

Free University of Berlin  
Otto-Suhr-Institute for Political Science

## **Bachelor Thesis**

### **Parliamentary Debates on Refugees and Migration in Italy**

#### **An Analysis of Justification Discourses**

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## **Abstract**

Politically and socially polarizing issues like immigration or Europe's financial crisis are leading to increasing party divisions in numerous European countries. Some scholars hypothesize that this is not just an issue of polarization, but the emergence of a new societal cleavage: the transnational globalization cleavage. Even though the salience and perceived gravity around transnational issues are increasing, no extensive analyses along the new cleavage have been made of parliamentary debates. This thesis attempts to close the identified research gap by following the method of Drewski and Gerhards (2023). Its analysis focuses specifically on justifications in the Italian parliamentary discourse to identify whether the globalization cleavage is indeed emerging in the country's party system. Results largely confirm the presence of this cleavage, which could lead to an increasing reevaluation of original cleavages, and to a further analysis of new conflict lines.

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## 1. Introduction

*"We will see that we adopt every possible means [...] to stop this invasion. [...] We are facing an obvious attempt at ethnic cleansing, ethnic replacement against those who live in Italy."*

– Matteo Salvini, *League (Il Post 2017: n.p.)*<sup>1</sup>

Since 2022, Italy has been governed by the far-right, nationalist party Brothers of Italy, which won the national elections gaining 26% in parliament (Ipsos 2022: n.p.). The party's success is primarily attributed to its extremist stances during the election campaign – especially on immigration, European integration, and protection of the Italian culture. However, the success of Italian parties in elections supporting nationalist and authoritarian stances is not a new phenomenon. Their radical political positions, especially towards polarizing issues, also reflect in political discourse. Phrases like the statement above have become a political normality, and not only since the last parliamentary elections. Particularly since the beginning of the so-called refugee crisis in 2014, far-right, nationalist parties like the League and the Brothers of Italy have shown their presence in politics and media through radical, discriminatory, and often racist stances.

Many political scientists and sociologists attribute the recurring emergence of nationalist parties, and their anti-immigration agenda, to the so-called refugee crisis itself (Hooghe/Marks 2018; Kriesi et al. 2012) and argue that from Europe's crises during the last 15 years, a transnational, new cleavage has emerged, dividing party realms across countries. This thesis attempts to understand the Italian parties' justification discourse towards refugees during the most aggravated times of the refugee crisis. To this end, it applies the methodology of Prof. Gerhards and Dr. Drewski (Drewski/ Gerhards 2022), utilized in the research project "*Debating the Legitimacy of Borders: How the Admission or Refoulement of Refugees is Justified Across the World*" (Drewski/ Gerhards 2023). The project follows the rationale that the analysis of political discourse is highly relevant to understand parties' argumentative approaches – in this case, their approach on refugees

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Own translation.

and migration. To understand which argumentation stands behind citations like Salvini's mentioned above, this thesis asks the following research question:

### **How do Italian parties justify their stance towards refugees and migrants?**

To answer this question appropriately, it must first be clarified what the research question is based upon, and where the research gap lies that this thesis is attempting to answer. Second, the Cleavage theory, on which the thesis' argumentation is based, is explained. After, the thesis' method, its operationalization, as well as the rationale of data selection are described in detail. Fourth, the analysis results for every chosen party are elaborated; finally, a conclusion is drawn.

## **2. State of Research: The Framing of Refugees in Italy**

In the following chapter, the most relevant findings on migration research, and the framing of refugees and migrants will be presented. Here, not a chronological, but thematic approach is followed.

One of the most relevant political overviews on Italian migration discourse was provided by Colombo (2013). She analyzed public discourse on migration in Italy and identified that especially right-wing parties like the League have mobilized against "illegal immigration" by repeatedly referencing the *ius sanguinis* and opposing the *ius soli* (Colombo 2013: 165). Especially the League has campaigned by making up a distinction between "our homeland" and "our culture" and "the foreigners", which implies that the latter do not belong to Italy (Richardson/ Colombo 2013: 190). The League also states that those countries who allow "illegal immigration" will suffer from poor economic conditions (Richardson/ Colombo 2013: 194). Richardson and Colombo's results are supported by Triandafyllidou's research (2000), who analyzed political discourse of public officials in Italy in 1996. She hypothesized that immigration discourse is connected to a redefinition of national identity (Triandafyllidou 2000: 373). Especially when a threat to "Us", the national community, is perceived, this is followed by identity redefinition. This perceived threat can consist in the presence of immigrants, which are often defined as "*alien to the ingroup*" (2000: 373). Her results confirmed the hypotheses: the "Others", defined as immigrants, are depicted as a threat to the home population (2000: 374). While

classifications based on nationalities are made, however, Italians are framed as nonracists (2000: 382).

The demarcation pattern between “Our people” and the “Others” had also been identified by Montali et al. (2007), who concluded that especially right-wing parties frame the “Others” as people who bring negative influence into the country, especially in the form of criminality or bad economic influence. While right-wing parties perceive the “Other” as a threat, left-wing parties follow a more humanitarian argumentation (2007: 18-19). The results of Montali et al. are certainly conclusive, but do not provide current information on more recent time periods. The existence of distinctions in the Italian discourse has also been confirmed by Fabio Quassoli (2013). He argues that especially the differentiations between “Italians vs. foreigners” and “Us vs. Them” were coined by the polarizing term *clandestino*, which suggests a “*threat or problem to be eliminated or solved*” (Quassoli 2013: 203).

Numerous research projects have analyzed the Italian migration discourse of news headlines (see Coschignano et al. 2023) or mainstream television documentaries (see Orrù 2018). Some have also compared election manifestos to identify the parties’ discourse on migration (see Alonso/ Fonseca 2011). However, only few scholars have referred to parliamentary debates when analyzing party discourse on migration, and even fewer have referred to recent Italian debates. When recent Italian debates have been considered, they have been analyzed primarily along the left-right-dimension, like in the case of Riva et al. (2008). No political or sociological research has extensively focused on the analysis of parliamentary debates in the light of the GAL\_TAN scale. Furthermore, no elaborate analysis of debates and party positions has been conducted during the most crucial period of the so-called refugee crisis, which stretched from 2013 to 2015. In the case of Italy, a deeper content analysis of parliamentary debates during that period has not been conducted.

### **3. The Theory: A new Transnational Cleavage?**

To fill the identified research gap, the research question is analyzed in the light of Cleavage Theory. More specifically, the thesis refers to the theory of transnational cleavages, which was elaborated by Hooghe and Marks (2018).

Cleavage Theory originated from the research of Lipset and Rokkan (1967). Cleavages do not focus on specific conflicts, but rather on conflict lines, which can be defined as sets of conflicts on which actors take sides (Koopmans/ Zürn 2019: 7). Cleavages generally contain an empirical, a normative and a behavioral element (Bartolini/ Mair 1990: 215). First, a cleavage should be empirically definable. Furthermore, the supporters of a cleavage are generally connected by the same normative interests. Finally, the behavioral element is present when people begin to vote for their in-group-based interests. Cleavages can be deeply rooted and often reflect in party identification, as parties often allocate themselves on one side of the conflict line. This, in turn, results in their electoral success (von Schoultz 2017: 31).

Originally, Lipset and Rokkan argued that the party systems of the 1960s reflected the social cleavages of the 1920s, suggesting that parties adapt themselves along them (Bartolini/ Mair 1990: 57). Especially the national and industrial revolutions were understood as crucial events in the formation of cleavages, as they created “*long-lasting structural divisions between specific socio-demographic groups*” (von Schoultz 2017: 32). The industrial revolution gave rise to (1) the class cleavage, separating between capital and labor, and (2) the agricultural cleavage, dividing between agricultural interests and industrial production. The national revolution was identified as cause for the remaining two cleavages: (3) the separation between state and church, and (4) the center – periphery conflict. Only parties who mobilized supporters along these cleavages were able to survive politically (von Schoultz 2017: 33).

In today’s party system, some scholars hypothesize that parties less and less represent the identified social groups, and that voters increasingly *dealign* from their traditional party identifications. However, it is discussed whether *dealignment* may lead to *realignment* along new cleavages (von Schoultz 2017: 40): Kriesi was among the first scholars to hypothesize the emergence of a new cleavage. The social, economic, and political changes caused especially by the globalization process have brought out globalization winners and losers, which has caused a change in party systems all over Europe (Kriesi et al. 2012: 4). This hypothesis is supported by Bartolini, who emphasized the emergence of a cleavage “*specifically generated by integration*” (Bartolini 2005: 390). It was later denominated the integration-demarcation cleavage (Kriesi et al. 2012: 3).

Supporting this premise, scholars Hooghe and Marks theorize that not only globalization, but especially migration and the Euro crisis have caused the emergence of a transnational cleavage, which stands against immigration and European integration (Hooghe/ Marks 2018: 110). To identify which parties position themselves on each side of the cleavage, parties are classified along the cultural dimension of GAL\_TAN (Bakker et al. 2019). So-called GAL parties have libertarian and universalistic tendencies, typically advocate open borders, and challenge the idea of authority. TAN parties, on the other hand, argue in favor of nationalism, tradition, and a strong state authority (Koopmans/ Zürn 2019: 3). This concept has been denominated not only GAL vs. TAN, but also cosmopolitanism vs. communitarianism or universalism vs. particularism (Hooghe/ Marks 2018: 123).

Scholars argue that GAL and TAN parties position themselves more extremely on relevant issues like immigration and put greater salience on them (Hooghe/ Marks 2018: 123). Especially TAN parties have very extreme positions on dividing issues. Furthermore, parties classified on the GAL\_TAN scale are not internally divided on polarizing issues. Even though they support more extreme positions than mainstream parties, they have greater internal unity: the vast majority agrees on the main issues and framings (Hooghe/ Marks 2018: 127). In contrast to mainstream parties, GAL and TAN parties position themselves at extremes, appearing more diametrically opposed, while mainstream parties are positioned more similarly.

Utilizing the theory of the globalization cleavage, this thesis attempts to answer how the chosen parties justify their stance towards refugees. Furthermore, it tries to identify if justifications are consistent throughout party members and whether they coincide with the positions on the GAL\_TAN scale.

