# The Relationship between Immigration and Newspaper Outlets in Italy: an Analysis on the case of Ventimiglia

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## Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the portrayal of migrants and refugees in the Italian media and to examine the moral obligations followed or violated by journalists while reporting on this phenomenon, identifying the potential causes of their linguistic, content, professional and ethical choices.

This professional category, and more broadly the whole media sector, has felt over the years the need to create and implement sets of rules to be followed while reporting on the phenomenon of immigration, in order to provide truthful and well balanced information.

While discussing the relationship between media and the portrayal of immigration in Italy, focus was given to the 2015 events in Ventimiglia, where migrants and refugees were stalled for weeks, unable to cross the frontier between Italy and France.

The sample taken for the analysis comprised of 26 articles published by the three main national newspapers, namely *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica* e *La Stampa*. These were examined through a set of questions that aimed at highlighting the way the event was covered by journalists. In particular, the theory of framing was followed, and the topics and aspects that were given more relevance were identified.  This has allowed to determine the cases and aspects in which journalists followed or violated the principles and moral obligations described in the Rome Charter.

The analysis has highlighted how the causes, the context and the solutions regarding the situation in Ventimiglia were discussed in a reductive and precipitous way. This lack of comprehensiveness can be traced back to the major importance given to the political debate arising from the events and the actions taken by politicians, which lacked a long-term and objective view and painted the situation as an emergency. This view was further fortified by the media, who reinforced this emergency view by reporting on the personal stories of migrants. This humanisation aimed at emphasising a positive depiction of Italy as the benevolent country, opposed to other organisms such as the European Union and France.

It was also noted how journalists implemented linguistic and content choices that led to the securitization of migrants and refugees, such as the incorrect use of the generic term migrant and the inappropriate and excessive presence of numbers. During the unfolding of the events of Ventimiglia, both France and Italy resorted to extraordinary measures which could not have been implemented if migrants and refugees had not been securitized and perceived as an immediate and severe threat to the internal security of the countries. It can therefore be concluded that journalists by mainly focusing on the political perspective and covering in a very limited way other important aspects of the events, such as the underlying causes, the political, social and economic context and the correct juridical status of the foreign citizens, have not only provided insufficient, inaccurate and at times misleading information, but have also reinforces the perspective of the actors in power.

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# 1. Introduction

In 2006, the Council of Europe through Recommendation 1768 (Parliamentary Assembly, 2006) on the image of asylum seekers, migrants and refugees in the media brought attention to the controversial relationship between media and their portrayal of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Medias are among the main actors who shape the way migration is perceived, which should be based on fairness and balance. They are therefore responsible for the promotion of positive contributions to society by migrants and refugees and the protection of the latter from negative stereotyping. In this Recommendation (Ibid.), the European Council also invited media to create and adopt codes of conduct along the ethical principles that should guide their professional work in case these were not already in place.

After that actions carried out by immigrants had become a constant presence in the Italian media, a debate developed in the early nineties regarding the representation of foreign citizens in news outlets. The *Code of conduct regarding asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants*, also known as Rome Charter, was approved in 2008 by the Ordine dei Giornalisti (i.e. Journalist Association) and the Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana (FNSI) (i.e. National Federation of Italian Press) and has recently been included within the *Journalist's Charter of duties* (Cnog, 2016).

Prior to this Code of Conduct, other behavioural protocols were employed by journalists, such as the 1994 *Declaration of commitment for a varied and well balanced information*, which was then followed by the 1995 *Charter of Ercolano*, and the 1996 *Recommendations for a non-racist information* (Binotto *et al.,* 2016, p.114). These initiatives were created and approved by journalist associations interested in the phenomenon of migration and its perception, and had the aim "to denounce the acts of discrimination and racism, both social and institutional" as reported in the fifth guiding principle of the 1994 *Declaration of commitment* (Bellu, 2014, p.17).

These charters of principles were not widely accepted within the journalistic community, due to the independent nature of the profession itself. All regulatory provisions were poorly

tolerated, as they were viewed and perceived as interfering with the professional autonomy of this category. Moreover, these charters were build on assumptions of acceptance of a certain world view, which could therefore be seen as excessively standardised. This would in turn lead to the perception that different political opinions could not be properly represented and followed, making it therefore difficult to abide by (Ibid., p.18).

A common ground between journalists and entities dedicated to the protection of migrants and refugees was found in 2007. After a gruesome homicide known as the "Erba Massacre", a Tunisian citizen was immediately held up as the perpetuator by all information outlets, without any evidence or official judicial provision against him. This was a serious professional mistake determined by a piece of news reported by an official source in an incorrect and incomplete way and that had not been properly verified. This led to the case to be characterised by xenophobic prejudice.After the media lynching, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' spokesperson Laura Boldrini, raised the need of safeguarding the representation of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees on Italian media (Macannico, 2015, p.26), which set the basis for the creation of the Rome Charter.

This Charter is composed of four conduct principles that journalists and editorialists should take into account while covering issue relating to the migratory phenomenon. The Rome Charter will be taken as the main point of reference during this thesis to develop the analysis.

## 2. Research question and disposition

The representation of migrants and refugees on newspaper articles has been analysed in order to determine if journalists abide by moral and ethical obligations dictated by their professional categories, and, if not, determine the underlying causes for such decisions.

For this purpose, the analysis will focus on the case study of the events which unfolded in Ventimiglia in the summer of 2015, which have highlighted the way Italy is perceived by

migrants, namely a transit country used as an intermediate stop during the journey while heading to other European destinations. According to Centro Astalli[1] (2015, p.4), more than half of those landed in 2014 in Italy has then moved towards Northern Europe in search of a better future (Centro Astalli, 2015, p.17). For many migrants and refugees Italy represents just one of the main entry points for Europe. Despite Italy being part of the European Union, migrants do not consider it as a viable destination, almost as if the Union begins beyond Italy's northern borders. In effects, because of its geographical position in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, its structural conformation and its closeness to other European countries such as France, Switzerland, Austria and Slovenia, Italy has been considered by migrants an arrival and transit country since the nineties (Monzini, 2015, p.61).

This analysis will therefore focus on the frontier Italy shares with France. Thus, this study has been carried out by focusing on the halt of migrants and refugees in June 2015 and the portrayal of these people on Italian newspaper articles. My analysis was guided and structured around the following research question:

> *Which are the principles of the Rome Charter that have not been respected by journalists covering the case of refugees and migrants blocked in the city of Ventimiglia? Which rationales have led to such choice?*

In order to answer this research question, the analysis will be structured in two main parts. In the first section, newspaper articles covering the case of Ventimiglia were examined in order to better understand how refugees and migrants are represented by the Italian media and identify any violation of the principles of the Rome Charter by journalists while reporting on this event.

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[1] The Association Centro Astalli is part of the Jesuit Refugees Services (JRS) that has operated on the Italian territory for over thirty years and deals with the protection of the rights of migrants and refugees (Centro Astalli, 2015, p.8).

In the second section, instead, focus will be given to the rationale that has led journalists to certain content and linguistic choices, as well as the causes and reasons for any violation of the provisions of the Rome Charter.

Concerning the definition used to describe the people blocked in Ventimiglia, the suggestion of the UNHCR (2016a) has been followed, namely both the terms migrant and refugee were used since both categories were present during the events.

## 3. Methodology

This chapter will describe the methodological approach used for the development of this thesis. It includes the reason why the research perspective was chosen as well as the applied method in order to clarify why and how the conclusions to the research questions were reached.

The purpose of this research is to understand the moral obligations that journalists violate while reporting on the phenomenon of migration and the underlying motive for these choices. In particular, I have analysed the ways in which migrants and refugees who transit through Italy have been presented in news media outlets. The research was focused on news of events that happened at the northern borders, namely the foreign citizens blocked in the city of Ventimiglia where migrants and refugees had been trying to cross the borders to reach France and other European Countries since 2015.

In the development of this thesis, the constructionist approach of *media framing* was taken. The aim of this theory is not to focus on news media in terms of the topics or issues selected for coverage, but rather on *how* such issues have been presented (Price and Tewksbury, 1997, p.184).

The most valid and used definition of framing is the one offered by Entman (1993, p.52, original emphasis):

"To frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition,*

*casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item

described."

Thus, framing has four functions: defining a problem, assigning responsibility, passing a moral evaluation and reaching possible solutions (Van Gorp, 2005, p.486). The first can consist of an issue and relevant actors that discuss the problem by emphasizing costs and benefits. The second relates to the identification of the forces that have created the problem while, moral evaluation refers to the judging of the issue and of its effects. Finally, a treatment recommendation concerns the suggestion of remedies, thus involves a call for or against certain actions (Entman, 1993, p.52; Matthes & Kohring, 2008, p.264).

