

# Comparing Right and Left-wing discourse on immigration: a lexical correspondence analysis of Italian parliamentary debates<sup>1</sup>

Paolo Riva, Monica Colombo, Lorenzo Montali

Department of Psychology – University of Milano-Bicocca

Piazza dell'Ateneo Nuovo, 1 – 20126 Milan, Italy

## Abstract

We present a lexical correspondence analysis supported by T-lab (Lancia, 2004) of the Italian parliamentary plenary debates on immigration (Turco-Napolitano and Bossi-Fini laws) held at the Italian Camera during two periods (1996-2001 and 2001-2006). The Turco-Napolitano draft bill was supported by the left-wing parties while the Bossi-Fini draft bill was supported by the right-wing parties. Our aim is to examine how “foreigners” are represented in the discourse of the Italian right and left-wing parties. We also analyzed how the issue of immigration is defined and what changes occur in the content of these representations between the two different periods.

Lexical correspondence analysis presents a major difference between the positions expressed in the two different draft bills and, furthermore, identifies two specific discourses, that are referred to by the majorities who supported the laws. The results show that the discourse of the parliamentary right is characterized as being centered on emphasizing the ingroup-outgroup polarization and represents the “Other” as a “threat”, while the left stresses the necessity for a more tolerant law focusing on the need for immigrants to increase the economic growth of Italian companies.

**Keywords:** political discourse, parliamentary debates, immigration, lexical correspondence analysis.

## 1. The problem

In recent years the numbers of foreigners present in Italy has risen steadily. In line with what has been happening throughout almost all of Europe – with obvious differences that are specific to each individual country – Italy now has a considerable share of foreign citizens.

Between the censuses of 1991 and 2001, the number of foreign nationals grew by three hundred per cent, rising from 356,000 to more than 1 million. More recent statistics indicate that this trend has been progressively consolidated so that it now constitutes a structural aspect of Italian society rather than a simple contingent element (ISMU, 2004). Following the latest regularization of illegal immigrants, the number of legal immigrants reached 2,600,000 in early 2004. In particular, although the number of immigrants from Eastern Europe has grown considerably, immigration to Italy is mostly of North-African origin.

Since this is a fairly recent phenomenon in Italy, it has so far been studied in terms of its structural aspects, which are of sociological, political, and legal interest – these being the main contexts in which it has been researched, including internationally.

---

<sup>1</sup> \* Research funds PRIN 2006, Coordinator: P.Cherubini, Milano-Bicocca University.

With respect to those aspects that are more strictly related to a psychosocial perspective, the question of how foreigners are perceived and portrayed can be considered a key element in understanding the complex dynamics that are typical of relations between different ethnic and cultural groups.

For this purpose, parliamentary plenary debates on immigration held in the Italian Camera during two periods (1996-2001 and 2001-2006) were collected and analyzed. In 1997 the so-called Turco-Napolitano draft bill on immigration was discussed (named after the two Ministers that proposed it, Giorgio Napolitano e Livia Turco). It was supported by the left-wing ruling parties: Democratici di Sinistra (DS), Margherita (DL), Rifondazione Comunista (RC), Verdi (VD). In 2002 the so-called Bossi-Fini draft bill was discussed (named after the two politicians that proposed it, Umberto Bossi, Leader of the Lega Nord e Gianfranco Fini, Leader of Alleanza Nazionale), and supported by the right-wing ruling parties: Forza Italia (FI), Alleanza Nazionale (AN), Lega Nord (LN), Unione democratica Cristiana (UDC).

The Turco-Napolitano (TN) law has been so far the more organic attempt to restructure Italian immigration law. It introduces an integrated reform of control systems, regulates flows, and integrates resident foreigners. From the point of view of control instruments, the TN makes possible both the immediate deportation of foreigners caught illegally entering the country and the holding of foreigners to be expelled in specific centers. At the same time, the law forms the basis of an improved guarantee of the rights of foreigners legally living in the country, with the issuing of a long-term residence permit after a certain period of time (the *carta di soggiorno* – residence card). In the light of repressive measures, TN law decisively improves the effectiveness of measures against illegal immigration. Regarding immigration policy, the law recognizes the need for new immigration and provides for realistic procedures to determine the annual entry quotas for both seasonal and long-term workers. Furthermore, through the institution of the sponsor (a citizen or a foreign resident guarantees the entry of a foreigner who does not have a job contract) the law allows the entry of immigrants that could be employed but that employers would never hire in absence of at least some personal knowledge. This is the case with domestic staff or workers in small and medium sized enterprises.