#### **4. The Method and Operationalization**

The method of this thesis is part of the guideline for content analysis by Gerhards and Drewski, developed to categorize the framing of refugees around the world (Drewski/ Gerhards 2022: 1). The guideline is based on discourse analysis, more specifically on Grounded Theory, and utilizes the concept of framing to contextualize the most relevant contents of parliamentary debates.



Due to its widespread use, the term “discourse” is perceived as a very vague concept. The majority understands it as being a generalization of everything that has to do with language and communication (Nonhoff 2006: 65). Furthermore, language is structured according to varying patterns (Jorgensen/ Phillips 2002: 1) and discourse analysis can be defined as an analysis of these patterns. Considering the thesis’ limited length, it seems appropriate to keep the definition as short as possible. In this thesis, the term is used primarily as a synonym for “debate”, However, it also has a constructivist connotation: reality can be constructed through discourses by speakers utilizing certain framings to strengthen their view of reality.

To fully understand the method, the concept of *framing* must also be defined. The process of framing is defined by selecting “*some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient*” (Entman 1993: 52). Thus, frames are not objective measures. They define certain problems and make moral judgements, and their content can greatly vary depending on the analyzed communicator and perceived salience of the topic (Entman 1993: 52-53).

The method thus aims to identify certain frames through the analysis of the chosen discourses. The applied guideline of content analysis follows Triandafyllidou’s (2000) distinction: the country’s identity and the identity of the “Others”. The “We” is framed along the following seven dimensions: *moral, cultural, security, legal, economic, humanitarian, and international*. “They” are framed along the same dimensions excluding the moral and international framing, as they refer to the role of the state (Drewski/ Gerhards 2022: 2-3). Furthermore, the moral frame was originally not included, but was added to this thesis because of its recurrence in the chosen speeches<sup>2</sup>.

In the characterization of the “We”, the primary focus lays on identifying how the own society is described. When defining the “Others”, the purpose is to also identify how they are characterized, but also how they are included – or separated – from one’s own society.

The chosen speeches are coded and interpreted along the mentioned dimensions and every framing is backed up by an appropriate quotation (Drewski/ Gerhards 2022: 2). This enables the structuring of the results, as well as the possibility of replicability.

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<sup>2</sup> Due to the research project’s much greater extent, the original guideline for content analysis does not only include the dimensions of (1) “We” and (2) the “Others”, but also (3) arguments for admitting or excluding migrants, (4) paths to integration/ assimilation, (5) definition of political actorhood, (6) policy conclusions, and (7) stylistic devices (Drewski/ Gerhards 2022: 2-6). However, due to limited length and time, this thesis only focuses on the two main dimensions.

The process of analysis follows the logic of Grounded Theory, whose scope is to infer from practical data to a more theoretical level (Oktaf 2019: 4). The first step of the analysis consisted in creating a sample of all chosen primary sources (Chun Tie et al. 2019: 3), which were chosen along specific criteria. The selection criteria for the parliamentary debates in this thesis will further be explained in the next chapter.

Secondly, the chosen primary sources were coded in two steps: an initial and an advanced coding process (Chun Tie et al. 2019: 4-6). During the initial coding, the frames were allocated for the first time. In the second step, the frames were reviewed and elaborated. Furthermore, the coding steps were repeated on separate days to avoid momentary bias. This partly guarantees reliability. However, it is important to mention that complete reliability cannot be achieved, as no second person was involved in the coding process.

Grounded Theory is known as an interpretative method with some methodological weaknesses. Amongst others, it lacks complete generalizability. The achieved results may be conclusive for the chosen discourses, parties, and period, but cannot be generalized to different debates or legislative periods. Furthermore, results might change depending on the chosen parent population. However, Grounded Theory adequate for this thesis especially because of its interpretative nature. Furthermore, it focuses not only on the discursive content, but primarily on framings. It identifies not only what is being said, but how it is said, and – most importantly – how it is justified.

To identify these party justifications, an adequate selection of the respective debates and speakers had to be made. This selection process will be explained in the next chapter.

## **5. Rationale of Data Selection**

This thesis focuses specifically on justification discourse of parties, and thus on public discourse. Today, democracy is widely perceived as deliberative and discursive (Hannon 2023: 1). Public discourse is allocated primarily in the so-called public sphere, which Habermas defines as “*a realm [...] in which something approaching public opinion can be formed*” (Habermas et al. 1974: 49). Following this definition of the public sphere, parliamentary debates can be defined as an inherent part of the democratic public sphere. Parliamentary debates were chosen specifically for the following reasons: (1) democratic legitimacy, (2) discursive context, (3) transparency and (4) justification. First, parliamentary democracies are legitimized through parliament, and only the parliament receives direct legitimization through the electorate. Due to Italy’s bicameral nature, the

Chamber of Deputies was chosen as the primary forum, as it is elected on a national level, and consists of a higher number of deputies.

To analyze the speakers' justifications, a discursive context is needed, which online posts or party manifestos do not have. Third, parliaments guarantee a very high transparency and an accurate documentation of statements and events. Finally, as mentioned, this thesis focuses not solely on content, but also on the speakers' justifications of their political stance, and on their coherency. These questions can only be appropriately answered through the analysis of debates, as election manifestos or even single speeches lack a discursive context and do not give information on potential differences within the party.

The parliamentary debates were chosen along so-called *critical discourse moments*. These are defined as moments where certain events, in this case related to flight and migration, have led to so-called critical discourse crises in parliament (Chilton 1987: 2).

The period for the selection of debates was limited from 2013 to 2015, as there was no change of government during that time which could have falsified analysis results. The following four critical discourse moments, which are connected to discourse crises in parliament, were identified:

The first chosen debate was held on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013, which presents the first point in time when the migration issue was debated in parliament. The discourse crisis was caused by the leak of a video, published by the state television channel RAI, showing inhumane treatment of refugees by Italian government officials in a refugee camp in Lampedusa (Deutsche Welle 2013: n.p.). The brutal treatment caused great shock among all Italian civilians.

The second chosen debate was held on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014, and revolved around the end of the Italian rescue operation *Mare Nostrum*, and its substitution with the Frontex operation *Triton*. This was highly controversial in Italian politics. *Mare Nostrum* aimed primarily at rescuing human lives and was esteemed to be quite effective in rescue numbers, but also highly expensive for the state (Marina Militare 2018: n.p.). *Triton*'s focus, however, was deemed border control. It covered a smaller geographical area and received a much smaller monthly budget (European Commission 2014: n.p.). The substitution of *Mare Nostrum* with *Triton* coincided with quickly rising refugee numbers and deaths, causing a debate about the country's – and Europe's – priorities.

The third debate was held on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015 – one day before the European Council gathered in an Extraordinary Meeting regarding the situation in the Mediterranean Sea

(European Council 2015: n.p.). Cause of the meeting had been the humanitarian disaster of a sunken vessel in the Mediterranean, which caused the death of more than 600 people (Reuters 2016: n.p.).

The fourth and last debate was held on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015, and revolved around the regulation of migratory flows in Italy, as well as the employment of migrant workers. The regulation of migration numbers was discussed at its peak in 2015; shortly before the debate, the number of arrivals in Italy surpassed 50.000 in one weekend (Scammell 2015: n.p.). This debate was not only chosen because of the peak in migration numbers, but also because after June 2015, the migration issue was no longer extensively debated in parliament.

Apart from the critical discourse moments, the parties and speakers were also chosen following a logic of selection. For the analysis, four parties were chosen: the Democratic Party (PD), the League (LN), the Brothers of Italy (FdI) and the Five Star Movement (M5S). Parties were deliberately selected based on their scoring on the GAL\_TAN scale. One more libertarian (PD), one center party (M5S) and two very traditional and authoritarian parties (LN and FdI) were chosen to see whether their position on the scale matches with their framing, as well as unification or division on the migration issue.

Furthermore, the speakers were intentionally chosen in variance and not based on a special representative function, as the purpose is to compare multiple positions to identify division or unification. FdI, however, does not have as much variance in its speakers, as one speaker is present repeatedly, and the party is absent in one debate<sup>3</sup>. The results for the Brothers of Italy must thus be taken with a grain of salt and are less generalizable than the other parties' results.

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<sup>3</sup> The reason for their absence does not emerge from any official documents and is thus unknown.

The following table summarizes the chosen moments, debates, and speakers:

**Table 1:** Summary of discourse moments, speakers, and party affiliation<sup>4</sup>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Chosen speaker</b>	<b>Party affiliation</b>
<i>December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013</i>	Urgent government briefing on the inhumane treatment of refugees in Lampedusa	Paolo Beni	Democratic Party
		Fabiana Dadone	Five Star Movement
		Emanuele Pratavia	League
		Achille Totaro	Brothers of Italy
<i>October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014</i>	Urgent government briefing on the handling of migrant flows in the Mediterranean and the start of Triton	Micaela Campana	Democratic Party
		Manlio di Stefano	Five Star Movement
		Nicola Molteni	League
		Fabio Rampelli	Brothers of Italy
<i>April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015</i>	Parliamentary debate on the Extraordinary Meeting by the EC following the drowning of 600 refugees	Matteo Renzi	Democratic Party
		Alessandro di Battista	Five Star Movement
		Paolo Grimoldi	League
		Fabio Rampelli	Brothers of Italy
<i>June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015</i>	Parliamentary debate on the regulation of migratory flows	Giorgio Brandolin	Democratic Party
		Luca Frusone	Five Star Movement
		Gianluca Pini	League
		/	Brothers of Italy absent

<sup>4</sup> Own illustration. All interpreted debates can be read in full length on the Italian Parliament's website (Camera dei deputati 2015: n.p.)

It is important to mention that the speeches are interpreted in reference to Cleavage Theory. However, while this thesis aims to confirm or deny the presence of a transnational cleavage in parliamentary debates, the results for the analysis are only valid for the timespan of the chosen discourses. It cannot be determined, however, whether the cleavage – if present – has emerged during that period, or whether the issue is thematized in a more salient manner during the crisis than before.

Before focusing on the presentation of results, it is necessary to illustrate why Italy was selected for the analysis. The rationale for this selection will be elaborated in the next chapter.