Saliency and selection are two essential elements that characterise framing: the former helps the audience notice and better remember the meaning of a piece of information, while the latter suggest that news media decide which elements to emphasise (Entman, 1993, p.43; Van Gorp, 2005, p.488). It is therefore possible through the framing theory to study both the news shaping process adopted by journalists and communicators, as well as the way the audience processes the information provided (Scheufele & Tewskbury, 2007, p.12). As Scheufele (1999) pointed out, this division corresponds to the two different levels of framing, namely macro-construct and micro-construct.

For the purpose of this research I have chosen to focus on the macro-construct, namely on the modes of presentation of information carried out by journalists. Therefore, both manifest and latent elements of the news text will be analysed. This choice is based on another important assumption of framing theory: whenever a function of the frame is not explicitly stated it will nevertheless be evoked (Van Gorp, 2005, p.487). As Entman (1993, p.54) has suggested, most frames are defined by what news media outlets omit. At the same time, through what is implicitly and explicitly stated, readers will understand the news message in accordance with the *repertoire* of frames that their culture offers (Van Gorp, 2005, p.487).

In light of the above, the content of the news text was approached through the codebook created for the purpose of this thesis. Concerning the reliability and objectivity of this research, I have respected these guiding principles by using the definition of frame as

precise operational guidelines. As Jörg Matthes (2009, p.350) noticed, this should reduce the inferences and improve the validity of the research.

### 3.1 Codebook

1. Which is the main issue of the article?

2. Which is the general tone of the article? [classified into sensationalistic, sentimentalist, critical, polemic]

3. Is the economic, social, political context of the issue described? [classified into yes or no]

4. Who are the relevant actors mentioned in the news article? [classified into elected politicians (European, national, local), officials (European, national, local), nongovernmental organizations (international, national, local), experts or researchers (international, national), citizens (foreign, national)]

5. Which terminology is attributed to the foreign citizen? [classified into migrant, immigrant, asylum seeker, refugee, economic migrant, irregular/illegal migrant, profugo, clandestino[2]

6. Are these terminology used interchangeably? [classified into yes or no]

7. Which are the information or data provided to describe the foreign citizen? [classified into name, age, nationality, religion, ethnic group, adjectives, numbers, others]

8. Is there verifiable data to support what is stated by the author and by the involved actors? If so, which?

9. What are the causes that created the issue? [classified into reason for migration (economic, war, trafficking, environmental disasters, political regime, persecution, family reunification, work, better expected life quality), criminal organizations (trafficking, smuggling, mafia, terrorism), policies (European, national, local)]

10. What are the reported effects? [classified into European, national, local]

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[2] These two terms in the Italian language can be translated in someone who has escape from his country of origins and illegal migrant respectively. In any case, I have not rendered them into English language due to their peculiarity

a. And what is their origin? [classified into elected politicians (European, national, local), officials (European, national, local), nongovernmental organizations (international, national, local), experts or researchers (international, national), citizens (foreign, national)]

11. What are the reported remedies? [classified into European, national, local]

a. And what is their origin? [classified into elected politicians (European, national, local), officials (European, national, local), nongovernmental organizations (international, national, local), experts or researchers (international, national), citizens (foreign, national)]

### *3.2 Data Analysis*

Journalism, willingly or not, is not immune to the reinforcement of stereotypes and prejudices when reporting about migrants and refugees. Accordingly, *the Code of conduct regarding asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants*, also known as Rome Charter (FNSI, 2008, p.1), and its guidelines (Unar, 2015) were taken into consideration as the primary data to conduct such research. The first principle of the charter recalls the main duty of journalists, which is to provide readers and viewers with the greatest adherence to the truth as possible, hence requiring the adoption of an appropriate terminology (FNSI, 2008, p.1). This is particularly important when dealing with the legal status of foreign citizens; for example, it is incorrect and misleading to use the words such as immigrant, asylum seeker or refugee as synonyms (Unar, 2015, p.11). This leads to the second principle that animates the charter: the recommendation to use accurate and verified information (FNSI, 2008, p.1). This implies the avoidance of sensationalistic rhetoric, the distinction between facts and conjectures, as well as the reference to the nationality, ethnicity, race, religion and legal status while reporting about the protagonist of a piece of news only if pertinent and relevant (Unar, 2015, p.29-30). Consulting experts and qualified organizations are the fourth principle identified by the code of conduct with the purpose of providing both a clear and complete

context and the causes leading to the reported event (Ibid., p.37). The Rome Charter also calls for a third principle concerning the safeguard of the image and the identity of the interviewers in order to impede their identification (Ibid., p.25). However, this was not taken into consideration in this analysis because of the lack of information and sources that would have been needed to include and appropriately discuss said principle.

For a deeper understanding on the representation of migrants and refugees, the analysis of the articles was also based on the five-point test developed by the *Ethical Journalism Network* (ETJ, 2016). This comprises of five questions that reporters and editors should take into consideration in their work, as the topic at hand could easily be interpreted as hate speech, and therefore having the potential to do harm (Ibid.). Thus, the first question should be based on the status or the position of the speaker, especially in the case of politicians and other influential people whose aim is to create a negative climate towards people whose rights should be respected (Law, 2016). Moreover, the extent and the intent of the communication should be disclosed to know which are the objectives of the speaker (Ibid.). Finally, journalist should recognize patterns of discrimination through the content of the speech and the economic, social and political climate (Ibid).

Concerning the literature, researches and studies concerning the representation of migrants in the Italian media has been taken into account. These could be divided in two categories: the studies concerning the migratory phenomenon (Montali *et al*., 2013; Quassoli, 2013) and the ones related to the arrival and landing of migrants and refugees in Lampedusa (Papa, 2014; Bruno, 2014). It has been observed that there has been some analogies between the media representations of migrants and refugees reporting on the block of Ventimiglia and on the landing of Lampedusa.

### 3.3 Newspapers and Corpus

Despite its ongoing decline, printed media still plays a central role in information. An Audipress survey[3] (2016) confirms the extensive presence and role of the press both through digital and printed newspapers.

Concerning the newspapers, I have chosen to select quality dailies combining high readership and a range of political views that best represent the socio-cultural scenario of readers and coverages. *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Repubblica* e *La Stampa* are the samples selected for this research. The first was founded in Milan in 1876. In light of the adoption of more critical positions on certain issues, this newspaper has shifted from a centrist to a centre-right political stance. According to the latest certified data (Primaonline Comunicazione, 2016), it counts 317.997 readers a day. *La Repubblica* was founded in 1976 and is published in Rome; its editorial line is broadly affiliated to centre-left positions. It is the second newspaper for readership in Italy, reaching 247.794 daily sold copies. Based in Turin, *La Stampa* was founded in 1867 and is politically centrist; it sells 177.397 copies per day. All these newspapers have several editions but this analysis only took into account the national one.

The corpus of the analysis consists of editorials and news reports. I have accessed the news through MediaLibrary.com for *La Repubblica* while, for *La Stampa* e *Il Corriere della Sera* articles were collected through online historical archives.[4]

For reasons strictly related to the time frame of the research, the sample was taken by selecting a short period of time to be analysed. Thus, focus was given to the week from June 12 to 18, 2015, when the events were unfolding and the case was widely covered by news media outlets.

# 4. Literature review

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[3] Audipress is the reference company that provides data on Italian daily newspaper and periodical.
[4] Because of the structure of the websites, in some cases the information provided to identify the analysed articles was not optimal and sufficient. For example, some online published articles did not report the name of the author or the issue in which they had been published on paper.

This section will introduce the theories used during the analysis, also describing the way they were approached for the development of this thesis.

In particular this literature review will cover the theories regarding the securitization and the problem solving approach.

## 4.1 Problem solving approach

Robert Cox, in his well known essay "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory" (1981) has discussed two different theories: the critical and the problem solving theory. The latter states that "all theory is for someone and for some purpose" (1981, p.128). This therefore implies, as discussed by Nyers (2006), that this framework is often exploited by political figures and institutions in order to instrumentalise events involving migrants and refugees for their own agenda. In addition to this, he also states that the rationale behind this approach is that of masking the truth causes that have led to the problem. Furthermore, the problem solving theory "takes the world as it finds it" (Cox, 1981, p.128) and is therefore opposed to the critical theory which analyses the way knowledge is created and promoted, as well as identify the underlying interests (Betts, 2009, p.34). In the event examined, this has allowed Italy to be portrayed as abandoned by France and Europe, as well as as described as victim of migration flows originating from Libya.

## 4.2 Securitization

The theory of "securitization" was developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and their collaborators in a body of work that has now come to be known as the ''Copenhagen School" (Betts, 2009, p.71).

The core claim of securitization theory is that security must be understood as a ''speech-act". The Copenhagen School takes a constructionist approach while discussing security, highlighting how the threat is not an objective condition but rather a consequence of social processes, through which threats are portrayed and identified (Williams, 2003, pp. 512-513) .

In order to be securitized, a situation has to represent a factual threat, dramatized and depicted as extremely urgent, and must thus be addressed through extraordinary measures that go beyond regular routines and procedures of everyday politics, and that would be in other cases considered excessive and disproportionate (Buzan *et al.*, 1998, p.26; Betts, 2009, p.71).

