (HRW, 2011).

For example, in 2008 an Italian citizen, Abdoul Salam Guiebre, of West African origins, was killed for allegedly taking something from a shop. The killers immediately associated the color of his skin with crime. However the attackers although charged with murder were not prosecuted for the aggravating circumstance of racism. This shows that Italy is suffering from racism, but also that the Mancino Law is left open to interpretation; racism and shoplifting cannot be punished together (HRW, 2011). In 2009, a Senegalese citizen, Ibrahima Mboup, university graduate and musician, was assaulted and punched by an Italian market trader in Rome. Even though the attack was preceded by racial remarks, the perpetrator has not been prosecuted with the aggravation of racial motivation (HRW, 2011). However, the most famous incident, which gained international attention in 2010,

happened in Rosarno, Calabria where Italian people attacked and shot African immigrants with the intent to kill (Gobbo, 2011). This clear racial attack, which specifically targeted legitimate African workers, ended with the incrimination for the attack, but without the aggravating racial motivation (HRW, 2011). Therefore, it is understandable how punishments in Italy cannot be guaranteed by the system due to the denial of racism.

Italy has been warned by international organizations such as ECRI (2012) and UNHCR (2012) to develop specific procedures in order to improve the legal system, with the aim to protect ethnic minorities and improving their rights. One of the first recommendations is to develop an independent organization responsible to monitor and evaluate police actions in the case of racial discrimination; this would guarantee that victims reported attacks and abuses without fear of intimidation, as well as punishing the perpetrators (HRW, 2011). Moreover, they ask Italy to contrast and condemn racism and xenophobia, whilst developing a national strategy and reforming the Mancino Law (ECRI, 2012). International organisations, therefore, warned Italy to implement new effective procedures in order to prevent racism and xenophobia, protecting victims and prosecuting perpetrators, condemning attacks and expressing solidarity (ECRI, 2012)(HRW, 2011)(UNHCR, 2012). However, as mentioned before, Italy, tend to deny or minimize racism and few changes have been applied over time (HRW, 2011).

In conclusion, it can be argued that the lack of adequate recognition of racism causes institutional racism, in which ethnic minorities become discriminated, losing human rights. Indeed, welfare become inaccessible to the most vulnerable, while the justice system fail to properly prosecute racist crimes. As the political, mediatic and Internet discourses focus on the negative representation of ethnic minorities, it seems therefore difficult, to foresee a change in public imagery that could drive an improvement in policies.

Conclusion: The power of words and misinformation

Today Italy is living a migration crisis and an economic crisis, which are becoming fertile grounds for political parties' demagogy and media sensationalism, supported by the development of Internet. The main narratives identified in the process of racialisation in Italy concern the economic burden and security problem. These themes seem appearing and disappearing over time or when interwoven together, alternating periods of alarmism to others of reassurance. Evidence suggests that racism is on the rise but policies to tackle it remain ineffective. Italy is experiencing an identity crisis due to the clash between nationalism and the recognition of the 'other', which does not allow multiculturalism to develop. This is obviously worsened by misinformation brought by a distorted public discourse that prevents the formation of a democratic ground for dialogue.

Research shows that in Italy there are multiple forms of racism or polyracism (Law, 2014), which worsen with the use of specific ethnic minorities through the discourse that the politics, the media, and consequently the Internet, create. For example, when unfortunate events such as terrorist attacks happen, Islamophobia emerges, forming an association to immigration. Public opinion becomes suspicious of the Muslim population that lives on the territory and refuses to welcome new immigrants. In this context, the remarks of some politicians and assertions of newspapers articles bring public attention to focus on the difference between cultures and the possible presence of terrorists in Italy, creating alarmism. This in turn, produces an unwelcome feeling amongst Italians, with the danger of triggering racist attacks in everyday life, where scared immigrants may refuse to use public transport or avoid using certain public spaces (HRW, 2011). According to Associazione Carta di Roma (2015b), anti-Semitism in Italy is also growing in relation to the conflict Israel-Palestine, a phenomenon associated with victimism and complotism. However, in this case media and politicians appear more moderate, avoiding the spread of prejudice and stereotypes. Contrary to Islamophobia, punishments against anti-Semitism seem to be applied with success. Racism in Italy develops also against immigrants from Eastern Europe in which Romanian people are the worst hit as they are usually associated to crime and violence (Progetto Melting Pot Europa, 2007). On the contrary, Asian people are not present so often in the negative public discourse as African immigrants are. However, asylum seekers from Syria have gained public attention due to the mass migration experienced throughout Europe. On this, the government and media are divided in two distinct factions, solidarity and hostility, which would also merge in the Internet discourse (Gatti, 2015).