## **6. Rationale of Case Selection: Why Italy?**

Italy is an especially interesting case study because of (1) its geographical position, (2) its migration policies leading up to the “refugee crisis”, and (3) the changes in its party system, considering the chosen theory.

Especially since 2011 and the Arab Spring, the Mediterranean route became the main flight route for refugees from Africa (Pastore 2016: n.p.). The Dublin Regulation, which determined that the state where the applicant first entered the EU is also responsible for the application process (Ambrosetti/ Paparusso 2018: 152), led to Italy increasingly perceiving itself as isolated. Even after refugee numbers peaked, Italy feared “bufferization”: becoming a country where numerous migrants would “get stuck” (Pastore 2016). It felt especially unprepared because it transformed very quickly from emigration to host country. Although having had a history of immigration, the numbers had always been small (Ambrosetti/ Paparusso 2018: 152). From 2013 to 2014, however, the number of asylum seekers increased sharply from 42.000 to 170.000 (European Commission 2022). Italy’s overburdening was reinforced by its critical economic situation, as well as the restrictive migration policy followed since the 2000s.

In 2002, the *Bossi-Fini* law was adopted, which restricted migration law significantly by connecting the migrant’s work contract to his residential permit (Parlamento Italiano 2013). Furthermore, in 2008, Italy’s governing right-wing coalition adopted the Security Package. It followed the restrictive argumentation of Bossi-Fini and was implemented to tackle the so-called “national security emergency” caused by “illegal migrants”. It facilitated expulsion and extended the detention period for migrants (Merlino 2009: 1). Furthermore, since 1998, Italy has regulated its immigration numbers with *decreti flussi*,

which are immigration quotas for non-EU residents. The quota numbers change every year, depending on the current goal to reduce irregular migration (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2023: n.p.). Scholars argue that Italy has adopted a *securitization* approach (Ambrosetti/ Paparusso 2018: 162), becoming increasingly restrictive towards refugees.

Migration has become an increasingly salient issue over the years; this becomes evident not only from the adopted laws, but also from the changes in Italy's party system. Scholars argue that over the last twenty years, the demarcation cleavage has become more and more evident in the Italian party system. Demarcation parties have gained 31 percentage points between 2014 and 2019, which coincides with the period when immigration became one of the country's salient issues. Furthermore, it is argued that Italy is one of the few European countries where the demarcation cleavage has even reached the mobilization stage: an increasing share of voters has already migrated towards parties, especially TAN parties, emphasizing the new cleavage (Emanuele et al. 2020: 326). It follows that the extremes between GAL and TAN parties have increased, partly due to the migration crisis and its high salience in Italian politics (2019: 403). Di Mauro and Verzichelli argue that generally, the left-right dimension still has greater predictive power for the positionings of party individuals. However, the GAL\_TAN cleavage has reached "*the core of the Italian political system*" (2019: 409), being identifiable both at individual and party level.

The following chapter will focus on the presentation of results. From these, it will be concluded how parties justify their stance, and whether their positions are coherent.

## **7. Results**

In the following chapter, the chosen parties' stances towards refugees and migrants, as well as their utilized justifications, will be presented in detail. Here, the framings will be elaborated in a hierarchical order: the most recurring argumentations will be mentioned first. Finally, it will be concluded whether the results point to the presence of the globalization cleavage. Due to limited word count, direct citations from the speeches could not be inserted. However, the full interpretations can be found in the appendix.

### **7.1. The Democratic Party (PD)**

## Framing the identity of Italy

The PD scores 2.3 on the GAL\_TAN scale, which suggests that it can be characterized as a moderate libertarian party. Furthermore, its party positions are slightly blurred (3.1) (Bakker et al. 2019: n.p.), which indicates that party positions are not as coherent as those of the League and FdI.

The analysis results are generally coherent with the PD's scoring on the GAL\_TAN scale. Arguments and framings are made repeatedly, but the analyzed speakers do not mention the same framings as often as members of the LN and FdI. This does not indicate disagreement between the speakers; however, it hints at a lower coherency, especially in comparison to the LN, where the same framings are mentioned almost exclusively.

The most prominent framing among PD speakers consists in a *moral* argumentation. Italy is defined as a civilized country with a strong and solidary civil society. Government entities, but also civilian volunteers, have provided the necessary aid to refugees (e.g. Campana; Renzi).

In accordance with the moral argumentation stands the framing of Italy as a *humanitarian* state. It is emphasized that flight and migration movements have time and time again been part of Italy's history, and that people from various countries of origin have sought protection in Italy in the past (Brandolin). At times, Italy's humanitarian nature is also emphasized by referring the states' swift action during the crisis. Italy has prioritized the refugees by addressing their humanitarian needs and taking action to prevent further human tragedies (Campana). Finally, Italy's humanitarian character is also referred in a *cultural* framing, namely in reference to religion. It is emphasized that Christianity preaches openness, and that Italy should welcome all people with open arms (Renzi).

The PD's focus on humanitarianism suggests that the party, and thus the Italian government, attempts to frame Italy as a humanitarian state which is committed to the compliance of international values, such as the protection of human lives, especially particularly vulnerable people. Furthermore, by framing the own country as strong and solidary, it is emphasized that the crisis is not being managed but handled with good organization and solidarity.

In the third recurring framing of the PD's speeches, Italy is *internationally* framed as member of the European Union. However, the direction of this framing varies depending on the analyzed speaker. In one case, it is emphasized that Italy shares with the EU humanitarian values and principles, and that Italy must adhere to these principles



(Campana; Brandolin). In one speech, however, the criticism overshadows Italy's moral identification with the EU. The increasing disappearance of the European Union's political agenda, and its substitution with economic issues, are especially criticized (Renzi). However, as the moral identification with the EU is not negated and criticism is substantive, this cannot be classified as an expression of Euroscepticism.

### Framing the "Others"

The PD's framing of Italy as a solidary and humanitarian state reflects in their characterization of the refugees: it becomes evident that the analyzed members of the PD justify the admission of refugees mostly with a humanitarian argumentation.

Before elaborating on the framings, however, it must be emphasized that the PD's language of is not very differentiated when it comes to the denomination of refugees and migrants. Even though most speakers emphasize the legal difference between refugees and migrants, that distinction is not made linguistically. Repeatedly, refugees are being referred to as migrants, while simultaneously their humanitarian situation is emphasized. However, in the case of PD, it is assumed that this denomination is not made intentionally, as the word *migrante* (migrant) is used much more frequently than the word *rifugiato* (refugee) to describe refugees.

Primarily, all members of the PD frame migrants from a *humanitarian* perspective. All people fleeing across the Mediterranean Sea need protection. They are fleeing from war, prosecution, and from places where their basic human rights have been negated. Furthermore, they partly consist of particularly vulnerable groups, such as families with young children. They are not only defined as refugees, but also as victims: of the conditions in their home country and of criminal human traffickers, from whom they must be protected (e.g. Campana; Renzi).

The differentiation between refugees and migrants is made through a *legal* framing. Some people do not flee from a precarious humanitarian situation, but from dire economic conditions in their home country (Campana; Brandolin). In contrast to the framing of the League and the FdI, economic migrants are not defined as illegal, but as irregular. This term does not carry a criminal connotation (European Commission 2023) and supports the humanitarian emphasis of the PD. Contrary to the right-wing parties' beliefs, refugees, but also economic migrants do not present a security threat to the country, and especially vulnerable people must be admitted.

When considering these results, it becomes evident that the PD's argumentation suggests a humanitarian and cosmopolitan tendency. All party members justify their stance towards refugees and migrants through a humanitarian approach. Furthermore, the PD partly makes a cosmopolitan standpoint in arguing that Italy has moral obligations towards refugees, and that these obligations arise independent of the refugees' nationality (Koopmans/ Zürn 2019: 11). Members of the PD partly consider migration to be a human right, at least in the case of humanitarian refugees. Generally, PD supports much less restrictive immigration policies in comparison to the other analyzed parties. This stands in accordance with the GAL\_TAN scale (Urso 2018: 366), especially with the PD's scoring on immigration policy, where it favors a liberal policy (3.0).

Finally, if one considers the PD's argumentation itself, it becomes clear that the party uses mostly inclusionist frames. Their argumentation is at no point based on an ingroup/outgroup comparison. No party member makes a clear differentiation between the "own nation" or the "own country" on the one hand, and the "foreigners" or "others" on the other. Rather, the humanitarian argumentation emphasizes that especially vulnerable people are to be helped. Still, the cosmopolitan tendency is rather moderate, as topics like the challenging of authority or the advocacy of fully open borders are not mentioned.

## **7.2. The League (LN)**

### Framing the identity of Italy

In contrast to the results for the Democratic Party, the League's party positions appear to be very coherent. The League scores 9.2 on the general GAL\_TAN scale, suggesting strong traditional, authoritarian, and nationalist tendencies. Furthermore, the party's internal positions are only very slightly blurred (0.75) (Bakker et al. 2019: n.p.). These scorings support the thesis' argumentation.

The most recurring framing among the speeches of the League's members is a *moral* framing, supported by a nationalist argumentation. Three of four speakers differentiate between the "true Italian population" and the "others" (Prataviera; Molteni; Pini). Primarily, Italy is the country not of the foreigners, but of its "true" population, the Italians. How the "true Italian" is defined, cannot be derived from direct quotations. However, literature suggests that the concept is most likely linked to the *ius sanguinis*.

Consequently, “true” Italians would be those people who inherit their citizenship through blood by having Italian parents. They were born in Italy, speak the language, and are part of the Italian culture. Foreigners can receive the Italian citizenship through the *ius soli*, but never become “true Italians”. This argumentation is supported by the finding that especially the League has supported the ethnic citizenship (Colombo 2013: 165).

The strict differentiation between the Italians and the foreigners suggests a strong incompatibility between the locals and the migrants. The Italian people, the Italian land and its culture are being separated from the foreigners, which implies that the latter do not belong to Italy. This framing which had previously been identified by Triandafyllidou (2000), can now also be confirmed in parliamentary debates.