Another element that must be taken into account while discussing securitization is the actors who make securitizing claims. The latter are defined as statements that identify the existential threat and the referent object. For this claims to be credible, the social position and the authority of the speaker are fundamental factors (Buzan *et al.*, 1998, p.32-33).

Thus, not just anyone can speak of security or make credible claims regarding existential threats; one must have sufficient social capital and be in a position of authority (Watson, 2007, p.97). Buzan *et al.* (1998) identify a number of potential security actors such as political leader, military/security managers, and in the case of societal security and migration phenomena, the media can be added to this list. Essentially, the media is an important actor that contributes significantly to the definitions of situations by reporting about the conflicting parties and the nature of the conflict, structuring the news along the lines of "us" versus "them" (Buzan *et al.*, 1998, p.124). Thus, in the second part of this paper, the securitization of migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia have been analysed through the practices implemented and the language used by journalists.

# 5. Analysis

## *5.1 Contextualisation of the event in Ventimiglia*

Ventimiglia is a small municipality in the region of Liguria, which is situated less than ten kilometers away from the French border. Since June 2015, this small town has appeared on all national newspapers because of the presence and the permanence of migrants and refugees trying to cross the border but were rejected by French police forces who did not allow them to pass the frontier and reach France.

Four years prior to this situation, the same identical event had occurred in 2011. Following the Arab Spring, 50,000 migrants had landed in Italy in 2011 alone, according to Sonia Viale, the then Undersecretary at the Italian Ministry of Interior Affairs. Many headed towards Germany and Scandinavia, but some arrived in Ventimiglia (Papoutsi, 2014) . As the majority of them came from Tunisia, their intent was to reach France, the former colonial power, for several reasons. First of all, being French a language common both to their destination and home country, this would represent an advantage for them; furthermore, they wanted to join relatives and families already living there; lastly, the French economy is considered to be much more stable than that of Italy (Papoutsi, 2014).

What was created was, as Elizabeth Collet (2011) defined it, a domino situation. Italy asked for technical and financial support to manage the impressive flow of migrants arriving in Lampedusa. However, such demand could not be accepted by the European Union (EU) as it was not commensurate, namely the amount of asylum requests received by Italy was much smaller than that of other European countries such as Germany and Sweden (Collet, 2011). This led to the decision of the Italian government to grant temporary residence permits for humanitarian reasons to those who arrived between January 1 and April 5, 2011. Therefore, it allowed the migrants to continue their journey further into the Schengen Area (Papoutsi, 2014). After a few weeks the French government had to desist and an agreement with the Berlusconi government was found: France would welcome the Tunisian migrants blocked in Ventimiglia, while Italy would have to support France with its request to review the Schengen regulation while facing emergencies (ISPI, 2015).

The situation in 2011 had been solved and similar cases had not emerged until 2015. That year a new flow of migrants and refugees reached Italy's southern coasts, and this in turn created a scenario similar to that of 2011 (ISPI, 2015). In this case, however, the migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia were no longer Tunisian, but mainly came from Mali, Sudan, Eritrea, Ghana and other Sub-Saharan countries. The presence of French police forces at the frontier caused the stall of these migrants and refugees that, while waiting for the

possibility to cross the border and reach other European countries, occupied the rocks of Ponte San Ludovico and the train station in Ventimiglia.

### *5.2 Analysis of the sample articles*

In the light of these events, the following analysis examines Italian newspaper articles published during the week from June 12 to 18, 2015. Using the developed codebook described above as a starting point, these articles were e analysed, highlighting the cases where the journalist does not respect the moral and deontological duties described in the Rome Charter.

This research is based on 26 articles, 6 of which from *Il Corriere della Sera*, 13 from *La Repubblica* and 7 from *La Stampa*. It is important to notice that, *Il Corriere della Sera* published articles regarding such events only during the mentioned week. On the contrary, the other two continued to report on these happenings even during the following days.

The analysed period starts from June 12, even though the halt of migrants had begun a few days earlier (Anon, 2015a). This is probably due to the time the newspapers needed for logistical and organisational matters involving their reporters sent to Ventimiglia. The analysed articles are almost always located in the first pages of the newspaper, therefore highlighting the relevance of the situation in Ventimiglia and the important role it played on a national scale. Further proof of this can be found in the fact that all three newspapers published more than one article a day regarding the ongoing events, even though *Il Corriere della Sera* was slightly less involved than *La Stampa* and *La Repubblica*.

The analysed newspapers began reporting about the events by giving an overview on the causes that led to the halt of migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia in the articles published during the first days. The Schengen cooperation, the Chambery Bilateral Agreement and the presence of French police forces at the frontier are all mentioned. The main focus is on European policies as well as Italian-French Bilateral Agreement, including the ensuing tension between the two governments.

In the articles published the following days, the information given focuses on the most important events happened in the previous day. However, they are discussed in the light of the emergency and crisis. Here are covered the peaceful demonstrations of the migrants and refugees were protesting against the violations of their rights, the various actions taken by the Italian police forces to keep the situation under control and the political debate taking place around the events. In particular, *La Repubblica* discusses in depth the political debate on a local and regional level. Several articles analyse the possible solutions to be implemented by the officials of the region Liguria as well as the mayor of Ventimiglia and the Governor of Liguria. *Il Corriere della Sera* prefers to focus on the political debate on a national level instead, focusing in particular on the relationship and the building tension with France.

### 5.2.1   Main issue

All analysed articles focus on the halt of migrants and refugees both in Ponte San Ludovico and in Ventimiglia's train station, describing the seriousness of the situation and the emergency caused by it. Furthermore, some articles recount the personal stories of migrants and refugees at the border. These reports were published in two articles on *La Stampa* (Menduni, 2015b, p.3; Anon, 2015e, p.5) and in other two on *La Repubblica* (Filetto, 2015a, p.4; Crosetti, 2015, p18). The latter newspaper also highlights the solidarity of the people of Ventimiglia, who donated food, clothes and other essential goods (Parodi, 2015b, p.4). Furthermore, the same newspaper in another column reports on the activity of the *passeur*, namely people smugglers who helped the migrants cross the border (Filetto, 2015b, p.3). *Il Corriere della Sera*, while discussing the events in Ventimiglia, examines in one article the welcoming and management of migrants and refugees both from a European and national perspective, while dedicates another column to the hypocritical indifference of France regarding Ventimiglia (Nava, 2015, p.34).

### 5.2.2   Tone

The general tone of the sample articles is mainly sentimentalist with 9 articles out of 26, published by all three newspapers. This is followed by 8 articles which have a polemic undertone, 5 characterised by sensationalism and 4 with a critical and alarmist tone. Unsurprisingly, a correlation between the articles that reported about the personal stories of migrants and refugees and the sentimentalist tone of it was found. By the same token, the polemic undertone could be linked to the articles describing the indifference of EU and France. Despite the fact that only, a fifth of the sample articles have a sensationalist rhetoric, Rome Charter Guidelines (Unar, 2015, p.29) suggest not to use this type of tone as it may cause fear or chaos on public opinion.

### 5.2.3   Contextualisation

None of the articles from the analysed sample include a complete and deep explanation about the economic, political and social causes that brought to the stop in Ventimiglia. It therefore can be noted that the only context given is that of the present situation, describing how long the migrants and refugees have been waiting and the seriousness of their condition, linking it to potential new incoming migratory flows from Southern Italy and the railway stations of Rome and Milan. Some articles mention the Schengen cooperation and, to a lesser extent, Chambery Bilateral Agreement. This information is contained in several articles, even though it does not paint a clear and truthful picture of the context. In order to get an overall understanding of the real situation it would therefore be necessary to combine several articles from all three newspapers, even though this would still lead to a vague and erratic knowledge. Here, it is quite clear that there is a violation of the principles of the Rome Charter (Unar, 2015, p.37). Also, the fifth guideline of the Ethical Journalism Network (Law, 2016) was infringed, as political social and economic contextualisation was not appropriately mentioned and explained while reporting on the event.

### 5.2.4   Actors included in the debate

Even though the Rome Charter Guidelines are quite clear regarding who should be consulted to give a clear and complete explanation of the context (Unar, 2015, p.37), none of the examined articles consulted experts on the matter. One article from *La Stampa*

(Martinelli, 2015, p.5) includes an interview to the head of the French NGO Forum Réfugiés, but the aim is to report on France's indifference and negligence regarding the events in Ventimiglia. This bias does not help the reader be better informed on the topic on hand, so it cannot be considered as an appropriate expert view.