The Bossi-Fini (BF) law introduced significant new restrictive controls on foreigners. An important aspect of the law is the introduction of measures to fight illegal immigration. Among these are the requirement for all foreigners to be finger printed when applying for their residence permit and all further renewals of their residence permit, the increase in the number of reasons for which a foreigner can be deported, increase in the severity of punishment if the foreigner does not leave the country when required or comes back after been deported, and the introduction of regulations aimed at strengthening border controls. While the preceding law attempted to stabilize the resident foreign population by prefiguring routes to legal integration, the BF aims to maintain their precarious temporary status. The requirements for a residence card were increased and the duration of residence permits reduced, permitting renewal for the same duration as the previous period only.

## 2. Theoretical framework

Social representations theory permits analysis of how attitudes, stereotypes, prejudice, and beliefs can be connected to social and culturally shared systems of knowledge (Moscovici, 1984). Recent advances in social representations theory support this idea of a fruitful integration with discourse-oriented approaches (see Wagner, 2005). In this context,

“discourse” refers to both recurrent and recognizable patterns of meaning and to the production and reproduction of shared common sense knowledge. Discourse about “foreigners” can be regarded as a symbolic resource in which more or less dominant social representations are used in group identity negotiation in order to maintain established social hierarchies (see Gotsbachner, 2001).

Van Dijk (1997, 2000a) discusses the general structural, functional, and contextual properties of political discourse by focusing on parliamentary debates in particular, thus offering a specific framework of analysis. He argues that political discourse, above all, may primarily be defined and studied contextually in terms of the participating actors, their social function, goals, and the political institutions and cognitions involved. Moreover, it may be investigated at the structural level even though few exclusive features are to be found there, although the forms of address for opening and closing discussions in parliamentary debates are standardized. Van Dijk also points out the influential role of political and especially parliamentary discourse on the level of communication, where it strongly influences the public at large.

### **3. Aims**

Our aim is to examine the following in detail:

- a) how “foreigners” are represented in the discourse of Italian left and right-wing parties;
- b) how the issue of immigration is defined and what changes occur in the content of these representations between the two different periods.

### **4. Method**

#### **4.1. The corpus**

Verbatim transcripts of the speeches made by all parties in parliamentary plenary debates on immigration held at the Italian Camera when discussing the so-called Turco-Napolitano and Bossi-Fini draft bills on immigration were collected, and then selected, analyzed, and compared by taking two variables into account: party/period. The corpus so obtained counts 226,544 occurrences with 16,629 different words.

#### **4.2. Data analysis**

A computer-aided content analysis was conducted with a software, *T-Lab* (Lancia, 2004). This approach rules out the possibility of carrying out research on larger corpora. The software analyzes the internal structure of a text through a series of statistical tools thereby permitting both a concise and global view of the corpus. To this purpose we performed lexical correspondence analysis.

### **5. Lexical correspondence analysis**

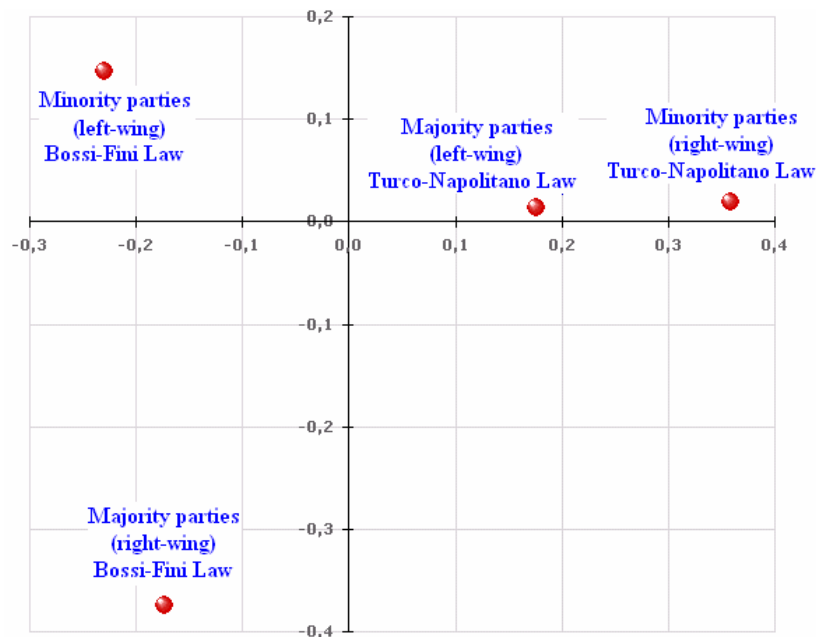
The lexical correspondence analysis use as active variables the position (Majority vs Minority) and political affiliation (Center-left vs Center-right) of the speakers who took part in the debates. So there are four possible modalities of the variable: the center-left majority versus the center-right minority in the discussion of the “Turco-Napolitano” (TN) and the center-right majority versus the center-left minority in the discussion of the “Bossi-Fini” (BF).