Secondly, Italy is portrayed from an *economic* point of view. The country is in an economic crisis, and many Italian citizens, especially the most precarious groups, live under dire conditions. Italy’s precarious economic situation is allegedly caused by the current Italian government, which allowed an “invasion operation” of illegal migrants (Molteni). The “true” citizens, the taxpayers who have built the country’s infrastructure, are being neglected, while the country is being “conquered” by illegal migrants, who receive extensive social and economic support (e.g. Molteni; Grimoldi). This argumentation is accompanied by a strong critique of the government, which is made responsible for the precarious economic situation of many Italian citizens.

### Framing the “Others”

Half of the analyzed speakers acknowledge the existence of a legal difference between “humanitarian refugees” and “economic migrants”. However, simultaneously it is argued that the bigger part of refugees are not actually refugees, but illegal migrants. The speeches of all League members thus focus almost solely on “clandestine” migrants.

The *legal* framing made by the League arises from the term “clandestine” (Grimoldi; Pini). It carries a strong illegal connotation, suggesting that every refugee arriving in the country is primarily illegal. By framing refugees as illegal migrants, fundamental rights which arise from the refugee status are being denied. Furthermore, it suggests that their flight reason does not arise from humanitarian plight or prosecution. This aspect is cohesive with the second prominent frame, which suggests that most refugees are *economic* migrants. The League argues that people migrate to Italy to profit from its economy, as well as from its extensive social programs. By receiving more benefits than

many lower-class Italians, the presence of migrants endangers Italians' livelihood (e.g. Pini; Molteni). As Gattinara frames it: refugees are treated as "aliens who infiltrate Europe to corrode its social and cultural fabric" (2017: 5). Interestingly, however, the fault for this apparent inequality is not given to the "illegal migrants", but to the left-wing government, which has practiced demagoguery and entitled thousands of people to migrate for economic reasons.

The third most recurring argumentation is the framing of migrants as a *security* threat for the country. Immigration is framed as a security challenge to the nation. Most clandestine migrants have a criminal record, can carry dangerous illnesses, may identify with terrorist ideas, or even belong to terrorist organizations (e.g. Molteni, Pratavera). The arrival of clandestine migrants is not only an economic, but also a security threat for the Italian population.

Summarizing, the League separates Italy's home population from the evil "others". Italy is framed from a very traditionalist perspective: the home country must be conserved and protected from the invasion of clandestine immigrants. These "others" do not only negatively influence the society and economy of Italy: they also pose a security threat to all Italian citizens. The League thus argues for a much more authoritarian stance against immigration policy, which coincides with its scoring on immigration policy (9.9). Montali et al. (2007) support these findings: authoritarian and nationalist parties often frame foreigners as "being opposed" to the home population, thereby constructing the narrative that the arrival of foreigners would endanger the existence of the home country (2007: 18-19). Thus, in contrast to the PD, the League utilizes highly exclusionist frames to separate itself from the "evil foreigners" and thereby justify its anti-immigration stance.

### **7.3. The Brothers of Italy (Fdi)**

#### Framing the identity of Italy

The Brothers of Italy score 9.4 on the general GAL\_TAN scale, scoring even higher than the very traditionalist and nationalist League. The positions of the speakers are mostly coherent with the argumentation of the League, and the results correspond with the party's coherency on positions (0.5) (Bakker et al. 2019: n.p.).

The Brothers of Italy also frame Italy from a *moral* perspective. Italy's "true nationals", the Italian citizens, are framed in opposition to the "evil foreigners". The financial and

social gains of one group are seen as a loss for the other. Italy should serve its own citizens, especially the most precarious groups, before providing financial assistance to illegal foreigners (Totaro).

MP Rampelli additionally *culturally* frames Italy as a solidary country that has always been sensible towards humanitarian plight, and never been racist or xenophobic. This analysis is complemented by Tryandafallidou's research (2000: 382): Italians perceive themselves as non-racist while simultaneously making classifications of "good" and "bad" based on origin and nationality. Rampelli emphasizes Italy's tolerance by simultaneously differentiating between the Italians and the burdening "Others".

This moral framing can be connected to an *economic* framing. Italy is framed as an overburdened country in an economic crisis, and especially Italy's poorest social classes are suffering under dire conditions (Rampelli).

Surprisingly, the Brothers of Italy are the only party to frame Italy from a *legal* perspective. The FdI is the only party to emphasize the relevance of a constitutional state in fighting and criminalizing so-called illegal immigration. Along with this framing comes the government critique also mentioned by the League. The current government has practiced demagoguery and enticed economic migrants to move to Italy to take advantage of its social system. In doing so, it has removed resources from its own citizens. Italy is a solidary country but should only provide help to those who truly need it (Rampelli). Who these people are understood to be will be elaborated in the following paragraph.

### Framing the "Others"

In comparison to the League, members of the Brothers of Italy make a slightly more elaborate distinction between "humanitarian refugees" and "economic migrants". Refugees are innocent and particularly vulnerable people fleeing from war or prosecution. Furthermore, they are victims of criminals, like human traffickers, who use people's suffering to further their own financial gains (Rampelli). However, when the debate revolves around concrete immigration measures, refugees are being re-framed as migrants. By this, their humanitarian background is being omitted and the rights arising from the refugee status negated.

The Brothers of Italy, similarly to the League, also frame illegal migrants from a *security* perspective. Most illegal migrants are people with a criminal record, who will continue to engage in criminal activities after having been admitted to Italy. Illegal migrants are

especially dangerous to Italy's security because the crimes are not only committed in the country, but against Italian citizens (Totaro; Rampelli).

Migrants are also framed from a *legal*, as well as from an *economic* perspective: migrants are residing illegally in Italy and do not migrate to Italy for humanitarian protection, but for its economic benefits. Furthermore, illegal migrants are a financial burden to the country. They occupy necessary infrastructure and eliminate the possibility for Italians to use social support centers. The legal and economic framings made by the Brothers of Italy are very similar to those made by the League. Italy's resources are limited and should be provided to Italians before providing aid to illegal foreigners (Rampelli).

Just like the League, FdI expresses fear that Italians could increasingly be replaced with foreign immigrants. This is also justified through a security, as well as an economic framing. Clandestine migrants are framed as a threat because they allegedly physically endanger the home population. Furthermore, they deprive economic resources from Italy's lowest social classes. They are framed as people who deduct resources from country nationals, while Italy's lowest social classes live on the brink of poverty. Similarly to the League, FdI also favors a restrictive immigration policy (9.8).

Thus, refugees are framed from an economic, but also from a security perspective as enemies of Italy. Like the League, the Brothers of Italy justify their anti-immigration stance and their endorsement of the exclusion of refugees with one main argument: Italy and all Italians must be protected.

#### **7.4. The Five Star Movement (M5S)**

##### Framing the identity of Italy

The Five Star Movement scores 3.7 on the general GAL\_TAN scale, thus being more liberal than authoritarian. Of all analyzed parties, the Five Star Movement has the highest blurring of positions on the scale, scoring around 4.9. These scorings coincide with the results of this analysis: of all the analyzed parties, the Movement is the most internally divided on its stance towards refugees (Bakker et al. 2019: n.p.). Consequently, the justifications on the admission or rejection of refugees also differ depending on the party member.

The most recurring framing among members of the Movement is the *international* framing. However, the interpretation of this international framing differs depending on

the speaker. On the one hand, Italy is framed from a European perspective. Italy belongs to Europe not only geographically; it is also bound to the humanitarian and legal obligations of the Union. Not the European Union, but Italy has neglected its duties – legal and humanitarian – during the so-called refugee crisis (Dadone). The pro-European stance is opposed by a strong criticism of the EU. Speakers di Stefano and Frusone frame the European Union as a supranational authority which enslaves its member states by imposing its policies against the states' will. Simultaneously, the importance of sovereignty is emphasized. Italy is a sovereign state and should reinforce its position in the international realm by opposing European policies and serving the interests of the home population first.

The members of the Five Star Movement also make an *economic* argument in their speeches. This framing had also been identified in the argumentation of the League, and the Brothers of Italy. Italian citizens have been financially neglected, while migrated foreigners have been receiving extensive aid. However, this argument also has a *cultural* component. MP di Battista acknowledges the presence of xenophobia and racism among Italians. He argued that this hostility will continue to prevail if Italian nationals will feel neglected.

The Five Star Movement's anti-establishment tendencies reflect in the chosen parliamentary speeches. The remaining argumentation focuses mostly on critique towards the government coalition. Italy has supported numerous military interventions in crisis areas, which have caused further destabilization. Due to its militaristic foreign policy, Italy is being framed as being jointly responsible for many flight causes. This argumentation is accompanied by a *humanitarian* frame: the Italian government should follow a stronger humanitarian approach – not only regarding its foreign policy, but also the admission of refugees.

### Framing the “Others”

Along with the PD, the Five Star Movement follows the strongest *humanitarian* approach in the framing of refugees. Similarly to the PD, members of the Movement make no clear linguistic differentiation between refugees and migrants. Even when refugees are framed from a humanitarian perspective, they are denominated as migrants. However, the Five Star Movement emphasizes that everyone who flees is in a particularly vulnerable state. Furthermore, people flee not because they have made a choice to pursue better living

conditions, but because they were obligated to flee their home country (Dadone; di Battista).

A second recurring framing among the members of the Five Star Movement is the *legal* characterization of migrants. All migrants, independent of their flight or migration reason, possess inalienable human rights. These universal human rights must always be protected and shall never be violated. Along with the Democratic Party, the Five Star Movement is the only party to emphasize the international dimension of human rights: the rights of refugees are ingrained in international law, to which states must adhere to (di Stefano).

The chosen speeches contain further framings of migrants; however, they are not mentioned recurrently, but only by one speaker. In her speech, MP Dadone took a proEuropean stance. Consequently, she not only frames migrants from a humanitarian perspective, but also frames them as *victims* of the Italian state, and especially of the treatment of Italian authorities in the reception centers. On the contrary, MP di Stefano followed a stronger anti-European stance, and he argues that although all migrants have human rights, especially the high migrant numbers present an *economic* burden for Italy, as the country hardly can provide for its own citizens.