The matter is exclusively discussed by politicians, both national and local. On a national level, the quoted and interviewed politicians are Angelino Alfano, Minister of Interior Affairs at the time (Caccia, 2015, p.12), some member of the parliament from different political parties (Longo, 2015, p.3) and Matteo Renzi, then Prime Minister (Ginori, 2015b, p. 18). The regional and local political personalities most frequently interviewed on the matter are the mayor of Ventimiglia, Enrico Iaculano, the president of the region Liguria, Giovanni Toti, and the vice president of the region, Sonia Viale. Only one article from the sample, published in *La Repubblica* (Filetto, 2015c, p.3) cites the political formations and alignments of actors at a local and regional level. This particular is especially relevant considering that some politicians of the region Liguria are politically affiliated with right and extreme right parties. This can be explained by the centre left tendency of the newspaper, as the journalist might have wanted to argue against the political positions of said elected officials. This can also be linked to the first principle of the Ethical Journalism Network (Law, 2016) which calls for an appropriate description of the status and position of the quoted speaker, i.e. politicians and police officers.

Some public servants, such as the prefectures of some province capitals of Liguria, are mentioned especially in *La Repubblica* and *Il Corriere della Sera*. Despite being among the most important and constant figures in the situation in Ventimiglia, Italian security forces, police and Carabinieri are rarely interviewed. Citizens of Ventimiglia and non-governmental organizations such as the Italian Red Cross and the Caritas are frequently mentioned especially regarding humanitarian relief, even though they are rarely directly quoted. Some columns include the actions and the positions of benevolent citizens from France and Principality of Monaco, even though the space given to them is smaller compared to that given to Italian citizens. On an international level, journalists use the word "Europe" to refer

to all the institutions of the EU, therefore creating confusion without giving any relevance to each specific organ and its roles and duties. In describing the positions taken by France, *La Repubblica* mentions the then Minister of Interior Affairs Bernard Cazeneuve and his cabinet (Ginori, 2015a, p.9; Ginori, 2015b, p.18 ).

Finally, journalist focus on migrants and refugees only when a full piece is dedicated to them; in the sample of 26 articles only 4, 2 from *La Stampa* (Menduni, 2015b, p.3; Anon, 2015e, p.5) and 2 from *La Repubblica* (Filetto, 2015a, p.4; Crosetti, 2015, p18) have migrants and refugees as the most relevant actors.

### 5.2.5 Terminology

In all examined articles, the terminology used to identify and describe foreign citizens passing through Ventimiglia are migrant, followed by *profugo* and immigrant. *La Stampa* also uses the generic term foreigner to identify those blocked between the Italian and French border. According to the Rome Charter Guidelines, migrants and immigrants are those who voluntarily decide to leave their home country in search of employment and better economic conditions and who could make a safe return if willing (Unar, 2015, p.13). The word *profugo* is instead used to refer to who escapes from wars and persecutions (Ibid., p.25). Often this term refers to illegal migrants or those who have been for a short period of time (Redattore sociale, 2013, p.51), presumably before seeking asylum. Despite *profugo* being a term frequently used by journalists, the guidelines (Unar, 2015, p.13) recommend the usage of asylum-seeker rather than the former.

A problem with terminology arises when the terms migrant, *profugo*, foreigner and immigrant are used as synonyms within the same article. These expressions define concepts and situations diametrically opposed, as *profugo* falls within the category of forced migrations (i.e. those obliged to escape their home country), while migrant or immigrant indicate a voluntary choice and the consequent possibility to return at any moment in the home country (UNHCR, 2016b). By using these words interchangeably, journalists are not following the

first principle of the Rome Charter, namely the duty to use juridical appropriate terminology to describe the reality of events (FNSI, 2008, p.1).

The journalist reporting on the events of Ventimiglia probably resorted to these terms since an asylum-seeker is who has applied for international protection. This allows him or her to obtain in Italy the so called *nominal certificate* namely a permit with a six-month validity and renewable until his/her case has not been examined (Ministero dell'Interno, 2015, p.12). However in this case the foreign citizens in Ventimiglia had no formal document issued by Italian authorities (ASGI, 2015, p.2) and therefore could not be defined as asylum seekers.

Similarly, the complete absence of the term refugee in all the examined articles is probably due to the fact that the determination of this status is a declaratory rather than constitutive (Goodwin-Gill & McAdam, 2007, p.51). Applications for international protection are examined in Italy by the Territorial Commission in charge, who issues it through a ministerial decree (Ministero dell'Interno, 2014)  to the foreign citizen that, abiding by art 1A clause 2 of the Geneva Convention are people who

> *(…) owing to a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, [are] outside the country of [their] nationality and [are] unable or, owing to such fear,  [are] unwilling to avail [themselves] of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of [their] former habitual residence as a result of such events, [are] unable or, owing to such fear, [are] unwilling to return to it* (UN Declaration on Refugees, 1951).

It follows that the asylum-seeker who obtains a residency permit on the grounds of political asylum has the right to move freely within the Schengen area (Ministero degli Esteri, 2017).

The examined articles should have reported that those blocked at the French border are classified as *refugees and migrants*. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2016a) suggests to use such terminology when discussing about the transfer or transit of groups of people via sea or in other circumstances where both categories are involved. Furthermore, in an article published in *La Stampa* (Menduni, 2015a, p.5) it is

reported that a large number of the foreign citizens present in Ventimiglia were previously hosted in the refugee and migrant Reception Centre in the Region Liguria. However, in Italy are present a variety of different welcoming structures for refugees and migrants and the article never report in detail which category they are referring to. Being this the case, these people should have already applied for international protection, and should therefore be addressed as asylum-seekers. The journalist is therefore not only using the four definitions above in an inappropriate and incorrect way, but is also not using the most appropriate one, which would be refugees and migrants.

Only in 4 articles out of 26 the migrant and refugee is described as *clandestino*. As previously mentioned, this term denotes illegal immigrants and has a negative feeling associated to it. Notably, this terminology is used both in *Il Corriere della Sera* (Bruno, 2015d, p.17; Nava, 2015, p. 34) and in *La Repubblica* (Filetto, 2015e, p.2; Filetto, 2015a, p.4)*,* where it is present in an article per newspaper. According to the Rome Charter Guidelines (Unar, 2015, p.12) in the journalism profession such word should be avoided. The term *clandestino* cannot be led back to any specific juridical condition and according to the Italian legislation this terminology does not exist. The extensive usage of this term both by politicians and media could cover several different juridical conditions. A *clandestino* could therefore be a foreign citizen who is still on the Italian territory after the expiration of his or her visa or residency permit. It could also describe a person who does not possess any permit or regular document, or an owner of a study permit who however is working (Redattore sociale, 2013, p.48). As seen, the juridical conditions that can fall within the term *clandestino* are varied and quite different between one another. Furthermore, this term has a negative and derogatory tone, which is an additional reason as to why it should be avoided by journalists (Unar, 2015, p.12).

### 5.2.6 Information and data provided to describe the foreign citizens

According to the Rome Charter Guidelines (Ibid., p.33), pertinence and relevance are the criteria a journalist should use as a reference point when citing information about the protagonist of a piece of news. In the analysed articles, reporters often do not follow this

recommendation, especially while describing the migrants and refugees. Although religious beliefs and the belonging to an ethnic or racial group are not mentioned, an article published by *Il Corriere della Sera* (Bruno, 2015d, p.17) specifies that two Eritreans were charged for resisting arrest. Even in *La Stampa* is reported that "an agent was bitten, while another was kicked. A 22 year old Sudanese and a 27 year old refugee from Mali were charged for resisting arrest" (Menduni, 2015d, p.5).

In both of these cases the nationality and the juridical status are neither relevant nor pertinent, especially when considering that the aim of the article was to describe the blitz carried out by Italian security forces, during which the migrants and refugees who were occupying the rocks near Ventimiglia had to forcefully board busses so that the area could be cleared. Mentioning the nationality and the juridical status of these people only foster the fears that then lead to the intensification of the problem (Unar, 2015, 35).

Similarly, journalists, in the entire editorial examined, used the nationality to describe the *passeur.* The *passeur* is Moroccans (Bruno, 2015c, p.15) or he comes from Algeria and Tunisia (Menduni, 2015c, p.10), stating that they all have a regular French residency permit. The strategy of referring to a few specific nationalities could causes overtime the automatic association of a certain group with dangerous behaviours (Montali *et al.,* 213, p.236). As a matter of fact, Triandafyllido (1999, p.83), in her studies on the relationship between immigration and national identity in the Italian newspaper, has found out that stereotypes, such as the portrayal of Moroccans as dishonest, are unchangeable features. Said patterns of discrimination also go against the guidelines given by the Ethical Journalism Network (Law, 2016).

Excluding the case not respectful of the Rome Charter, journalists mentioned the nationality of migrants and refugees to give an explanation for the reason why they are present in Italy, and therefore the rationale for their migration. Generally Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Mali, Egypt, Libya and Syria are listed as their home countries. At times, a broader geographical reference is given, as Northern Africa or the Horn of Africa are pinpointed as the departure of the migrants. It can therefore be said that the journalists involved are not giving clear and

complete information regarding the context, hence contradicting the principles of the Rome Charter (Unar, 2015, p.29). The articles seldom report the name and the age of the migrant and refugee. It can be noted that when this happens there is a correspondence with the usage of other non-juridical terminologies, such as the words *people*, *women* and *children*, as well as *mother*, *sister*, etc.