Each factor is set up in a spatial dimension – which can be represented as an axis line – whose center is the value “0”, and that develops towards the negative and positive end in a bipolar manner so that the lemmas and extra-textual variables on opposite poles are the most different. In T-Lab the results of analysis are summarized in graphs and tables that allow the evaluation of the relationship of proximity/distance – or rather similarity/dissimilarity between the objects considered.

The resulting geometric space of the analysis is composed of three factors. The first helps explain over half the variance (50.4%) while the remaining two respectively explain 25 and 24 per cent of the variance.

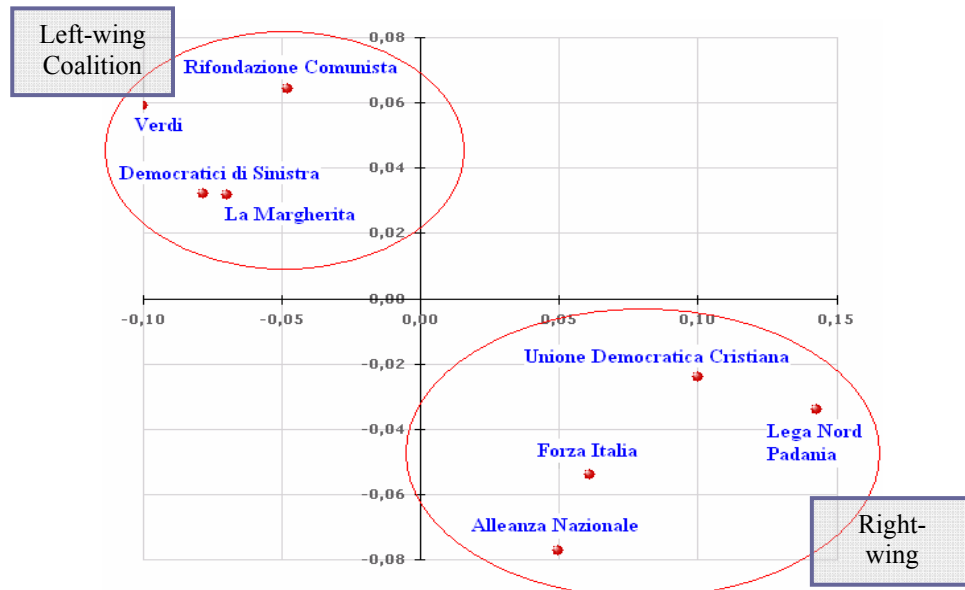
Graph 1 shows the distribution of these variables on the cartesian plot. It can be seen that the first factor (X-axis) separates the speeches produced for TN from those made for BF. In contrast to the rest, the second (Y-axis) positions the speeches made by deputies from the right-wing majority during the discussion of BF in the lower part. The third factor, which does not appear in the two-dimensional graph, isolates the speeches made by the center-left majority from all the other modalities of the variable.

The main difference is therefore between positions expressed on the two different draft bills. Furthermore, two specific discourses are identified, that of the majority who supported the law, and those who with equal importance summarize the remaining data variability. The sub-corpus furthest away from the baricenter (that is, those containing a more specific lexicon) concern the speeches made by minorities who opposed the passing of the two laws.



Graph 1 - Correspondence between the corpus sub-groups

Graph 2 shows the position of political parties, that were considered only as illustrative variables. It can be notice the clear difference between the discourse of the left-wing parties (positioned on the left) and the discourse of the right-wing parties (positioned on the right) that demonstrate the existence of a specific lexicon related to the two coalitions.



Graph 2 - Correspondence between the corpus sub-groups

5.1. Factor 1 - TN and BF: comparison of subject and perspective

The lemmas that form the two extremes of factor 1 are classified in table 1.