Recently, immigrants from South-America were added to the public discourse, described through the gang problem (Abbate, 2015). Finally, the most affected by racism are Roma and Sinti, being continuously used as examples by right-wing politicians in their speech on security. These populations suffer the highest level of discrimination in which the most important services are denied. This highlights how there are different perceptions of immigrants which are spread by public discourse; in some cases, as for the Roma example, old stereotypes and prejudice are reinforced, while in others, such as the South-Americans, perceptions are just imported from the American common stereotype. It is also interesting to note the difference of perception in public discourse between Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in which the first is commonly discussed and effortlessly used by politicians and journalists, while the latter is avoided. Racist attacks on Muslims are minimized, while the one on Jews are punished. This suggests that not only there are multiple racisms in Italy, but also that they suffer from a hierarchy and a difference in perception. In addition, it can be said that, even if Italy is tackling an identity crisis due to a cultural difficulty to accept the 'other', this is worsen and driven by public discourse that direct its attention on specific ethnic minority following events or changes in society. Therefore, it can be suggested that the rise of racism in Italy is strongly related to use of words and terms found in the public discourse. The process of racialisation works in multiple dimensions in Italy but finds its major expression in political, mediatic and Internet discourse, which are free to reproduce by a weak application of the law.

References

Abbate, L. 2015. *Le Gang Sudamericane alla Conquista di Milano.* [Online]. [Accessed 3 May 2016]. Available from: http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2015/10/02/news/a-milano-le-nuove-faide-sono-quelle-tra-bande-sudamericane-1.232826.

Ambrosini, M. 2013. Immigration in Italy: Between Economic Acceptance and Political Rejection. *International Migration and Integration*. [Online]. **14**(1), pp.175-194. [Accessed 25 April 2016]. Available from: http://0-search.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/docview/

Andrisani, P. 2011. *Facebook: Racism on the Web*. [Online]. [Accessed 20 March 2016]. Available from: http://www.cronachediordinariorazzismo.org/wp-content/uploads/Chronicles-of-ordinary-racism-2011_versionedefinitiva1.pdf.

Associazione Carta di Roma, 2015a. *Notizie di Confine: Terzo Rapporto Carta di Roma 2015.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 March 2016]. Available from: http://www.cartadiroma.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Rapporto-2015_-cartadiroma_EMBARGATO-FINO-AL-15-DICEMBRE-ORE-1030.pdf.

Associazione Carta di Roma, 2015b. *Antisemitismo, in Italia Soprattutto sul Web. Betty Guetta: Pochi Punti in Comune con Islamofobia.* [Online]. [Accessed 2 May 2016]. Available from: http://www.cartadiroma.org/news/antisemitismo-in-italia-soprattutto-sul-web-betty-guetta-pochi-punti-in-comune-con-islamofobia/ <%22>.

Associazione Carta di Roma.org, 2016. *Al Via Una Collaborazione tra Open Migration e Carta di Roma. Il Fact Checking Contro Una Visione Distorta della Realtà.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: http://www.cartadiroma.org/osservatorio/factchecking/open-migration-carta-roma-collaborazione/

Associazione 21, 2014. *Antiziganismo 2.0: Ogni GiornoOodio Contro i Rrom Nelle Parole dei Politici.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 Aprile 2016]. Available from: http://www.21luglio.org/antiziganismo-2-0-ogni-giorno-odio-contro-i-rom-nelle-parole-dei-politici.

Baussano, L. F. 2011. *ENAR Shadow Report: Racism and Related discriminatory Practices in Italy.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 March 2016]. Available from: http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/shadow%20report%202010-11/14.%20Italy.pdf

Baussano, L. F. and Formicola, L. 2012. *ENAR Shadow Report: Racism and Related discriminatory Practices in Italy.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 March 2016]. Available from: http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/publications/shadow%20report%202011-12/Italy%20(2).pdf.

Bufale.net, 2015. *BUFALA Catania: 15enne Bruciato Vivo da Immigrati Perché Cristiano*. [Online]. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: http://www.bufale.net/home/bufala-catania-15enne-bruciato-vivo-da-immigrati-perche-cristiano-bufale-net/

Caviedes, A. 2015. An Emerging 'European' News Portrayal of Immigration? *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.* [Online]. **41**(6), pp.897-917. [Accessed 25 April 2016]. Available from: http://0-www.tandfonline.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/

Cere, R. 2002. "Islamophobia" and the Media in Italy. *Feminist Media Studies*. [Online]. **2**(1), pp.133-136. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: http://sl4tb4rv5r.search.serialssolutions/

CERD, 2008. *Human Rights Coalition Welcomes CERD Concluding Observations on Italy.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 March 2016]. Available from: http://www.errc.org/article/human-rights-coalition-welcomes-cerd-concluding-observations-on-italy/2942.