The usage of numbers and figures is almost excessive while describing migrants and refugees. In an article published in *La Stampa* on June 14 2015, numbers are used six times. They described the eighty migrants on the rocks of Ponte San Ludovico, the fifteen hundred that have been readmitted by France, tenths who have occupied the train station, about fifty charging the French police, other forty immigrants blocked by the Italian police and finally the other forty who boarded the busses headed to other facilities (Menduni, 2015a, p.5).

Lastly, the adjectives used in the columns are mainly descriptive of the desperation of the migrants and refugees blocked in Ventimiglia. Words like *lost*, *confused* and *tired* often illustrate the situation and give context. On the contrary, while addressing those migrants and refugees who occupy the rocks of Ponte San Ludovico with no intention of leaving them despite the attempts of the police, the journalist resorts to the word *diehards* (irriducibili).

### 5.2.7   Verifiable data

Another principle enlisted in the Rome Charter is the exclusion of imprecise and inaccurate information and the duty not to put them in circulation, as it could damage the people involved and cause unnecessary alarm (Unar, 2015, p.29). Among the analysed articles, it can be found in several cases that the reported news lacked accuracy, as they were not properly and sufficiently verified. An example of this is the statement according to which France suspended the Schengen cooperation or the reporting of unverified or unreliable figures. Only two articles, one from *Il Corriere della Sera* and one from *La Stampa*, contain reliable information on the effective number of migrants and refugees: in the first case this comes from the 500 meals distributed by the non-governmental organizations for them

present in Ventimiglia (Bruno, 2015d, p.17) , while in the second case the estimate is given by a border patrol agent (Menduni, 2015c, p.10).

Alarmism can also often be identified within the articles, especially when journalists report about how the situation at the Italian-French border could be worsened by new arrivals and landings on Italy's southern coasts with migrants and refugees heading straight to Ventimiglia. Being there no rational or justified grounds for such statements, this connection between the two events must be considered a conjecture and not a verifiable truth to be spread among readers. The same analysis can be applied to journalists who report statements of other parties who could cause alarmism. This  behaviour by journalists contradicts another of the guidelines listed in the Ethical Journalism Network (Law, 2016). Before reporting a news, journalists should examine and identify the aim and the agenda of the reported speaker and decide whether to include said information accordingly. In this case, several interviewees aimed at creating alarmism and their words should have therefore been excluded from the articles, which did not happen. This is especially clear in two cases: an article reports a police officer stating that "if other 400 or 500 arrive, the situation will become uncontrollable" (Menduni, 2015d, p.5), while in another the Vice President of the Region Liguria expresses his concerns regarding new arrivals in Ventimiglia (Filetto, 2015c, p.3).

### 5.2.8   Causes that have created the issue

Journalists attribute the development of the events in Ventimiglia to the blockages on the border and the constant presence of French police officers at the border patrol offices between Ventimiglia and Mentone, who pushed back the migrants, obliging them to remain on Italian soil appealing to the Schengen cooperation and the Chambery Bilateral Agreement. In *Il Corriere della Sera* two articles (Caccia, 2015, p. 12; Nava, 2015, p.34) identify as an additional cause to the situation the choice by the international community, France included, to attach Libya, which was the main route taken by migrants and refugees to cross the central Mediterranean Sea to reach the coasts of Southern Italy. New incoming flows and landings of migrants in the southern regions of Italy is another explanatory factor

listed in 4 articles both by *Il Corriere della Sera* (Caccia, 2015, p.12; Bruno, 2015d, p.17) and *La Repubblica* (Parodi, 2015a, p.2; Filetto, 2015c, p.3), and is connected to the aggravation of the emergency in Liguria. *La Stampa* recognises the indifference of Europe regarding these migrants and refugees blocked in Ventimiglia as one of the causes. A similar position is also taken by *La Repubblica*, which reports: "the people of the rocks […] looks at the line where Italy ends and nothing begins: the closed door on France and the future" (Crosetti, 2015, p. 18).

Among the other factors involved, blame is given to the Italian government's inability to stop the arrivals of migrants and refugees coming from the southern coasts. In particular, this accusation was made by the President of the Region Liguria Giovanni Toti (Filetto, 2015c, p.3) and from the President of the Region Lombardia Roberto Maroni, interviewed in an article from *Il Corriere della Sera* (Caccia, 2015, p.12).

It can therefore be noted that journalists explain the situation mainly from a political point of view violating the principles of the Rome Charter (Unar, 2015, p.37). Minor relevance is given to the rationale behind the permanence of the migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia. An article from *Il Corriere della Sera* published on June 17 gives a generic explanation on "them being victims of wars" (Nava, 2015, 34). Only 4 articles out of 26, 2 from *La Stampa* (Menduni, 2015b, p.3; Anon, 2015e, p.5) and 2 from *La Repubblica* (Filetto, 2015a, p.4; Parodi, 2015a, p.2) explain that the migrants and refugees interviewed want to head to other European countries to re-join their families. It is important to observe how the articles mentioned above focus specifically on the migrants and refugees, and are the only pieces of news where journalist interview them and illustrates their story.

### 5.2.9 Effects

From the analysis of the articles, several effects deriving from the halt of migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia can be identified. On a European level, journalists mainly report the political tension between France and Italy. Furthermore, 2 articles from *La Stampa* (Longo, 2015, p.3; Martinelli, 2015, p.5) describe France's indifference and lack of solidarity towards Italy, and accuses it of applying the fundamental principles of its Republic only when

convenient. This issue is also discussed by other newspapers, as *Il Corriere della Sera* dedicates an entire column to this matter. Europe, both as an institution and as a set of values built on cooperation and harmony is depicted as indifferent and unable to find a common solution for the migrants' emergency (Bruno, 2015d, p.17; Nava, 2015, p.34). While describing the national context, 2 articles from *La Stampa* (Longo, 2015, p.3; Menduni, 2015d, p.5) and 2 from *La Repubblica* (Anon, 2015b, p.2; Anon, 2015d, p.2), report of tensions caused by the inability of the government to deal with the stall of migrants and refugees at the frontier. These accusations were made by the President of the Region Liguria, Giovanni Toti, and the Mayor of Ventimiglia, Enrico Iaculano. The latter is cited by two articles from *La Repubblica*, stating that the Italian reception system for migrants and refugees "does not hold up" (Anon, 2015b, p.2.) and it cannot be expected from a single municipality to manage alone an emergency (Anon, 2015c, no pagination). *La Repubblica* is also the only newspaper who discusses the economic implications of the presence of migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia. Three articles (Anon, 2015b, p.2; Filetto, 2015d, p.10; Filetto, 2015c, p.3) quote the Governor of the Region Liguria, who states that the situation in Ventimiglia could lead to a decrease in tourism and consequent negative repercussions on the region's GDP, as this is mainly based on the tourism and hospitality sector. The same newspaper describes the strong conflicts between the citizens and business owners of Ventimiglia and the foreign citizens due to the littering and disrepair caused by the latter around the town's railway station (Anon, 2015b, p.2; Parodi, 2015a, p.2).

The last two effects that have great relevance in the three newspapers analysed are the protests of the migrants and the figure of the *passeur* (people smuggler). Migrants and refugees protested and organized demonstrations on June 14 and 15 2015 to claim their rights and denounce how these had been violated. Several articles from all three newspapers inform readers about these protests (Bruno, 2015b, p. 12; Menduni, 2015a, p. 5; Filetto, 2015a, p.4). The existence and the actions of *passeur* are mentioned in three articles (Bruno, 2015c, p.15; Menduni, 2015b, p.3; Filetto, 2015a, p.4) and these actors are seen and described as an effect of the presence of migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia.

*5.2.10 Remedies*

In the sample of articles, journalists propose several potential solutions to the situation in Ventimiglia. In an article from *Il Corriere della Sera* published on June 15 (Caccia, 2015, p.12), the writer reports a proposal made by Angelino Alfano, then Minister of Interior Affairs, to equally distribute migrants among all European countries. This proposal was then presented at a meeting with the Ministers of Interior Affairs from other European countries held on June 16 2015 in Luxembourg (Caccia, 2015, p.12). The same piece of news was also published by the other two newspapers (Martinelli, 2015, p.5; Ginori, 2015b, p.18).

The same article from *Il Corriere della Sera* (Caccia, 2015, p.12) identifies other two potential remedies to the problem; one consisting in the creation of refugee camps in Libya, and the other in organizing humanitarian corridors so as to prevent large-scale arrivals of migrants and refugees via sea on the Italian coasts. Since migrants who cross the Mediterranean Sea often travel on pontoons in terrible safety and sanitary conditions, this solution could tackle the problem from a humanitarian point of view.