<i>Negative polarity</i>			<i>Positive polarity</i>			
Subject categories	Lemmas	Test Values	Subject categories	Lemmas	Test Values	
<i>The economic dimension of migratory phenomena</i>	Worker	-9.2	<i>Ingroup – outgroup polarization</i>	Illegal immigrant	8.3	
	Company	-6.1		Non EU immigrant	8.1	
	Job contract	-5.8		Frontier	5.3	
	Development	-5.2		People	5.3	
	Work	-5.2		Citizen	4.9	
	Employer	-4.9		Italy	3.8	
	Entrepreneur	-4.8		Nation State	2.8	
	Labor	-4.8		Italians	2.4	
	Market	-3.9		<i>The regulations discussed</i>	Right to vote	7.8
	Fixed term	-2.1			Expulsion	7.0
<i>The regulations discussed</i>	Finger printing	-4.7	Enter		4.7	
	Residence permit	-4.6	Offence		4.5	
	Asylum seeker	-4.5	Regularization		4.3	
	Right of asylum	-4.5	Sanction		4.3	
	Residence contract	-3.8	Measure		3.7	
	Quota	-3.8	Health		3.3	
	Refugee	-3.6	Limit		3.3	
	Refusal	-3.0	Residence permit		3.0	
	Migratory flow	-3.4	Regulatory	2.8		
	Reunification	-2.6	Public life	2.7		
Identity	-2.6	Judicial system	2.4			
Illegal immigration	-2.5	Unconstitutional	2.2			
Personage of the sponsor	-2.1	Rule	2.1			
<i>The ideological-value dimension</i>	Ideological	-4.0	<i>The ideological-value dimension</i>	Confrontation	5.2	
	Integration	-3.6		Racist	3.2	
	Idea	-3.5		Solidarity	3.0	
	Co-operation	-3.4		Life-style	2.2	
	Insecurity	-3.0		Feeling	2.2	
	Democracy	-2.4		Discrimination	2.1	

Table 1 - Lemmas associated with the positive polarity and negative polarity of factor 1

### 5.1.1. Positive polarity: details of the TN debate

The lemmas that characterize specific speeches about the TN can be summarized as follows:

Most marked of all there is a dimension of **ingroup-outgroup polarization**. Both lemmas referring to outgroup (“illegal” and “non EC immigrant”) and lemmas referring to the ingroup (“Italy”, “Italians”, and “Nation\_State”) are found. In this context the opposition is expressed in terms of both people and places. The concept of “frontier” confirms and emphasizes this social opposition, evoking a physical line that separates “Us” from “Them”.

As shown in graph 2, it is above all the speeches of the right-wing coalition (analysis positions it furthest away from the “baricenter”) that brings about this factorial polarity. In particular, the center-right minority identifies the outgroup by using the lemma “illegal”, which has the highest t-value in this polarity. On the one hand, this particular lexicology emphasizes one part of the migrants, while on the other it establishes the association of migrants and illegality that, via criminalization, constitutes a typical negative presentation strategy of the Other (van Dijk, 2000a).

With regard to the ingroup, it is significant that potentially generic terms such as “people” and “citizen” are used exclusively to speak of Us: the “people who we represent”, the “citizens ask us to”, etc. These terms refer back to a polarization in favor of the ingroup that has developed transversally (although it is clearly more evident in the discourse of the right-wing minority in parliament), and is part of the contemporary way of expressing xenophobia based on the concept of belonging and on implicit or explicit forms of social exclusion:

“However, above all else, that is, first and foremost above all other external interests, I think comes our culture, our interests, and those of the **people** and the **citizens** we represent” (LN\_minority)<sup>2</sup>.

In this extract the parliamentary right uses the lemmas “people” and “citizens” to define the ingroup compared to the polarized and opposed migrant groups (“our culture”, “our interests”) following on from a legal hypothesis of negative interdependence.

The second content area concerns the category of the **regulations under discussion**. The TN is characterized by the introduction of a regulation composed of “rules” on immigration into Italy. The specific subjects the discussion concentrated on are listed in the lemmas presented in tables.

First of all comes the possibility of giving migrants possessing a “residence-card” the administrative “right\_to\_vote” from the point of view of favoring participation in “public\_life”. The controversy over this question has not only involved the majority and the opposition (in that the opposition has been almost unanimous in its opposition from the very start) but also the majority itself. In fact, the Green Party and the *Rifondazione Comunista* (Communist Refoundation Party) supported the need to include the regulation in the vote on the measure, while the *Ds* (*Democratici di Sinistra* – left-wing democrats) and the *Margherita* (Daisy Alliance<sup>3</sup>) retorted that introducing the right to vote required a constitutional law and cannot be brought about through an ordinary law as this is “unconstitutional”.

---

<sup>2</sup> The following abbreviations will be used for the left-wing parties: Democratici di Sinistra (DS), Margherita (DL), Rifondazione Comunista (RC), Verdi (VD). For the right-wing parties: Forza Italia (FI), Alleanza Nazionale (AN), Lega Nord (LN), Unione democratica Cristiana (UDC).

<sup>3</sup> The Daisy Alliance (DL) includes Italian Popular Party, Italian Renewal, Union of Democrats for Europe, The Democrats.

The lemmas “offence” and “sanction”, being more specifically used in the lexicon of the minority in parliament, concern the proposal supported by the *An*<sup>4</sup> and *Lega Nord*<sup>5</sup> of including the offence of illegal entry instead of administrative sanctions. A controversy emerges within the center-right minority concerning both the “subject” of the offence (that is, whether or not crossing the frontier without the necessary documentation can be considered a sufficient condition for offence) and the sanctions to be applied:

“Therefore, which is the only way of defending the **non EC immigrants**, who must stay in our country with a job and a house? It is to separate them from the **illegal immigrants**. So it is necessary to consider illegal immigration as an **offence**” (FI\_minority).