In the case of the Five Star Movement, the party's division on GAL\_TAN issues like immigration becomes quite evident. Party members are split between a humanitarian, proEuropean approach on the one hand and an eurosceptic, sovereign approach on the other. The party's division is also evident in its scoring on immigration policy (6.5), appearing split between a liberal and restrictive policy. The party's strong division does not enable a clear identification of the globalization cleavage.



The following two tables summarize the analysis' main results:

**Table 2:** Framing the identity of Italy<sup>5</sup>

	<b>Democratic Party</b>	<b>League</b>	<b>Brothers of Italy</b>	<b>Five Star Movement</b>	
<b><i>Moral</i></b>	Italy is a civilized country with a solidary civil society	Italy is country of the “true” Italians	Italy is country of the “true Italians”	Italy is partly responsible for flight causes	
<b><i>Cultural</i></b>	Italy is a racist country	/	Italy is a non- and racist country	Italy is partly xenophobic Catholic Christian values	
<b><i>Humanitarian</i></b>	Italy is a host country which prioritizes humanitarian needs of refugees	/	Italy should help only those who truly need it	/	
<b><i>Economic</i></b>	/	Italy is a country in an economic crisis, in which illegal foreigners are prioritized over country nationals	Italy is an overburdened country in an economic crisis	Italy is in an economic crisis and neglecting its own citizens	
<b><i>International</i></b>	Italy is member of the EU, identification with its principles	Italy is member of the EU, which neglects support for Italy	/	Italy is member of the EU, bound to its humanitarian obligations	Italy's sovereignty is undermined by the EU

<sup>5</sup> 5 Own illustration.

**Table 3:** Framing the “Others”<sup>6</sup>

	<b>Democratic Party</b>	<b>League</b>	<b>Brothers of Italy</b>	<b>Five Star Movement</b>
<b>Humanitarian</b>	Refugees are vulnerable people in need of protection	No differentiation between refugees and migrants ® migrants as desperate people	Refugees are vulnerable people fleeing from war or prosecution	Refugees are denominated as migrants, but flee from precarious humanitarian situations
<b>Legal</b>	Migrants move not because of a precarious humanitarian situation, but to better living conditions	Refugees are “illegal migrants”	Migrants are immigrating illegally	Refugees/ migrants are people with inalienable human rights
<b>Economic</b>	/	“Illegal migrants” are people who migrate to profit from the economy	“Illegal migrants” are a financial burden who deduct resources from country nationals	Refugees/migrants are an economic burden for the country
<b>Security</b>	Refugees/ migrants <u>do not</u> present a security threat	“Illegal migrants” are a danger to the nation’s security	“Illegal migrants” have criminal records and endanger country nationals	/
<b>Results</b>	<u>→ Inclusion of refugees with humanitarian justification</u>	<u>→ Exclusion of refugees with nationalist justification</u>	<u>→ Exclusion of refugees with nationalist justification</u>	<u>→ Strong party division, no clear alignment along the globalization cleavage</u>

<sup>6</sup> 6 Own illustration.

## 8. Conclusion and Discussion

This thesis analyzed how four Italian parties – the Democratic Party, the League, the Brothers of Italy, and the Five Star Movement – justify their stance towards the admission or rejection of refugees in parliamentary debates. This in-depth analysis was conducted during the height of the Italian refugee crisis, thereby closing the identified research gap for the chosen parties and period.

The parliamentary debates were analyzed under the light of Cleavage theory to identify whether parties do indeed realign themselves along the so-called globalization cleavage. By differentiating between the framing of the “identity of Italy” and the framing of “the Others”, the analysis revealed that the chosen parties largely justify their stance on the admission – or exclusion – of refugees depending on their framing of the home country. In the case of the Democratic Party, Italy is defined as being a humanitarian country with a solidary civil society, adhering to Christian values. This emphasis on humanitarianism is reflected in the speakers’ framing of the refugees. On the other hand, the League and the Brothers of Italy frame Italy’s citizens as being endangered economically and in terms of security. This threat frame is reflected in the characterization of refugees, as they are portrayed mostly as economic migrants and criminals. In the case of the Democratic Party, the League and the Brothers of Italy, their results are largely coherent with their scorings on the GAL\_TAN scale and its subdimensions.

The only analyzed party whose results are not fully cohesive is the Five Star Movement. The analyzed speeches of its members suggest a strong internal division of the party, which corresponds with its blur score on the GAL\_TAN scale. Due to this strong blurring, a globalization cleavage cannot be identified – at least for the analyzed speeches and period.

Generally, however, for three of the four analyzed parties, the globalization cleavage could be identified empirically in parliamentary speech, which suggests that during the analyzed period, the globalization cleavage has begun to establish itself in the Italian party system. Urso’s (2018: 367) research supports the analysis results, especially those for the parties located at the more extreme ends of the spectrum. When security and defense prevail on the right, and humanitarianism on the left, it could provide evidence for the establishment of a new transnational cleavage.

Of course, due to its limited nature, this thesis carries methodological limitations. Amongst others, the achieved results are not generalizable: one cannot conclude the

general presence of a globalization cleavage in Italy. The results could change depending on the analyzed parties and/ or time period. However, if the emerging evidence were to be verified for additional parties and periods, it would mean that scholars would have to increasingly reevaluate the original cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan. The results would still support the general hypothesis of Cleavage theory: parties respond to social divisions and allocate themselves along these conflict lines (Hooghe/ Marks 2018: 126).

Future academic research could not only focus on the verification of the achieved results for other Italian parties, but could expand the research question to other countries, analyzing if the emergence of a transnational cleavage could be verified for other political systems. Furthermore, an analysis of the globalization cleavage could provide results on voter characteristics, and thus lead to a higher understanding of party and voter behavior.

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## 10. Appendix

### List of Tables

**Table 1:** Summary of discourse moments, speakers, and party affiliation

**Table 2:** Framing the identity of Italy

**Table 3:** Framing the “Others”

### List of Abbreviations

PD	Democratic Party
LN	League
FdI	Brothers of Italy
M5S	Five Star Movement
CHES	Chapel Hill Expert Survey
GAL	Green, alternative, libertarian
TAN	Traditional, authoritarian, nationalist
MP	Member of Parliament

### Interpretations

**Parliamentary debate from December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013 – Urgent government briefing on the inhumane treatment of refugees in Lampedusa**

*Interpretation of the speech by Paolo Beni (Democratic Party)*

#### **1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity**

Beni frames Italy from a moral perspective. He characterizes Italy as a civilized country. By this, he implies that the Italian government and society adhere to certain civilized standards, such as a fair justice system, and the respect of human rights. However, at the same time, he emphasizes that Italy has been called out by the European Union for the recent violation of human rights in Lampedusa.

*“These are injuries to rights unacceptable in a civilized country, for which Italy has been repeatedly called out by the European Union, most recently when Commissioner Malmström harshly stigmatized the latest Lampedusa episode.” (Beni, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013)*

## 2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees

Beni does not legally differentiate between refugees and migrants. His speech revolves around all people having arrived in the Lampedusa refugee camps. From this result the following framings:

1) All people staying in these refugee camps are in a precarious humanitarian situation. They are helpless people who are in need of assistance and protection.

*“It will be hard to forget those intolerable images we all saw, those naked bodies and the brutality and humiliation inflicted on helpless people who were there, instead, to be welcomed and cared for.” (Beni, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013)*

2) From the mentioned quote also results a legal framing. They are people with rights that must be kept and respected. However, these rights have been violated by Italian authorities, as these mistreated a high number of migrants by failing to provide humane living conditions in the reception camps, and inflicting brutality on many migrants.

### *Interpretation of the speech by Fabiana Dadone (Five Star Movement)*

#### 1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity

1) Dadone mainly frames Italy from an international perspective. She emphasizes that Italy is part of Europe and is bound to Europe’s humanitarian and legal obligations. However, she also criticizes that with the recent events in Lampedusa, Italy has fallen behind Europe’s humanitarian standards, and that those events should never have occurred:

*“Mr. President, colleagues, Minister Alfano, in a normal country, I do not say ideal, but a country that is a minimum of normal, a country in Europe that is the child of the Declaration of Human Rights, episodes like those that occurred in the CIE (Note: Identification and Expulsion Center) in Lampedusa should never have occurred.” (Dadone, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013)*

2) Dadone also frames Italy from a legal perspective; however, this becomes evident only from her critique of the government. She emphasizes that not only by international, but also by national legal standards, Italy has fallen below its standards of conserving human rights and human decency. One can deduce that according to Dadone, Italy should enforce its legal and humanitarian stance in the refugee crisis.

*“The issue of immigration policies in Italy is a very sore point-this we all know-but here it was not about talking about ius soli dry or tempered, about cultural integration yes or no, about laws on granting residence permits more or less strict. It was about human rights, about astonishment and indignation in the face of a threshold of decency below which one should not have fallen, below which instead one has fallen and has fallen hard.” (Dadone, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013)*

## 2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees

In her speech, Dadone does not differentiate between refugees and migrants. She defines all people debarking on the Italian coast as migrants.

1) First and foremost, Dadone frames all migrants from a humanitarian perspective. She emphasizes that everyone fleeing is in a very vulnerable state, and in need of protection. People flee primarily not because of a choice, but because they were obligated to do so. Their rights have been negated, their home country has been attacked, and many people have become victims of torture or human trafficking.

*“It is good to remember: we are talking about people who have no choice but to leave their land with the hope of a better future. We are talking about victims of trafficking, torture, exploitation, with a dramatic past. The state of fragility with which these people arrive in Italy is simply indescribable.” (Dadone, December 21<sup>st</sup>. 2013)*

2) Furthermore, the mentioned migrants are also framed from a legal perspective. Dadone emphasizes that all migrants have human rights. These rights must be conserved and cannot be violated.

*“The issue of immigration policies in Italy is a very sore point-this we all know-but here it was not about talking about ius soli dry or tempered, about cultural integration yes or no, about laws on granting residence permits more or less strict. It was about human rights, about astonishment and indignation in the face of a threshold of decency below which one should not have fallen, below which instead one has fallen and has fallen hard.” (Dadone, December 21<sup>st</sup>. 2013)*

3) Finally, Dadone also emphasizes that all migrants are victims: victims of Italy’s inhumane treatment in the reception centers. Italy has continuously negated human rights to migrants. The reception centers have been kept in inhumane conditions, and Italian officials have used violence to enforce their agenda in the reception centers.