The French Minister of Interior Affairs, Bernard Cazeneuve, is cited by *La Repubblica* on June 16 2015 (Ginori, 2015b, p.18) and offers an alternative solution, suggesting that should be opened some centres in Italy where migrants can be sorted between those eligible for asylum and those who are not. The same article also recounts about the meeting between Matteo Renzi and Francois Hollande, then respectively Italy's Prime Minister and France's President, as the latter visited EXPO Milano 2016. Also included in the article is the proposal of the Italian Prime Minister to issue temporary permits as already happened in 2011 to lighten the situation in Ventimiglia. Lastly, journalists report of Germany closing its borders from May 26 to June 15 2015 for the G7 meeting, and describe this as another potential answer to the situation in Ventimiglia (Ginori, 2015a, p.9; Filetto, 2015e, p.2; Longo, 2015, p.3). The solutions reported by all journalists concern the evacuation of the migrants and the refugees from the square in front of the rocks of Ponte San Ludovico carried out by Italian police forces (Martinelli, 2015, p.5).

Journalists refer to these operations as a containment strategy: "the strategy seems clear: nobody must join the handful of men on the rocks, no concession must be granted to make their stay more comfortable. "We want to exhaust them" lets slip a police official" (Bruno, 2015d, p.17).

As reported by all the examined newspapers, Italian security forces have contained migrants and refugees through barriers so as to avoid them trying to cross the French border, and at the same time force them through charges to board on busses headed to the station or to refugee shelters in the region (Menduni, 2015a, p.5; Crosetti, 2015, p.18).

In some cases, especially in articles published by *La Repubblica*, it is reported of various meeting between the Mayors of Ventimiglia and Nice, the Prefects of Imperia and Nice (Filetto, 2015e, p.2) and also the institution of an emergency committee for the creation of temporary refugee shelters (Filetto, 2015d, p.10). Such actions are, as reported by the journalist, aimed at establishing a short-term hospitality, therefore avoiding circumstances that would potentially be attractive for thousands of migrants (Filetto, 2015e, p.2). Lastly, as other remedies to alleviate the emergency, journalists describe the spontaneous help coming from both private citizens and associations located in the area (Bruno, 2015d, p.17; Bruno, 2015b, p. 12).  As well as the health service provided by the Region Liguria to assist migrants and refugees and at the same time guarantee better sanitary conditions to the areas surrounding the railway station and the rocks (Parodi, 2015a, p.2; Filetto, 2015c, p.3).

In light of the above, It is possible to state that journalists ignored and violate every principles entrenched in the Rome Charter. They have never used a correct terminology creating confusion on the status of those blocked in Ventimiglia. To this is added that an overall explanation of the contest and causes is partly lacking. Consulting and reporting some experts, journalists could have better shed light on the event. Finally, some information has never been verified and others could not be reported since the criterion of pertinence and relevance was missing.

*5.3 Analysis*

In this part of the analysis, the second research question that have guided my work will be answered, thus, the motive behind the choice to violate the Rome Charter's principles has been analysed.

From the analysis of the 26 articles, it can be deduced that the case of Ventimiglia has been approached by the journalists mainly from a political perspective. The correlation between media and politics has been extensively discussed, especially as a relationship based on manipulation for electoral purposes (Castelli Gattinara, 2016) The stop of migrants in Ventimiglia, however, does not present elements that can be reconducted to this relationship, on a neither local nor regional nor national level, since no elections were going to take place in the near future. These had indeed already run a few days earlier for the President and the Council of the Region Liguria (Regione Liguria, 2015)

The events in Ventimiglia highlight a terminology and a portrayal exclusively based on practices and dynamics of control. In his study on the immigration debate in Italy, Maneri (2011, p.85) observed how the linguistic forms through which immigration is interpreted and discussed mainly derive from the way in which migrants are treated by the institutions, who in turn mention it and describe it.

Journalists therefore discuss and report the situation in Ventimiglia basing their articles on the perspective of the institutions who are trying to manage the event, consequently reinforcing said perspective. The following analysis will highlight how the political debate, reported by various newspapers, enhanced the creation of an emergency situation around the case of Ventimiglia and how journalists have themselves been influenced by such perspective when recounting of migrants and refugees. At the same time, practices and languages who brought to the securitizing of migrants and refugees will be examined.

*5.3.1 The situation on Ventimiglia: an emergency*

Even though the case of Ventimiglia involved a small number of migrants and refugees (ASGI, 2015, pp. 2-3), the events were reported in terms of an on-going emergency crisis. This can be attributed to the fact that those involved were stranded migrants[8], namely people who are stalled, as they do not want to remain where they are located at the moment but cannot continue their journey. These migrants can be defined through different juridical statuses depending on their individual situations (Dowd, 2008, p.4). This has allowed journalists to talk about and describe the migrants and refugees present in Ventimiglia as a problem to be solved.

Robert Cox (1981, p.128) has suggested that the "problem solving approach", "takes the word as it find it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organized".

The capacity to discuss in an authoritative way of populations, problems and solutions implies a power relationship (Nyers, 2006, p.6). However, as specified by Nyers (2006, p.6) the political character of this perspective entails the lack of willingness of who detains the power to be self-reflexive about the origins, context and aims. This will is further strengthened by the fact that the topic at hand is an emergency, specifically situations which allow little time for critical considerations (Ibid.). Therefore, when dealing with the "problem solving approach" the capacity to understand and engage with the real causes producing the problematic event, is really limited (Betts, 2009, p.134).

By analysing the 26 sample articles under the light of the political debate, two main themes can be identified: the role of Europe and the consequent need for common policies to face emergencies and the internal management of migrants and refugees.

The political debate around Europe leads to and focuses on two factors: while on one hand the focal point is an equal distribution of migrants and refugees among all the member states of the European Union, on the other hand attention is directed to the need to create refugee camps and humanitarian corridors in Libya, so that Italy could welcome only those who have right to apply for asylum, therefore implementing a real and proper selection. Despite the constant and ongoing political debate, the phenomenon of immigration in Italy is still an

emergency, to which an urgent solution is to be found, not only within the Italian context, but also through European common policies (Papa, 2014, p.85).

Italy is described in the sample articles as exposed to the threats deriving both from the migrants and refugees and from Europe's and France's indifference and egoism. This second factor can also be considered one of the causes to the internal tensions between the various Italian political actors.

### 5.3.2 The narrative on migrants and refugees

The reductionist contextualisation of the rationales of migration is represented also when journalist reported on the stories of the migrants and refugees. This can be well noted in an article published by *La Stampa* (Anon, 2015e, p.5) on June 18 2015, which starts with a quite sensationalistic title: ""We the desperate on no one's land". The stories of four migrants blocked for days in Ventimiglia between the Italian and French border. The odyssey of men who have fled their own country in hope of a better future. Will they find it?"

This article describes the stories of four migrants and refugees stalled in Ventimiglia. Their journey is discussed, even though only from an economic perspective, such as the expenses needed to reach Italy and the duration of the trip (e.g. 8 months, one year…). Emphasis is laid upon Libya, describing it as *hell* or *a nightmare*.

It can be observed what Bruno (2015a, p.72) describes as flattening, namely where the journalist circumvents any possible reflection on the structural causes of international migration and the phenomenon's links and connections with issues such as globalization, political crises, and international conflicts, or the critical economic, demographic, food and health plight of significant parts of the planet[E3] . The information given does not increase and improve the knowledge of the phenomenon of migration, but is rather aimed at catching the readers' attention and provoke in them pity and making them feel touched, this feeling often enhanced by emphatic and emotional language (Papa, 2014, p.87). It can therefore be identified what Belluati *et al*. (1995, p.149) define as an "excessive personalisation of the topic, which hinders a more universalistic contextualisation of the phenomenon. The debate

on the issue at hand remains focused on the single events while the matter is discussed from a broader and more general perspective only in rare occasions, therefore mainly remaining in the background".

Furthermore, each migrant is described through his or her name, age, origin and profession in the home country. With the exception of the title, the interviewed migrants are humanised: they are conferred features that are typical of human being, namely proper characteristics that allow him or her to be recognised as a single individual and not as a political and administrative object.

The same descriptive pattern can be found in the two articles reporting on the stories of the migrants and refugees by *La Repubblica* (Parodi, 2015b, p.4; Crosetti, 2015, p. 18). The migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia are depicted by journalists by listing their name, age, origin and their expectations for the future, especially the final destination of their journey. As highlighted by Marco Bruno (2015a, pp.71-72), reporting any form of planning regarding migration not only helps understanding the rationales behind migration flows, but also allows the humanisation of migrants in the eyes of the public. While discussing the case of Ventimiglia this favours the understanding of the motives that brought the migrant to be blocked between the French and Italian border. However, this is done in a superficial way, as the only mentioned element is the European country where the migrant or refugee is heading.

Other articles also humanise the migrants and refugees blocked in Ventimiglia, and do so by using nouns such as *family*, *sister*, *mother*, *children*, therefore considering them not as different, but as normal people with dear ones.

By the same token, representative logic is also applied to adjectives used to attribute desperation and exhaustion to the situation of the migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia. These emotional attributes who create feelings of compassion and solidarity through the articles respond to the value of the news, which is crucial for journalists. While discussing the *criteria for newsworthiness for the public interest*, Papuzzi (1998) efficaciously defined

said feelings through the human-interest criteria. Basically, the humanisation of migrants and refugees represents an efficient selling tool for newspapers.