“We too are against the hypothesis of the **offence** for **illegal immigrants** and we prefer to send them back at the **frontier**, when the conditions apply. (...) On the other hand, is it not the case to introduce the concept into the **judicial system** for those who insist on remaining **illegally** and recidivously in our country (and in this condition continue to break the law), that a penal **sanction** can be applied?” (UDC\_minority).

“Regularization”, that is, the passage from an illegitimate to a legitimate regime, is another of the regulations that were debated and discussed on the TN. This too is a term used by the minority in parliament, always as a rule with a negative meaning, to define and criticize the regulation under discussion. In particular, the political parties which use this term to criticize the government are largely the *An* and the *Lega Nord*.

“I have proposed this suppressive subamendment to subsection 13-bis as I think one is facing what I call perpetual **regularization**. In other words, through this the **illegal immigrants** present on the territory can substantially stay forever” (FI\_minority).

Furthermore, when referring to the health policies discussed for the TN, the lemma “health” belongs to the lexicon of the right-wing minority. The subject of the discussion is the possibility of migrants obtaining health care in Italy. The right-wing Parties speak of health in terms of negative interdependence: allowing migrants to have health care (or other services) implies either loss of these resources for the ingroup, or an increase of fiscal pressure on the ingroup.

The third area taken into consideration is the **ideological-value system dimension** that emerged during the debate on the TN, with “Racist”, “solidarity”, and “discrimination” forming part of these principles.

In particular, the lemmas “racist” and “discrimination” are used in center-left speeches in order to make accusations against political opponents, while in the discourse of the center-right it is used to anticipate, by dismissing it, an accusation of racism (a typical disclaimer, van Dijk, 2000b):

“We want to shun an attitude of closure and of **discrimination**, or worse still of **racism**, that unfortunately have been recorded in various parts of the country and several sections, fortunately in a minority, of this Parliament” (DS\_majority).

“We are among those who strongly disapprove of **racism** and xenophobia, we are however shoulder to shoulder with citizens who are often scared, and the police forces who risk their lives on the street, at times without effective instruments to enforce the law. The Government must now understand that the forces of law and order cannot suffer the outrage and humiliation of those who show them an illegal identity card or a deportation order with arrogance” (FI\_minority).

---

<sup>4</sup> National Alliance or AN.

<sup>5</sup> Northern League or LN.

### 5.1.2. Negative polarity: details of the BF debate

There seem to be three subject areas that characterize speeches on the BF. First and foremost lemmas that refer to the **economic dimension of migratory phenomena**. The lemmas “worker”, “labor” refer to subjects that are used by the “company”, by “employers”, and by “entrepreneurs” through a “job\_contract”, often “fixed\_term”, in order to favor and support the “development” of the “market”. The focus on the production system represents the proprium (compared to the TN) of the factorial polarity concerning the debates on the BF. How is this aspect connected to the subject of immigration, as discussed in Parliament? We have to consider two lemmas in this category: “worker” and “company”.

With regard to the former, according to the center-right majority, the BF will be an “ally” of migrant workers (guarantees for workers are increased and employers are made responsible), while from the minority point of view, it discriminates between Italians and immigrants to the benefit of the former.

The lemma “company” is prevalently used by the left-wing minority to support the idea that the measures under discussion damage the company since it makes the employment of non EC labor difficult.

“**Entrepreneurs** have told us: we must produce, we must work, we must create **work**, and we need **labor** that we cannot find, let’s find it! The mechanism you have provided does not find it. It affects the wealth of the nation, it influences the Italian gross national product, and impacts on the ability of the **company** to produce” (DS\_minority).

In order to argue their objections to the law under discussion, the left therefore seems to appeal to the need to favor economic and entrepreneurial development of the country, putting forward the immigrant-possible worker connection.

The second content area concerns the category of the **regulations under discussion**. The debates on the BF are also characterized by several specific regulations such as those concerning ascertaining the “identity” of the migrant using “finger\_prints”, regulation of “migratory\_flows” by determining “quotas”, discrimination between legal and “illegal\_immigration”, and the consequent issuing of documents (such as a “residence\_contract” or a “residence\_permit” based on various modalities such as “personage\_of\_the\_sponsor”). In addition, the subject of the “refugees” who are an “asylum\_seeker” exercising the “right\_to\_asylum”, and lastly, the subject of family “reunification”.

The main question in the BF compared to the TN is ascertaining identity. The discussion concentrates on the proposal to finger print any non EU citizen who requests entry into Italy.