*“These centers are in degrading conditions, they are places where basic services are lacking, where psychological and psychiatric care is lacking, where spaces are cramped and totally inadequate. Yet it certainly cannot be said that there is a lack of funding, far from it.” (Dadone, December 21<sup>st</sup>. 2013)*

### ***Interpretation of the speech by Emanuele Prataiviera (League)***

#### 1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity

Prataiviera’s speech is characterized by a very anti-government stance. Therefore, his framing of Italy does not result directly from the speech but must be deduced from his critique of the government.

1) The Italian government has been representing the interests of illegal migrants and not those of the Italian citizens. However, the latter are the ones sustaining the country's infrastructure with their tax payments and paying the politicians' salary.

From this results a moral framing: Italy is a representative democracy. The elected politicians should first and foremost represent the interests of their own citizens, and not those of immigrated foreigners, who have contributed nothing to the Italian economy, politics, and social system.

*“Mr. President, you are as close to the immigrants as you are far from the citizens, those who pay your salary and whom you should be sitting here representing.” (Prataviera, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013)*

2) Furthermore, Prataviera makes a similar argument to Rampelli. This does not fit in any of the dimensions but seems to be a common pattern among right-wing parties. Prataviera frames the current government as having enticed illegal migrants to come to Italy, preventing the Italian state to be able to provide aid to those truly in need.

From this results another moral framing, which complements point number (1): Italy should not admit everyone but practice more welfare chauvinism and admit only the people who truly need it.

*“The main interpreter of the political direction of indiscriminate reception is Integration Minister Cécile Kyenge, who misses no opportunity to encourage illegal immigrants to defy the odds and seek entry into our country, completely irrespective of our actual capacity to ensure that those who arrive receive conditions worthy of reception.” (Prataviera, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013)*

## **2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees**

In his speech, Prataviera does not frame refugees or migrants from a humanitarian perspective. He considers all people arriving to Italy solely from a legal perspective, thus mostly omitting flight reasons and humanitarian conditions.

1) Prataviera frames all people arriving in Italy, independently of their country of origin, as clandestine. If their legal status has not been verified, every migrant entering the country is – first and foremost – illegal.

*“Migrants, as you call them, President, are illegal and they are illegal until their status is verified. So let's call them by their name: illegal immigrants, because they do not enter our country legally.” (Prataviera, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013)*

These clandestine immigrants can be further divided into two groups:

1.1.) The first group is indirectly framed from a humanitarian perspective. They are desperate, and therefore flee to Italy. However, Prataviera does not focus on flight reasons, or their need of protection.

*“How we will pretend not to say that we absolutely oppose the call to abolish Bossi-Fini because it is not the fault of a law that every year, if every month thousands of desperate people arrive on our shores, dead or alive. It is not the fault of a law that this happens.” (Prataviera, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013)*

1.2.) The second group is framed from a security perspective. The “other” clandestine immigrants are labelled as criminals who do everything to not be able to be registered, such as damaging their fingertips. According to Prataviera, these people should not be treated with respect, nor be defined as migrants. From his framing follows that they should probably not be admitted to Italy.

*“So let's call them by their name: illegal immigrants, because they do not enter our country legally. Many already arrive with shredded, cut, damaged fingertips. They arrive voluntarily with this condition precisely so that they do not get verified. Should we call them migrants? Should we call them and treat them with the respect they demand? No, I don't think it should work that way. These people, if they do these acts, cannot be defined only as desperate people but probably as something else.” (Prataviera, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013)*

### ***Interpretation of the speech by Achille Totaro (Brothers of Italy)***

#### **1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity**

Totaro’s speech does not include a high number of framings. When it comes to the definition of Italy’s national identity, Totaro mainly focuses on the opposition between “Italy’s own nationals”, its own citizens, and “the foreigners”. In Totaro’s argumentation, these two groups are diametrically opposed. Furthermore, Italy’s financial and social resources are seen as a zero-sum-game: the gains for one group are seen as an automatic loss for the other.

1) Totaro mainly frames Italy from a moral perspective. Italy is a sovereign country and, first and foremost, country of the Italians. In Italy live multiple groups, such as the elderly, who are in need of additional social and economic support. The Italian government should serve its own citizens, especially those vulnerable groups, before providing aid to foreigners.

*“Because, you see, when a nation, when a nation like ours is not able to guarantee rights to our fellow citizens, it becomes difficult to guarantee rights to so many thousands of people who arrive with so many prospects on our land and, then, find themselves, coming out of those centers, going to sleep under bridges, going to sleep on the streets, in this winter time, when the temperatures are so cold.” (Totaro, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013)*

#### **2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees**

Like many other speakers in the Italian parliament, Totaro does not alternate his terminology. Instead, he denominates all people debarking on the Italian coast as migrants. Furthermore, he does not legally differentiate between refugees and

migrants, nor mention that many people flee their home countries for humanitarian reasons.

1) Totaro frames all migrants from a security perspective. The majority of people arriving in Italy are either already criminals or will become criminals during their stay in Italy. Furthermore, they present a danger to Italian citizens, as they mainly commit crimes against Italian nationals.

*“Then, there is the rhetoric, or another rhetoric, of talking about those who, then, end up in our jails. Sometimes we deal with it here in our House, in the parliamentary chambers, about overcrowding, about the problems that we have in prisons, where there are 60, 70 percent of foreign nationals who have committed, if anything, crimes against our other fellow citizens.” (Totaro, December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013)*

### **Parliamentary debate from October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014 – Urgent government briefing on the handling of migrant flows in the Mediterranean Sea and the start of Triton**

#### ***Interpretation of the speech by Micaela Campana (Democratic Party)***

##### **1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity**

1) Campana makes a moral framing when referring to Italy’s civil society. Italy has a very strong and solidary civil society. The military, as well as many civilians, have provided their aid in times of crisis, and helped the refugees when they needed it the most. Campana thanks all Italians for being proud to belong to their country.

*“Since Oct. 18, 2013, the Military Marina has ensured, as part of the operation, the constant airsea patrol of the Mediterranean and the Strait of Sicily: five naval units, about 5,000 men engaged, men and women who have directly assisted 149,000 migrants, recovered 93,000 people on board sinking ships, and brought more than 500 boatmen to justice. To them, as well as to the men of the Harbour Master's Office and the Guardia di Finanza, a thank you for carrying Italy and Italians to be proud to be Italians.” (Campana, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

2) Campana also makes a humanitarian framing when referring to the Italian state and the refugees. The Italian state has acted by putting the humanitarian needs of the refugees first, and to prevent further humanitarian tragedies.

*“The Italian state, however, has decided not to stand by and watch, but to react with strong and concrete humanitarian interventions in order to prevent the occurrence of tragedies, such as the one in Lampedusa last year, in the near future.” (Campana, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

3) Campana frames Italy from an international perspective. Italy is part of Europe; not only geographically, but also in terms of values and moral principles. Italy is proud

to belong to a system that especially in times of crisis, has been the most effective and has brought out the principles and conventions that command interactions today. However, at the same time, she asks for Europe not to look away, and for support in the Mediterranean, emphasizing that the Mediterranean belongs to Europe.

*“Italy was quick and also did a lot. However, we have asked Europe not to turn its head the other way, not to be a stone guest. In the most dramatic moments of its history, Europe has been able to create the best things, the conventions and bodies that, even today, are the basis for the respect of mutual aid, sharing and taking charge of common history.” (Campana, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

*“The Mediterranean is Europe and Europe is the Mediterranean: this is the only way, there are no alternatives.” (Campana, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

## **2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees**

Before focusing on Campana’s framings, one must emphasize that her language is not very clear. Even though legally differentiating between humanitarian and economic migration, she does not verbally differentiate between refugees and migrants. Multiple times, she refers to refugees as migrants, while at the same time emphasizing their humanitarian situation. I assume that this is not made intentionally, as the word “migrante” (migrant) is much more often used in the Italian language to describe refugees, than the word “profugo” (refugee).

1) First and foremost, Campana makes a humanitarian framing. There are migrants who suffer from a precarious humanitarian situation. They are fleeing from war or the negation of human rights in their home country. Often, entire families and generations flee their country to find protection.

*“Economic migration, which pushed those who had nothing to dream of a better world, has given way to a migration that can perhaps be said to be even more dramatic, a migration for the survival of entire generations, fleeing from wars, from the total denial of rights.” (Campana, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

2) Campana also makes an economic framing. There are also migrants who flee not because of a precarious humanitarian situation, but because of a precarious economic situation in their home country. However, economic migrants are the minority in comparison to humanitarian migration.

*“Economic migration, which pushed those who had nothing to dream of a better world, has given way to a migration that can perhaps be said to be even more dramatic, a migration for the survival of entire generations, fleeing from wars, from the total denial of rights.” (Campana, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

3) Finally, Campana also makes a security framing. She emphasizes that contrary to the beliefs of the conservative parties, many migrants are not criminals or exploiters of Italy's social system, and therefore a danger to Italy's society.

*"Italy has allowed, on the basis of 25,000 files examined, the granting of 3,000 asylum claims and more than 12,000 humanitarian protection claims: this is to say emphatically that we reject the idea that most migrants arriving in our country are people to be brought to justice or, even worse, that national representatives, who have the highest compliance to legislate, may think that the best part of migrants are those at the bottom of the sea." (Campana, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

### ***Interpretation of the speech by Manlio di Stefano (Five Star Movement)***

#### **1. Who are "We"? Constructing national identity**

1) Di Stefano frames Italy from an international perspective. However, in contrast to Fabiana Dadone, this framing comes mainly from a position of strong criticism. Di Stefano describes Europe as a supranational authority, that enslaves its member state by imposing its policies on them. Di Stefano emphasizes that Italy should hold on to its sovereignty, and first and foremost serve the Italian citizens.