However, it must be noted how during the analysis of the articles only four give space to the migrant and the refugee to tell his or her story him/herself. In the other cases, theirs remains a background presence and are mainly considered passive actors of political debates and humanitarian aid.

Moreover, to the humanisation of migrants and refugees corresponds an equal glorification of private citizens who bring food and essential goods to those blocked in the station and on the rocks of Ponte San Ludovico. Less glorified but with the same space given to them in the articles, humanitarian organisations and NGOs such as Caritas and the Red Cross are described as generous and charitable.

In the article by *La Stampa* (Anon, 2015e, p.5) cited above, journalists have decided to focus and stress on the aspects of the migrants and refugees 'stories that describe the humanitarian aid given by Italy. The latter is reported as representing "the only country who has welcomed us and has taken action for us", as a country "[who has] respect for people, and [has] rescued and helped us". Half of the articles taken from *La Repubblica* mention the acts of solidarity of Italian citizens towards the migrants. One article presents the actions of a citizen named Laura de Luca who helped the migrants and the refugees, declaring that "having two children [herself she knows] what it's like" (Filetto, 2015a, p.4).

While conducting research on Hutu refugees in Tanzania, Malkki (1996, pp.377-378) noted how the humanitarian actors, journalists and photo reporters involved painted refugees as a depoliticised and ahistorical category, making them speechless emissaries. These humanitarian representations often aim at preventing and halting the distinction between refugees and non-refugees, promoting a shared vision of common humanity (Nyers, 2006, p.16). This representative logic, however, hide both the individuality of refugees and also the historical and political circumstances that have produced migration.

In the examined case, it could be said that journalists humanise the migrant so as not to characterise them through historical and political attributes and to depict Italy as an innocent,

charitable and generous nation regardless of the causes that have led to the situation in Ventimiglia.

Furthermore, by portraying Libya as the only dangerous part of the migrants and refugees journey, journalists apply once again the perspective of those in power. The latter can also be identified as those who, for emergency reasons, do not search for the real causes behind the migration flows and the transit of migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia, but seek solutions elsewhere.

Another effect of said perspective is the choice of journalists not to mention or include in the article references to the Dublin III Regulation (European Regulation (UE) 604/2013), which is based on the principle according to which asylum can only be sought in the member country where the migrant has first arrived. This guideline has two main objectives: firstly to avoid situations where all member states declare their lack jurisdiction regarding the application for international protection; furthermore this should help maintain a greater control over the movements of asylum-seekers within the European Union, giving each member state the power to request the country of arrival to be in charge of the migrant (Ministero dell'Interno, 2015, p.16). Thus, journalists and political discourse, reported on the examined sample, are masking the Italian duty with regard to the migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia that is, to give them information about the asylum procedures as well as identify them and follow all the procedures for their request.

### 5.3.3 Securitizing migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia

The migrants and refugees stopped in Ventimiglia was securitized. They have become part of a "speech-act", of that social process that has constructed them as an urgency and fundamental threats (Williams, 2003, pp.513-514). In particular, the politicians had make a securitizing claim in order to represent migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia as a societal security issue.

According to Buzan *et al*. (1998, p.119) in societal security, what is at stake is the identity of a group, that is, those ideas and practices that identify individuals as a member of a social group. Societal security exists when communities of whatever kind, both at national level and in a smaller scale, define a development or potentiality as a threat to their survival as a community. In the case of Ventimiglia, what is at stake is the societal security of France, Italy and in a smaller scale, the city in which migrants and refugees are blocked.

Moreover, as suggested by Betts (2009, p.72) migrants represent a threat also from an economic perspective. In the case examined, as reported by the journalists, politicians such as the Governor of Region Liguria and the mayor of Ventimiglia, describes the economic repercussions that this Region could face because of a reduction in tourism,  as well as the added expenses for the municipality needed to manage the building emergency. This hazard to the economic life of the city itself and on the region can be also added to the securitizing process regarding the migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia.

This section will analyse the extraordinary measures that have led to the securitization of the migrants and the refugees blocked in Ventimiglia, which, as noted by Alexander Betts (2009, p.72) are practices which would generally be associated to a military threat. The tightening of controls at the borders and the derogation on human rights fall within this category of procedures. By the same token, extraordinary means involves the coercive capacity of the state to detain and deport the offending group in such a way to deter or prevent further arrivals [E5] (Watson, 2007, p.98). The language and terminology used by journalists to describe the situation in Ventimiglia in terms of securitization will then be examined since, as suggested by Buzan *et al*. (1998, p.124) media contribute significantly when there are two parties in conflict that is, "us" versus "them".

 *5.3.4 The reinforcement of controls at borders and the derogation on human rights*

The majority of the articles analysed state that fixed controls have been reintroduced on the frontier between Ventimiglia and Mentone, that the Schengen cooperation has been suspended, or denounce the constant presence of French police forces along the border.

Only *La Repubblica* in one article reports how said controls are partial and happen sporadically so as not to violate the Schengen cooperation (Parodi, 2015a, p.2). It can therefore be noted how the information reported is incorrect and inaccurate, which is in accordance with what is reported above in the analysis.

The Schengen cooperation and area are founded on of the Schengen Agreements of 1985, the Schengen Convention of 1990, as well as all accords and rulings connected. This has been inserted through the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 within the European Union's legislative framework, and has allowed the removal of controls on internal borders between member states of the European Union[10] and the members of the European Economic Area, such as Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland (Collett, 2011).

Notwithstanding, border controls may be temporarily reintroduced in *exceptional* cases as stated in the Schengen Borders Code (European Council (EC) 562/2006).

According to art. 23, clause 1 of the Schengen Border Code (European Council (EC) 562/2006), this reintroduction can only be justified by a severe threat to public order or matters of internal security, and must have a time restriction, which varies on the seriousness of said threat. The art. 25 of the Schengen Borders Code (European Council (EC) 562/2006) disciplines the cases defined by urgency but it was not taken into consideration since the number of migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia (around four hundred ) is not sufficient to be included into this category  (ASGI, 2015, p.6).  The French authorities should have notified the other member states and the European Commission about their desire to reinstate internal controls. This should have also been accompanied by a detailed report describing the reasons and the causes for such claim, as stated in art. 24 clause 1 of the Border Code (European Council (EC) 562/2006).

However, France did not follow such protocol. As reported by the Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration (ASGI)[11] following the visit to Ventimiglia on June 24 and 25 2015, the reintroduced controls along the French-Italian border were systematic, but not formal

reintroduction of border control which did not involved all travelers . As a matter of fact, said controls were carried out in a discriminatory way, as they were based on racial profiling (ASGI, 2015, p.5) rather than being carried out on a random basis.

Therefore, international commuters, Italians or any other European citizen, as well as a citizen of a third country with a regular residency permit could regularly circulate and travel within Europe.

As reported by the Prefect of the Maritime Alps, France is thus acting in accordance with the Chambery Bilateral Agreement. The latter is a bilateral agreement signed in 1997 by Romano Prodi, the Italian Prime Minister at the time, and Jacques Chirac, then President of France. This pact established a cooperation regarding the common border between the police forces and the custom agencies of the two countries. In particular, art.6 (Accordo di Chambery, 1997) states that said cooperation is aimed at the safeguard of public security and at an efficient fight on crime, especially regarding illegal immigration and trafficking.

Hence, both states can readmit an illegal foreign citizen located in their territory if there is sufficient well-founded evidence that said citizen comes from the other state (Papoutsi, 2014; IPSI, 2015). Furthermore, the police forces of one country can place the foreign citizen in the custody of the other nation, and each security force must evaluate the grounds for such claim and eventually authorise his or her readmission (ASGI, 2015, p.6).

At the same time, the Chambery Bilateral Agreement was infringed and ignored, as reported by ASGI (2015, pp.2-4) who identified several systematic infringements. The first issue that arises involves the procedures implemented for the handing over of migrants. A number of foreign citizens were stopped while on French trains and obliged to disembark at the following station, being then put on other trains directed to Italy, and therefore without any contact with the Italian police forces. The same procedures were used with foreign citizens stopped on French soil, at times also located at a great distance from the Italian border (ASGI, 2015, p.3). In these cases were immigrants were send back, the transit through Italy was assumed by the French police forces based on little evidence such as train tickets or receipts from Italian shops. Furthermore, it is reported that the security forces of either

countries identified these migrants and informed them of their rights, therefore ignoring their potential status of international protection seeker (ASGI, 2015, p.4). It is also reported that several foreign citizens who succeeded in crossing the border had expressed the wish to request asylum but that the French police officers did not allow them to do so (ASGI, 2015, p.3).