The center-left minority accuse the BF of discrimination:

“Knowing that electronic tagging has not resolved the problem, so **finger-printing** will not resolve it either. Taking of finger-prints is only another instrument of odious discrimination between citizens based on their ethnicity, country of origin, and religion” (VD\_minority).

In defending the BF, the majority attempt to prove the contradictions in the positions of the opposition, divided between its moderate component who defend the TN, which provided for obligatory finger printing only of migrants without documentation, and the radical component that wants the measure abolishing completely:

“From two, one: either all the opposition considers – in agreement with the Right Honorable Fassino (Secretary of the main left-wing party) – that the measure we are examining is both populist and demagogic, but if this is the case, they must at least be coherent with the positions



within the left which want to close the centers of permanent residence or holds up as racist the amendment that requires for the taking of **finger prints**" (FI\_majority).

The third area concerns the **ideological-value system dimension**. "Integration" and "co-operation" are terms used by both of the parliamentary line-ups but with different meanings and aims. In right-wing speeches, integration seems to be a desirable possibility but subordinate "to the needs of Italian society", especially the need of companies for low cost labor, or is viewed as an inevitable historical phenomena that needs to be regulated in order to guarantee "certainty" in "economic" and "social" relationships. On the other hand, the left-wing minority speaks of the "lack of integration", for example disputing the BF over the limits imposed on family reunification. On the other hand, "co-operation" refers to the bilateral agreements with the countries of origin of the migrants, that in the arguments put forward by the right are aimed "at fighting illegal immigration".

Lastly, considering its salient semantics, the lemma "insecurity" is noteworthy as being typical of the lexicon of the right in their support of the BF measure. The members of parliament in this coalition use the situation in the French *banlieue* to denounce "latent xenophobia" that would well up from the co-existence of different cultures in the same territory:

"The French vote tells of the unease and social disintegration in the urban suburbs. This shows a sense of **insecurity** and latent xenophobia that has its origin in, and is fed by, the problem of different identities living together and integrating. Above all it shows the failure of the policies of **integration** that beyond moral and sociological considerations, have not succeeded in guaranteeing immigrants harmoniously become part of the socio-cultural conditions of the collectively that hosts them" (AN\_majority).

**5.2. Factor 2 - The problem as represented by the center-right majority**

The lemmas that contribute to forming the two polarities of factor 2 are shown in table 2.

<i>Negative polarity</i>			<i>Positive polarity</i>		
<b>Subject categories</b>	<b>Lemmas</b>	<b>Test Values</b>	<b>Subject categories</b>	<b>Lemmas</b>	<b>Test Values</b>
<b>The representation of the problem</b>	Criterion	-5.2	<b>The representation of the problem</b>	Request	5.4
	Certainty	-4.8		Question	4.4
	Important	-4.0		Propose	3.8
	Control	-4.0		Think	3.2
	Commitment	-3.9		Choice	3.0
	Requirement	-3.7		Risk	2.9
	Necessity	-3.6		Reasoning	2.8
	Objective	-2.8		Discuss	2.7
	Strong	-2.7		Discussion	2.5
	Guarantee	-2.6		Possibility	2.5
	Campaign	-2.4		Difficult	2.5
	Obligation	-2.4		Knowing	2.4
Opposition	-2.3	Reason	2.4		
<b>Regulations</b>	Institute of the sponsor	-4.6	Forecast	2.0	
	Discipline	-4.6	<b>The Parliamentary debate</b>	Committee	2.5
	Stay	-3.1		Regulation	2.4
	Identity	-2.6		Vote against	2.3
	Residence contract	-2.4		Result	2.3
	Residence card	-2.0		Constitutional	2.1

Table 2 - Lemmas associated with the positive and negative polarity of factor 2

### 5.2.1. Negative polarity

The discourses of the center-right majority supporting the Bossi-Fini characterize this polarity. The lexicon used by the center right majority defines a representation of the problem centered on the “requirement” and “necessity” of a “commitment” to adopt the “criteria” with the “objective” of “guaranteeing” with “certainty” the “control”, the “campaign”, and the “opposition” to “illegal immigration” viewed as a threat to social security.

“The qualifying elements of the government initiative involving various innovations will affect two aspects, availability of reception facilities and integration of non EU workers, **guaranteeing** and insuring real opportunities for them to work, and conditions conducive to **certain** social integration aimed at protecting the territory from illegal immigration” (FI\_majority).

This requirement is spoken of in relation to the necessity to secure the borders of the national territory against non EU immigration, including the case of refugees.

The “discipline” proposed by the BF therefore makes the conditions required to obtain the “residence\_permit” worse, which for the non EU immigrant translates into the need to prove that you have a “sponsor” who ensures a job contract, the introduction of the “residence card” (the limit has been increased from 5 to 6 years), and in finger printing all immigrants who request entry into Italy in order to ascertain their identity.