*"Let's start with a basic concept: in this Parliament we all agree that human rights and, therefore, the lives of migrants should be protected; we all agree that migration flows are a natural phenomenon, but on one thing we will never agree, on your passive enslavement to European diktats. Europe, that supranational entity that requires us to welcome everyone with open arms, sanctions us when things go wrong, yet takes refuge behind the Dublin Convention when we scream the desperation of our citizens who say one simple thing: we are not racist, but Italy can't take it anymore." (Di Stefano, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

*"[...] for us, our employers remain the citizens of Italy and, therefore, their political ideas are our political ideas." (Di Stefano, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

2) From the citation also emerges a moral framing. Italy is being strict regarding its immigration policies, but this does not result from Italy being a racist country. On the contrary: Italy's infrastructure is overwhelmed with the high numbers of migrants arriving. However, it still becomes clear that di Stefano argues that Italians should be prioritized when it comes to the allocation of resources.

3) Furthermore, di Stefano frames Italy from an economic perspective. He emphasizes that Italy is still in an economic crisis, and that the precarious economic situation of many Italian citizens complicates the admission of migrants.

*"A country in economic crisis is less tolerant and receptive: Italians need to be guaranteed the necessary conditions of well-being...so that they can live their relationships with migrants to the fullest." (Di Stefano, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*



## **2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees**

In his speech, di Stefano focuses mostly on the Dublin Agreement, on not so much on the framing of refugees and migrants. Furthermore, he does not legally differentiate between refugees and migrants, but refers to all people entering the country via the Mediterranean as migrants. Therefore, his framing of the “Others” is not very detailed.

1) All migrants are framed from a legal perspective. Di Stefano emphasizes all migrants have unalienable human rights. These rights, as well as the lives of the migrants, must be conserved and protected.

*“Let's start with a basic concept: we all agree in this Parliament that human rights and, therefore, the lives of migrants should be protected [...]” (Di Stefano, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

2) Di Stefano also emphasizes that migrants, especially a high number of migrants arriving to Italy, presents an economic burden for Italy. This is especially true because Italy is still in an economic crisis, and hardly providing for its own citizens. Furthermore, social tensions could arise between migrants and country nationals, as the latter feel neglected socially and economically.

*“A country in economic crisis is less tolerant and receptive: Italians need to be guaranteed the necessary conditions of well-being...so that they can live their relationships with migrants to the fullest.” (Di Stefano, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

### ***Interpretation of the speech by Nicola Molteni (League)***

#### **1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity**

As with some other speeches of opposition members – and members of right-wing parties, the framing of Italy does not directly result from Molteni’s speech but must be deduced from his critique of the Italian government.

1) Italy’s current government has been greatly discriminatory towards “true” Italians by providing numerous social and economic benefits for so-called clandestine migrants. Especially Italian politicians have stopped representing and making politics for Italians and are now representing the interests – and benefitting – primarily illegal migrants.

From this results the moral framing made also by Rampelli and Prativiera: Italian politicians should first and foremost serve the citizens of their own country. Italy is country of the Italians. Italians should receive social and economic support before foreigners do.

*“In that square there will be many citizens, men, women, unemployed, unemployed workers, who feel discriminated against by this government. It is not the League that is racist, it is you who are doing reverse discrimination against Italian citizens. Minister, be the minister of Italians and not of immigrants.” (Molteni, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

2) Furthermore, Molteni makes an economic framing: many Italians are poor and belong to precarious social groups. Ten million Italian citizens live on the brink of poverty. There are millions of pensioners or unemployed persons who are not supported enough financially and socially by the Italian system.

*“[...] tell them that Mare Nostrum, at 1,200 euros per month per immigrant, is a great success; tell the seven million pensioners who get less than 1,000 euros per month, the 2 million pensioners who get less than 500 euros per month, tell them that you give 1. 200 euros a month, food, lodging, hospitality; tell them that you have given, with Operation Mare Nostrum, hospitality in four-star hotels, guaranteeing all kinds of benefits, to the three and a half million unemployed Italians who are on television right now, who do not have a job, who probably do not even have a home.” (Molteni, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

## **2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees**

Molteni does not emphasize the differences between refugees and migrants. Instead, he re-classifies refugees as migrants, emphasizing that most people embarking are clandestine people:

1) Molteni makes a legal framing. Most of the people disembarking in Italy are not refugees or migrants, but clandestine immigrants who enter the country illegally, “invading” the country.

*“We are the only country in the world that uses Navy ships to invade us, that we go and get illegal immigrants because the numbers say that the vast majority of those who land on our soil are not refugees or migrants, as President Boldrini, the high priestess of immigrants, likes to call them, but are illegal immigrants.” (Molteni, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

1.2.) Illegal migrants are an economic burden to Italy. They have invaded the country and endangered the existence of Italians – socially and economically. They receive much greater social and economic benefits than the precarious social groups of Italians. However, Molteni does not attribute the fault to the illegal migrants by defining them as benefit scroungers, but rather to the Mare Nostrum operation.

*“Tell it, tell it to the citizens who are listening to us, tell the goodness of Operation Mare Nostrum to the ten million Italian citizens who live below the poverty line, tell them that Mare Nostrum, at*

*1,200 euros per month for each immigrant, is a great success; tell them that you give 1,200 euros per month to the seven million pensioners who get less than 1.000 euros a month, to the 2 million pensioners who get less than 500 euros a month, tell them that you give 1,200 euros a month, board, lodging, hospitality; tell them that you have given, with Operation Mare Nostrum, hospitality in four-star hotels, guaranteeing all kinds of benefits, to the three and a half million unemployed Italians who are on television right now, who do not have a job, who probably do not even have a home. Go and tell the successes of Mare Nostrum to these people who are listening to us. It was an invasion operation.” (Molteni, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

1.3.) Molteni also frames illegal migrants from a security perspective. By entering the country, they present a danger to Italy and its citizens. For Molteni, this is primarily a health, as well as an internal security issue: many migrants carry dangerous illnesses like Ebola, increasing the Italians’ risk for infection. Furthermore, many might belong to terrorist groups or identify with terrorist ideas, increasing the risk for Islamic terrorism.

*“Minister, you didn’t mention two problems that illegal immigration brings with it, public order problems-and we just mentioned them-and health problems. On Ebola we are the only country in the world that is not doing anything. And then there is terrorism, Islamic terrorism.” (Molteni, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

### ***Interpretation of the speech by Fabio Rampelli (Brothers of Italy)***

#### **1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity**

1) Rampelli frames Italy from a cultural perspective. He emphasizes that Italy has had a long history of solidarity culture, and it has always provided aid to the people in need. According to Rampelli, because of Italy’s strong solidarity and sensibility towards humanitarian necessity, racism and xenophobia have never taken root in Italy.

*“I want to come precisely to your reasoning: granted that all of us, we have said it in so many circumstances, fortunately, we are in a country that is not racist, that, on the contrary, has a culture of solidarity, a clear humanitarian sensibility (probably, these antibodies have also prevented racism and xenophobia from taking root in Italy), but, attention Minister Alfano, colleagues of the majority, we do not see any significant results from the point of view of protecting, to begin with, human lives.” (Rampelli, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

2) Rampelli also frames Italy from an economic perspective. Italy is bureaucratically and economically not able to admit illimited migrant numbers. Italy’s own citizens, especially the lowest social classes, are suffering under the country’s economic crisis. Italy can provide solidarity for foreigners, but only for very limited numbers, as it must also prioritize the needs of its own citizens.

*“We are for welcoming, we are for allocating funds for charity, aid and solidarity, but with a limited number, because it is obvious that you cannot hold a kind of solidarity that does not have a prescribed capacity. So much so, dear President, that on the ground, the suffering, and even the impatience of the weaker social classes, are there for all to see.” (Rampelli, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

3) Finally, Rampelli criticizes the current government. This does not fit in any of the dimensions but is important to mention because it is a common pattern among opposition parties. Rampelli frames the current government as having practiced demagoguery and having enticed especially economic migrants to move to Europe, creating “unnecessary” migration movements and putting an unnecessary toll on the Italian state.

*“Since 2011, when the "Arab Springs" broke out, years have passed and there is a significant implementation of immigrants who come for economic reasons, and not because they are fleeing from wars as all the statistics and studies that are probably also in your possession tell us. By showing all of Africa, starting with the poorest Africa, the reassuring ships of the navy doing the right rescue work, we absolutely showed that there was a possibility of arriving, through the door of Italy, in Europe and the Western world.” (Rampelli, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

## **2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees**

1) Rampelli generally acknowledges that there is a legal difference between “humanitarian refugees” and “economic migrants”. However, he also emphasizes that since 2011, more and more migrants, and not refugees, have come to Italy to seek economic benefits. Thus, his speech mainly revolves around economic migrants.

*“Since 2011, when the " Arab Springs " broke out, years have passed and there is a significant implementation of immigrants who come for economic reasons, and not because they are fleeing from wars as all the statistical data and all the studies that are probably also in your possession report.” (Rampelli, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

2) Rampelli frames most migrants as economic – and illegal – migrants, who are not fleeing for humanitarian reasons, like war and persecution, but moving to Italy to profit from the country’s social benefits.

*“Since 2011, when the " Arab Springs " broke out, years have passed and there is a significant implementation of immigrants who come for economic reasons, and not because they are fleeing from wars as all the statistical data and all the studies that are probably also in your possession tell us.” (Rampelli, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

3) Following this argumentation, illegal economic migrants are a financial and social burden for Italy. They are favored by the state by receiving more money than an Italian citizen. They occupy necessary infrastructure such as daycare centers or social housing and take away the possibility for Italians to use these social support possibilities.

*“The comparisons that are being made, that are legitimately reported in this House between the social pensioner, who gets less than 450 euros, and an irregular and illegal immigrant, even though the crime of illegal immigration you, together with the MoVimento 5 Stelle, the Nuovo Centrodestra and other parties wanted to abolish it, is obvious. The 1,200 euros, which is the cost of an immigrant, going up to 1,700 euros for a child, compared to 458 euros for a social pensioner, is an obvious inequity that creates discontent anyway.” (Rampelli, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

*“I conclude, saying, I remind myself and you, that we have only 8 percent of legal immigration, and, therefore, 8 percent of legal immigration, in that percent, and not an extra number, must be able to access social services, social housing, daycare centers, because I inform you, and really conclude, that Italians can no longer go to daycare centers and can no longer access social housing.” (Rampelli, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014)*

## **Parliamentary debate from April 22, 2015, on the Extraordinary Meeting of the European Council on April 23, 2015**

### ***Interpretation of the speech by Matteo Renzi (Democratic Party)***

#### **1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity**

1) Renzi frames Italy from a cultural perspective. He emphasizes that Italy has a deeply political culture, and that this crisis must not be approached from an emotive, but a political perspective. Politics has dominated Italian relations with the African continent for decades. A political approach must now be taken to redefine relations with Africa, and to find a solution to the humanitarian crisis occurring in the Mediterranean.