CERD, 2012. *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*. [Online]. [Accessed 30 April 2016]. Available from: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/CERD.C.ITA.CO.16-18.pdf.

Cohen, S. 2002. *Folk Devils and Moral Panic: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers.* London: Routledge.

Corriere della Sera.it, 2010. *Berlusconi: 10 Punti Contro la Mafia: "Meno Clandestini, Meno Criminalità".* [Online]. [Accessed 20 Aprile 2016]. Available from: http://www.corriere.it/politica/10_gennaio_28/berlusconi-csm-reggio-calabria_768bff04-0bef-11df-bc70-00144f02aabe.shtml.

COSPE, 2016. *L'Odio Non È un'Opinione: Ricerca su Hate Speech, Giornalismo e Migrazioni.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: http://www.cospe.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/ricerca_odiononèopinione.pdf.

ECRI, 2005. *European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI): Third Report on Italy 2005.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 March 2016]. Available from: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/european-commission-against-racism-and-intolerance-ecri-third-report-on-italy-2005.

ECRI, 2012. *RAPPORTO DELL'ECRI SULL'ITALIA*. [Online]. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Italy/ITA-CbC-IV-2012-002-ITA.pdf .

De Marco, D. 2015. *La (De)Costruzione Sociale dello Straniero tra Discorsi Politici, Norme Giuridiche e Politiche Locali per l'Immigrazione: Una Ricerca Comparativa tra Roma e Barcellona.* [Online]. [Accessed 27 April 2016]. Available from: http://diposit.ub.edu/dspace/bitstream/2445/66779/1/DE_MARCO_TESI.pdf

Di Fazio, M. 2015. *"Vi Racconto Come Ho Fatto Soldi a Palate Spacciando Bufale Razziste sul Web".* [Online]. [Accessed 25 March 2016]. Available from: http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2015/10/15/news/vi-racconto-come-ho-fatto-soldi-a-palate-spacciando-bufale-razziste-sul-web-1.234576.

Fondazione Ismu, 2012. *Diciottesimo Rapporto sulle Migrazioni 2012*. [Online]. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: https://books.google.co.uk/books.

Gatti, F. 2015. Non Sono Razzista Ma. [Online]. [Accessed 3 May 2016]. Available from: http://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2015/09/10/news/io-non-sono-razzista-ma-1.228911.

Gobbo, F. 2011. Racism, 'Race' and Ethnographic Research in Multicultural Italy. *Ethnography and Education*. [Online]. **6**(1), pp.9-27. [Accessed 30 April 2016]. Available from: http://0-www.tandfonline.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/

HRW, 2011. *L'Intolleranza Quotidiana: La Violenza Razzista e Xenofoba in Italia.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: https://www.hrw.org/it/report/2011/03/21/256185.

Hughey, M. W. and Daniels, J. 2013. Racist Comments at Online New Sites: A Methodological Dilemma for Discourse Analysis. *Media, Culture and Society*. [Online]. **35**(3), pp.332-347. [Accessed 20 March 2016]. Available from: http://0-mcs.sagepub.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/

IlBo, 2012. *Immigrati: E Se I Cattivi Fossero i Media?* [Online]. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: http://www.unipd.it/ilbo/content/immigrati-e-se-i-cattivi-fossero-i-media.

Il Tirreno, 2015. *Profughi, Esplode la Violenza Sul Web*. [Online]. [Accessed 25 April 2016]. Available from: http://iltirreno.gelocal.it/regione/toscana/2015/04/19/news/profughi-esplode-la-violenza-sul-web-1.11265462

La Repubblica.it, 2013, *Calderoli: "Kyenge? Sembra un Orangue" Letta: "Inaccettabile". Colle Indignato*. [Online]. [Accessed 20 March 2016]. Available from: http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2013/07/14/news/vedo_il_ministro_kyenge_e_penso_a_un_orango_e_polemica_per_la_frase_del_leghista_calderoli-62945682/

Law, I. 2014. *Mediterranean Racisms: Connections and Complexities in the Racialization of the Mediterranean Region*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillian.

Lentin, A. 2004. *Racism and Anti-racism in Europe*. London: Pluto.