### 5.2.2. Positive polarity

The discourse characterizing the opposing polarity is underlain by representation of the migratory phenomena in terms of “problem” rather than “solution” to be applied without any flexibility. Lemmas such as “request”, “question”, “propose”, “think”, “choice”, “risk”, “reasoning”, “discuss”, “possibility”, “knowing”, and “forecast” define the subject in terms of a “question” to “discuss” the “possible” “choices”.

Therefore, in this environment space is given to discussion between the various political forces that seek shared solutions and propose mediation in the Parliament (lemmas: Committee, regulation, vote against, result).

“The discussion has been very civil, quite calm and constructive, even if it must be said that agreement and disagreement have been recorded, as after all occurs in all democratic dialects. For example, there has been deep reflection on the **question** of the right to vote leading to a result: the Government has accepted the opinion already neutrally backed by the Chamber’ research office” (UDC\_minority).

“Therefore, legal entry channels. We **suggest** a choice that takes the unsatisfactory experience with the regulations in force into account, we **propose** the policy of quotas” (DS\_majority).

### 5.3. Factor 3 - The problem as represented by the center-left majority

The lemmas that contribute to forming the two polarities of factor 3 are shown in table 3.

<i>Negative polarity</i>			<i>Positive polarity</i>		
<b>Subject categories</b>	<b>Lemmas</b>	<b>Test Values</b>	<b>Subject categories</b>	<b>Lemmas</b>	<b>Test Values</b>
<i>Ingroup</i> – <i>outgroup</i> <i>polarization</i>	Non EU immigrants	-6.3	<i>The</i> <i>historical</i> <i>perspective</i>	Peoples	5.9
	Illegal immigrants	-4.7		Civilisation	5.2
	Italy	-3.8		History	5.1
	Italians	-3.1		Cultural	4.6
	City	-2.7		Phenomena	3.2
	Italian citizens	-2.5		Emigration	2.3
	Region	-2.4		Migratory	2.3
	North	-2.3	<i>The</i> <i>outgroup</i>	Immigrant	4.4
			Foreign citizens	2.6	

Table 3 - Lemmas associated with the positive and negative polarity of factor 3

5.3.1. Positive polarity

This polarity is characterized by lemmas typical of the center-left majority that supported approval of the TN.

The most relevant area in terms of content is defined as **historical perspective**. In presenting the first text of the organic legislation on immigration, the center-left adopted a broad temporal perspective to justify and link the reasons for the measure.

One of the main arguments refers to Italian recent history: the Italian migrations in twentieth century: according to the majority, a population of (ex)migrants “cannot be insensitive” to other migrants.

“The history of our country before and after unification is a history of who is going to find work. Until 1970, perhaps until 1980, our country was a country of emigration. Precisely because of our **history**, modern and old, as well as culture, ethics, and **civilization**, we cannot but be sensitive to the phenomena of non EU immigration, to be regulated using the new legal norms under discussion, excellently drawn up by the Government, showing great human understanding to the many migrants who now populate our small and large centers” (DS\_majority).

From a wider historical perspective it is recalled the ability of the Roman Empire to get its ethnically diverse internal population to live together:

“In the year 2000 will we be able to obtain what our ancestors managed to do centuries ago, making many different ethnic groups live together? Scared and unprepared, will we stand idly by and look on at this migration of **peoples**, who come from the Third world and see the Mediterranean area as their natural socio-economic destination?” (DL\_majority).

The adoption of a historical perspective is also connected to a representation of migratory phenomena in terms of inevitability, which means the restrictionist position of the center right is qualified as being “out of step with history” and “outside the realms of civilization”:

“After having listened during the course of examining the measure and the announcement of the vote, I think that the first natural observation to be made in this chamber is that in some way our *Lega* colleagues live outside **history** and outside our ethnic and judicial **civilization**” (DL\_minority).

In this context, the description of the outgroup is composed of two lemmas: “immigrant” and “foreign\_citizen”, while the first defines the Other as a function of Our borders and Our territory, the lemma “citizen” implies a recognition of rights, duties, and dignity.

“In other words, we have to recognize above all the guiding principle of progressive equalization between the **foreign\_citizen** and the Italian citizen. Those who enter Italy must have rights: above all the right to work” (DS\_majority).

The speeches of the radical left also reject the different treatment of immigrants and Italians that the TN also provides for:

“When an authority of public safety asks an Italian for a document, he does not ask the Italian citizen how he obtained that document, while the **foreign\_citizen** is required to prove the origin of the document at any time and of the documents that enabled that citizen to obtain the residence permit. We consider this duplicitous treatment to be mistaken” (RC\_majority).