The Chambery Bilateral Agreement is legally binding for the contracting parties, but must not however contradict and fail on duties and obligations deriving from other international treaties which the parties have signed, in particular the 1951 Geneva Convention (Corneli, 2005, pp. 174-175). The Geneva Convention of 1951 dictates that all contracting states must respect the right of the individual to leave his or her country seeking for protection, and therefore ratifies the right to seeking asylum (Goodwin-Gill & McAdam, 2007, p.370). This allows the migrant not to receive any penalty regarding his/her illegal entry in the country or his/her presence in the state where s/he will apply for asylum, as stated in art 31 of the Geneva Convention (UN Declaration on Refugees, 1951).

It is evident how a successful securitization strategy was implemented, especially by France, as the identity of the migrant or refugee in Ventimiglia was reconstructed so as to classify him/her as an illegal migrant. This has allowed France to justify and motivate actions that would otherwise have no validity, namely the substantial but not formal reintroduction of border controls and the appeal to the Chambery Bilateral Agreement in order to be redeemed from the rules of the international refugee regime.


### 5.3.5 Detention and deportation

Another practice that has enhanced the securitization of the migrants and refugees of Ventimiglia is the use of the coercive capacity of the Italian state. More than once in the week from which the sample articles were taken for the analysis the Italian police force and the Carabinieri army were employed in connected operations, firstly by presenting the migrants from crossing the border and subsequently by ensuring that the situation would not be worsened by the arrival of other migrants and refugees. The media therefore started

talking about an outright containment strategy: migrants and refugees were fenced in through crush barriers to prevent them from moving and had to forcefully board busses headed elsewhere.

### 5.3.6 Language of securitization

As stated above, the terminology used by journalists to describe the juridical status of the migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia is not appropriate, primarily due to the fact that it does not abide by a Code of Conduct. As a matter of fact, in all the articles included in the sample the foreign citizens were mainly described through the terms migrant or immigrant. Furthermore, it can be noted how the word refugee is completely absent and migrant and *profugo* are used interchangeably as synonims.

As noted by Watson (2007, p.109) in his research on asylum-seekers and refugees on the Canadian coasts, the usage of the term migrant annihilates all the humanitarian attributions that revolve around refugees.

If the foreign citizens blocked in Ventimiglia had been defined as refugees or migrant this would have given them recognition as human beings entitled to human rights, and as such should have been respected, protected and accommodated. This is particularly true for refugees and asylum seekers who are entitled to distinct rights as protected by a specific normative framework (UNHCR, 2016a).

Journalists depict foreign citizens present in Ventimiglia as people who are defined by illegality. This perception is strengthened by the use of the term *clandestino*, even though it has not been employed often.

Quassoli (2013) has examined the recurring combination of the terms "immigrant" and "clandestino" in the headlines and texts of articles published *in the Corriere della Sera* between 1992 and 2009. What he found out is that during the second half of the nineties, the *clandestino* became an independent symbolic resource for the political and media discourse, which emphasized a linkage between immigration and criminality (Quassoli, 2013, p.206). As pointed out by Maneri (2011, p. 87-88)

This word encapsulates the various concerns of those agencies that seek to control migratory movements, which certainly do not refer to the countless stories and invidual conditions nor, for that matter, to the evaluation, recognition or denial of asylum, entry and protection but rather to locating, blocking and expelling those who seek to arrive and cannot follow legal routes.

The media sector has therefore heavily contributed to securitizing the foreign citizens in Ventimiglia.

### 5.3.7 Figures

Several researched, which focused on landings on the Italian coasts, have concluded that a numerical significance of the amount of refugees and migrants presents strong elements of newsworthiness and triggers fears of an invasion or however of an excessive and burdening presence of foreigners (Bruno, 2014, p.59).

The case of Ventimiglia was characterized by much smaller numbers, as the amount of refugees and migrants was limited. Journalists report of "about eighty", "one hundred" and maximum "five hundred". However, by adding the various assumptions described by the journalist him/herself, police officers, the mayor, and even the Vice President of the Region Liguria about the arrival of new migrants from other parts of the country, the picture painted is that of an imminent threat of notable proportions. By using this descriptive technique based on figures and hypotheses, journalists reinforce the idea that migrants and refugees represent a hazard to the Italian society, which risks being invaded.

### 5.3.8 The diehards

Another linguistic choice that supports the securitization of migrants and refugees can be identified in the term "diehard". This is used by journalists working for all three newspapers to describe those who are immovable in their occupation of the rocks in Ponte San Ludovico. It is mainly used when reporting about events where police intervention was needed to sedate demonstrations and protests and to clear the area. The diehards are therefore identified as people who resist any solution, elements of disturb, problematic actors who create chaos.

### 5.3.9  Passeur

*Passeurs* (or people smugglers) are mentioned in 6 articles among those analysed. In particular, *passeurs* are seen by journalists as a consequence of the presence of migrants and refugees in Ventimiglia. This actor however creates disorder and insecurity, as they attract criminality. Buzan *et al*. (1998, p. 121) define crime primarily as a threat to the individual. However, crime can become a societal security issue when menace the disintegration of society. In this case, criminality represents a threat both to the Italian and the French society, as can be inferred by the Chambery Bilateral Agreement and its aim and focus on fighting criminality. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Interior Affairs Cazeneuve declared that the reinstituted border controls had allowed the capture of traffickers, as reported in an article by *La Repubblica* (Ginori, 2015a, p.9).

A *passeur* is defined as the person who actually escorts the immigrants along the paths which cross the border, or who drives the cars (…) that transports them (Pastore *et al*., 2006, p.7).

These figures are generally part of a larger organization, of which he covers the most exposed role in the business, as he comes most often to contact with illegal immigrants and is therefore the easiest to identify during investigations, as is demonstrated by the fact that they are the ones who are often caught in the act (Pastore *et al*., 2006, p.7).

While securitizing migrants and refugees, journalists also mention *passeurs*. It can be noted how the term *passeur* is always preferred to the word smuggler. This linguistic choice can be explained by the reference to Italy's migration history after the Second World War. *Passeurs* were widely and frequently employed since the end of World War II, when large migration flows were taking place from Italy towards other European countries, such as France, Switzerland and Belgium (Lejeune & Martini, 2016, p.10). According to Lejeune and Martini (2016, p.15) about half of the Italian citizens who moved to France looking for better working perspectives were irregular migrants.

Not by chance, an article by *La Repubblica* (Filetto, 2015b, p.3) thoroughly describes the strategies implemented and the paths taken by *passeurs* to avoid being discovered by the

French police forces, but specifies how the same itineraries had been already used by Italians who wanted to emigrate.

As analysed by Potenza (2008, p.90) in all debates about illegal immigration, whether it being approached by an academic, political or military standpoint, one of the permanent figures is that of the *passeur* that allows the entrance of unauthorised migrants in a different national territory thus linking this figure with that of *clandestino*.

By using this term and making reference to Italy's migration history, journalists are therefore reinforcing the idea that the foreign citizens present in Ventimiglia are solely illegal immigrants. This again adds and strengthens the deconstruction of the status and the identity of these individuals in order to highlight their illegal condition.

# 6. FINDINGS

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the portrayal of migrants and refugees in the Italian media and to examin the moral obligations followed or violated by journalists while reporting on this phenomenon, identifying the potential causes of their linguistic, content, professional and ethical choices.

This professional category, and more broadly the whole media sector, has felt over the years the need to create and implement sets of rules to be followed while reporting on the phenomenon of immigration, in order to provide truthful and well balanced information.

While discussing the relationship between media and the portrayal of immigration in Italy, focus was given to the 2015 events in Ventimiglia, where migrants and refugees were stalled for weeks, unable to cross the frontier between Italy and France.

The sample taken for the analysis comprised of 26 articles published by the three main national newspapers, namely Il Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica e La Stampa. These were examined through a set of questions that aimed at highlighting the way the event was

covered by journalists. In particular, the theory of framing was followed, and the topics and aspects that were given more relevance were identified.  This has allowed to determine the cases and aspects in which journalists followed or violated the principles and moral obligations described in the Rome Charter.

The analysis has highlighted how the causes, the context and the solutions regarding the situation in Ventimiglia were discussed in a reductive and precipitous way. This lack of comprehensiveness can be traced back to the major importance given to the political debate arising from the events and the actions taken by politicians, which lacked a long-term and objective view and painted the situation as an emergency. This view was further fortified by the media, who reinforced this emergency view by reporting on the personal stories of migrants. This humanisation aimed at emphasising a positive depiction of Italy as the benevolent country, opposed to other organisms such as the European Union and France.

It was also noted how journalists implemented linguistic and content choices that led to the securitization of migrants and refugees, such as the incorrect use of the generic term migrant and the inappropriate and excessive presence of numbers. During the unfolding of the events of Ventimiglia, both France and Italy resorted to extraordinary measures which could not have been implemented if migrants and refugees had not been securitized and perceived as an immediate and severe threat to the internal security of the countries. It can therefore be concluded that journalists by mainly focusing on the political perspective and covering in a very limited way other important aspects of the events, such as the underlying causes, the political, social and economic context and the correct juridical status of the foreign citizens, have not only provided insufficient, inaccurate and at times misleading information, but have also reinforces the perspective of the actors in power.

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