Jedlowski, P. 2011. *Memoria Pubblica e Colonialismo Italiano*. [Online]. [Accessed 20 March 2016]. Available from: http://storicamente.org/sites/default/images/articles/media/1633/jedlowski_colonialismo.pdf.

Jubany, O. and Roiha, M. *Backgrounds, Experiences and Responses to Online Hate Speech: A Comparative Cross-Country Analysis*. [Online]. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: http://www.unicri.it/special_topics/hate_crimes/Backgrounds_Experiences_and_Responses_to_Online_Hate_Speech_A_Comparative_Cross-Country_Analysis.pdf.

Magnani, N. 2011. Immigration Control in Italian Political Elite Debates: Changing Policy Frames in Italy, 1980s–2000s. *Ethnicities*. [Online]. **12**(5), pp.643-644. [Accessed 25 April 2016]. Available from: http://0-etn.sagepub.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/content/

OCSE, 2014. *Italy*. [Online]. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: http://hatecrime.osce.org/italy#summary.

OECD, 2014. *Jobs for Immigrants: Labour Market Integration in Italy Volume 4*. [Online]. [Accessed 20 Aprile 2016]. Available from: http://www.keepeek.com/Digital-Asset-Management/oecd/social-issues-migration-health/jobs-for-immigrants-vol-4_9789264214712-en#page1.

Orrù, P. 2014. Racist Discourse on Social Networks: A Discourse Analysis of Facebook Posts in Italy. *Rhesis: International Journal of Linguistics, Philosophy and Literature.* [Online]. **5**(1), pp.113-133. [Accessed 20 March 2016]. Available from: https://www.academia.edu/10302376/Racist_discourse_on_social_networks_A_discourse_analysis_of_Facebook_posts_in_Italy.

Polchi, V. 2015. *Accoglienza, Ecco Quanto Ci Costa Davvero al di là Delle Propaganda.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: http://www.repubblica.it/solidarieta/immigrazione/2015/11/08/news/accoglienza-126912993/

Progetto Metling Pot Europa, 2007. *Attenti Rumeni, l'Italia È Pericolosa: Il Ministero degli Esteri Rumeno Inserisce l'Italia tra i Paesi "a Rischio" per i Cittadini Rumeni.* [Online]. [Accessed 3 May 2016]. Available from: http://www.meltingpot.org/Attenti-rumeni-l-Italia-e-pericolosa.html#.Vy2kPcenPzI <%22>.

Rauch, S. M. and Schanz, K. 2013. Advancing Racism with Facebook: Frequency and Purpose of Facebook Use and the Acceptance of Prejudiced and Egalitarian Messages. *Computers in Human Behavior.* [Online]. **29**(3), pp.610-615. [Accessed 20 March 2016]. Available from: http:/sl4tb4rv5r.search.serialssolutions.

R.ti, 2014. *Alfano: "Non Accetteremo che un Immigrato Prenda il Posto di un Italiano".* [Online]. [Accessed 20 Aprile 2016]. Available from: http://www.repubblica.it/politica/2014/08/01/news/alfano_-92937945/

Scagliotti, L. 2011. *Racist Violence in Italy.* [Online]. [Accessed 25 April 2016]. Available from: http://cms.horus.be/files/99935/MediaArchive/Racist%20Violence%20Report%20Italy%20-%20online.pdf.

Sciortino, G. and Colombo, A. 2010. The Flows and the Flood: The Public Discourse on Immigration in Italy, 1969–2001. *Journal of Modern Italian Studies.* [Online]. **9**(1), pp.94-113. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: http://0-www.tandfonline.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/
Student ID number 200881836

Smith, E. 2014. *Racism in Italy.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: http://2m1wji4fi7mw252rpnmo25u6.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/files/2015/01/Racism-in-Italy-Ed-Smith.pdf.

Suler, J. 2004. The Online Disinhibition Effect. *CyberPsychology and Behavior.* [Online]. **7**(3), pp.321-326. [Accessed 23 April 2016]. Available from: http://sl4tb4rv5r.search.serialssolutions/

Tamburini, F. 2011. *Il Razzismo nella Quotidianità del Discorso Pubblico in Italia.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 March 2016]. Available from: https://www.academia.edu/

UNHCR, 2012. *Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 April 2016]. Available from: http://www.refworld.org/country,,CERD,,ITA,,50a0edab2,0.html.

Villari, S. 2011. *L'Italia tra Passato e Presente.* [Online]. [Accessed 20 March 2016]. Available from: http://cab.unime.it/journals/index.php/qdi/article/view/789

Wolf, M. 2001. *Teorie delle comunicazioni di massa.* Milano: Bompiani.