### 5.3.2. *Negative polarity*

The modalities of the variable positioned in opposition are distinguished from the previous (left-wing majority) by the use above all of words that recall the polarization of the ingroup/outgroup.

“Non EU” and “illegal” are typical lemmas of this modality, recalling a representation centered on categorizing the other as “different” (coming from outside the community) in the first case and “illegal” in the second. However, a difference in use emerges between the center-right and the center-left, who lie at the two extremes. In the first case they are used prevalently to accredit the equation illegal-criminal:

“Now it is permissible to ask oneself (we ask the Government and the Assembly) if these measures, as a consequence of our country signing the Schengen Treaty, will not be susceptible to guiding a stained diffusion – not only here with us, but throughout the entire continent – of irregular and **illegal immigration** and that of criminality!” (LN\_minority).

“My example refers to the concrete case of an **illegal immigrant** who twenty-one times, has declared twenty-one different generalities” (FI\_majority).

In the second case, in order to empathize with the migrants or at least to emphasize the need not to consider foreign citizens as illegal immigrants by using the same yardstick.

“How can we legislators know if there are people seeking asylum among those you call **illegal immigrants**? This confusion is also factual, chronological, and temporal” (RC\_minority).

## 6. Conclusions

The results of the content analysis presented in this paper highlight various characteristics of the parliamentary debate that can be further developed using discourse analysis, which forms the future aim of this work on the basis of the hypothesis that integration of quantitative and qualitative methodology produces better founded results with greater validity.

In addition to the predictable difference in content between the two parliamentary debates relating to the difference between the two proposed laws, the analysis of the correspondence shows the specificity of the debate on immigration by the center right and the center left line ups.

In particular, the discourse of the parliamentary right is characterized by being centered on emphasizing the ingroup-outgroup polarization that sees “our people” opposed to the migrant according to a strategy of negative emphasis on the outgroup and a positive one on the ingroup (Van Dijk, 2000b). Within this general framework, the representation of the immigrant is centered on the binomial “illegal or guest”. In the first case the urgent need for regulation to ascertain the identity and favor expulsion is underlined, while in the second the need for the immigrant to be conscious of being “in someone else’s house”, and it implicitly defines his presence as temporary.

Moreover, what can be observed above all about the center-left is that they aim for a more permissive and tolerant law. In this context the requirement to give rights to immigrants,

whatever their legal status, is related to a representation of the phenomenon of migration as a necessity caused by need, and by the suffering of the immigrants. The ingroup – outgroup polarization is lost in this context in favor of recognizing the similarity between “Italian emigrants” in the last century and modern “non EC immigrants”. At the same time, it can be noticed that between the main arguments used by the center-left in opposing the excessive restriction of the BF law is that the growth of our companies could be damaged. The main center of interest therefore still seems to be the ingroup and especially security and economic growth of Italian companies. In this context, the principle of national preference that is typical of the center-right discourse can also occur in the center-left discourse.

The right prevalently represents the “Other” as a “threat” (principle of negative interdependence), and the left view it as a “necessity” for “our” economy. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that the typical left-wing strategy considered in the literature (van Dijk, 1997), “humanitarianism”, is abandoned when it is felt to have little effect in the context of the discussion, thereby avoiding being attacked by the right who talk of “pseudosolidarity”. More generally, the results seem to show how, together with significant differences, discrimination is produced not by only one political party but in some way by a joint agreement between the two parliamentary coalitions. Both coalitions accept negative representation of outgroup even when supporting a pro-immigration position.

## References

- Fondazione ISMU (2004). *Nono rapporto sulle migrazioni 2003*. Milano, Franco Angeli.
- Gotsbachner E. (2001). Xenophobic normality: the discriminatory impact of habitualized discourse dynamics. *Discourse & Society*, 12, pp.729-759.
- Lancia F. (2004). *Strumenti per l'analisi dei testi. Introduzione all'uso di T-LAB*. Milano, Franco Angeli.
- Moscovici S. (1984). The Phenomenon of Social Representation. In R. M. Farr, S. Moscovici (eds.), *Social Representations*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Van Dijk T. A. (1997). Political discourse and racism. Describing others in the Western Parliaments. In S. H. Riggins (ed.), *The language and politics of exclusion: others in discourse*, pp. 31-64. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.
- Van Dijk T. A. (2000a). Parliamentary Debates. In R. Wodak and T. A. Van Dijk (eds), *Racism at the Top*, pp. 45-78. Vienna, Drava Verlag.
- Van Dijk T. A. (2000b). *Ideology and Discourse. A Multidisciplinary Introduction*. English version of an internet course for the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC).
- Wagner W., Hayes N. (2005). *Everyday Discourse and Common-Sense — The Theory of Social Representations*. Basingstoke, Palgrave-Macmillan Publishers.