*“[...] there are various ways of approaching a reflection on what has happened in the past few days in our Mediterranean Sea: there is an emotional, emotional aspect, very strong; there is a technical aspect, of measures to be taken, of decisions to be executed; there is a diplomatic aspect, of relations: the initiations, the meetings, from the Secretary General of the United Nations to the smallest of the European Union countries, which is the one that showed itself with the biggest heart, Malta. But I think it is respectful of your role and awareness of the importance of the Parliament, the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Republic, to start from a totally, integrally, radically political approach.” (Renzi, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

2) Following framing (1), Italians are also deeply political people. A crucial part of politics consists in the process of elections. When voting, Italians do not vote with their gut or with their emotions, but in a rational and informed way.

*“The idea that Italians vote based on their bellies, as some think, is deeply offensive to Italians. Italians are rational, reasonable persons and capable of making decisions.” (Renzi, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

3) Renzi also frames Italy from an international perspective by defining Italy as part of the European Union. However, at the same time he criticizes that the EU has

become mostly an economic club and less of a political alliance. Renzi pledges for Italy to appear politically united in order to demand a transnational political plan from the EU.

*“ We are Italy, as such we have a duty to react and we have been reacting for months, I would like to say for years, but reaction alone, noble and generous, is not enough. The next step of reaction is political strategy, and political strategy means asking Europe to do Europa, not only when there is a budget to be done, but then putting Europe in a position to have an overall strategy.” (Renzi, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

4) Finally, Renzi also makes the moral argument that Italy consists of a strong solidary society. Renzi especially thanks the employees of the coast guard and police forces, which are helping saving lives continuously, but also local administrations and volunteers, who provide aid to all refugees arriving in Italy.

*“And I do not want to deny in this House the gratitude of the Government of the Republic to the women and men of the Navy, the Coast Guard, the Guardia di Finanza, the police forces, the Carabinieri, and all those in uniform who are honoring Italy by taking in survivors, saving lives at sea and trying to fulfill that moral principle, which in the Gospel is synthesized as “I was a stranger and you welcomed me,” but which for everyone, whatever religious faith or cultural involvement they start from, constitutes an inalienable principle.” (Renzi, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

5) From this citation also emerges another cultural framing, which consists in Italy being a religious country. However, Renzi does not instrumentalize Italy’s Christian influence to separate Italian culture and religion from other cultures and religions. Instead, he emphasizes that Christianity pledges the welcoming of all people in need, independently of their faith or culture.

## **2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees**

Like all other speakers in the Italian parliament, Renzi does not linguistically differentiate between refugees and migrants. However, he mainly denotes all refugees as “human lives”, which suggests a humanitarian approach.

1) Even though Renzi never explicitly mentions the word “refugee” in his speech, it becomes clear that he defines all people fleeing across the Mediterranean as people in need of protection. He especially emphasizes that behind every number, there is a vulnerable person with a story of flight that must be considered.

*“Sometimes, we have the approach of thinking, in the face of these massacres, that by flying a number here and a number there, we are almost talking about abstract objects: they are people, they are stories, they are women, they are men, they are families who mourn and who, perhaps, do not even know what happened.” (Renzi, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

2) Furthermore, Renzi defines refugees from a legal perspective. He emphasizes that many people who fled, have had their rights violated by human traffickers, and

become their victims. They are not only victims, but modern slaves – they have risked their lives, but been abused and exploited by the traffickers.

*“It does not mean, this, to underestimate that the force, the pressure that is exerted and reaches to the Libyan borders is not stoppable simply by blocking the human traffickers, but it is not first and foremost a question of security or antiterrorism, it is a question of justice and dignity of the human person. In fact, history has already known times when human lives were taken, sold, or bought and stuffed into holds and barges. It was the era of slavery. And I think it is not an exaggeration or a gamble to claim that what is happening in the Mediterranean area with the buying and selling of humans is exactly a form of modern slavery.” (Renzi, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

3) From the previous citation also emerges that Renzi does not support the stance that most people arriving are a danger to Italy’s security. However, there is no further elaboration of this point in the speech. This framing coincides with Campana’s argumentation.

### ***Interpretation of the speech by Alessandro di Battista (Five Star Movement)***

#### **1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity**

As with most opposition parties, in di Battista’s’ speech his definition of Italy must also be deduced from his critique of the current government.

1) Di Battista frames Italy from a moral perspective. Italy is jointly responsible for the wars and countries that caused so many people to flee their home countries. Italy has supported multiple military interventions that have violated international law and caused conflict and destabilization in multiple territories. From this follows that di Battista favors a more humanitarian and pacifist approach when it comes to international politics.

*“You mentioned war, but who is making this war? You are all responsible. Responsible is the president who appointed you, President Renzi: President Napolitano who more than anyone else pushed for that obscene military intervention and against international law that caused deaths in Libya and the destabilization of a territory and today the Italian people are living the consequences.” (Di Battista, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

2) The Italian government is greedy and prioritizes economic benefits over the saving of human lives. Di Battista argues that if the migrants had not been destitute people without a home, but members of financial groups, the Italian government would have rescued them quicker and sooner.

From this results a humanitarian framing: the Italian government should follow a stronger humanitarian approach on the admission of refugees. It should not be led by financial incentives, but by the desire to save human lives.

*“The truth - and I conclude, hear me well - is: [...] [if] those who embark on barges of death because they no longer have a state at home, if all of them were not men and women but financial institutions, if all of them were not flesh and blood but oil groups that support it, if all of them were not called people but banks, you would have saved them long ago.” (Di Battista, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

3) Finally, di Battista also frames Italy from an economic perspective. However, this argument also has a moral component. Italy is a poor country in a deep economic crisis. Italian citizens often feel that the government neglects them, especially when refugees and migrants receive extensive social aid. Di Battista argues that as long as Italian citizens remain poor, xenophobia and racism will continue to prevail.

*“You should know that as long as the number of poor people grows-and they grow because of your dastardly economic measures-racism and xenophobia will also grow.” (Di Battista, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

## **2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees**

Di Battista does not mention the word “refugee”; therefore, it can be concluded that he does not legally differentiate between refugees and migrants. In his speech, he defines all people migrating to Italy across the Mediterranean from a humanitarian point of view.

1) All migrants coming to Italy are primarily framed from a humanitarian perspective. They have fled their home countries because their homes have been destroyed, and they have no other possibility but to leave.

*“The truth - and I conclude, hear me well - is: [...] [if] those who embark on barges of death because they no longer have a state at home, if all of them were not men and women but financial institutions, if all of them were not flesh and blood but oil groups that support it, if all of them were not called people but banks, you would have saved them long ago.” (Di Battista, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

1.1.) From the quote mentioned above also results that di Battista emphasizes that all people fleeing are individuals. They have individual stories and fates, which must be considered.

### ***Interpretation of the speech by Paolo Grimoldi (League)***

#### **1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity**

Like in Molteni’s speech, Grimoldi’s construction of national identity must be deduced from his critique of the current government.



1) Italy's government is a government of murderers. The country's left-wing government has promoted social and economic benefits for illegal migrants for way too long. Grimoldi gives left-wing parties, mainly the PD, the fault for the quickly increasing immigration numbers during the last years. According to Grimoldi, the Italian government has provided way too many incentives, become accomplice of the human traffickers, and contributed to the death of thousands of people in the Mediterranean.

From this results a moral framing which is supported by the following economic framing: instead of financially supporting illegal foreigners, Italy should support its own citizens first.

*“Simply those who come here phone home and say: it's true, there really is a country of suckers who pay for your house, who pay for you to be fed, who pay for your phone recharge, who pay for your cigarettes. So, they all leave to come to Italy [...]” (Grimoldi, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

*“I express my political idea and I am convinced that it is a government of murderers and I will explain why! When the League was in government there were 4,400 arrivals in one year; since the Democratic Party has been governing there have been 170,000 arrivals in one year. From 4,400 we have gone to 170,000 and - mind you - it is not said by the League or Matteo Salvini, it is said by your Immigration Agency. In 2014, 250,000 illegal immigrants arrived in all EU Schengen countries; of those 250,000 illegal immigrants who arrived in all EU and Schengen countries, 170,000 arrived in Italy! All the illegal immigrants of Europe choose Italy as their destination! Not refugees, but illegal immigrants!” (Grimoldi, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

2) Grimoldi frames Italy from an economic perspective. Italy is allocating its resources primarily in the support of illegal migrants. At the same time, the country is neglecting the needs of its most disadvantaged social groups. The actual citizens of the country, who provide for Italy's economy and infrastructure with their tax payments, are being neglected, while illegal migrants are supported extensively politically and socially.

*“We say: our people first! The money that you spend on illegal immigrants, before you cause the disasters in the Mediterranean, would go for our young people, for our evictees, for that pensioner in Lecco, who lost his home and killed himself, and about whom you don't give a damn at all, because this government, with President Boldrini in the lead, thinks only and exclusively about the rights of anyone who comes to our country from the other side of the world, but never about the Italians, never about the people who pay taxes, pull the cart along and, in a time of economic crisis, are in serious trouble.” (Grimoldi, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

## **2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees**

In his speech, Grimoldi uses the two terms “refugees” and “clandestine migrants”, which implies that he knows that there is a legal difference between the two groups. However, his speech focuses almost solely on the “clandestine migrants”, which suggests that he is redefining refugees as clandestine migrants and treating them as one group.

1) Grimaldi defines clandestine migrants from a legal perspective, which is already implied by the term “clandestine”. More than 90 percent of people arriving in Italy are not refugees, but illegal migrants, who do not flee from war, persecution, or areas of crisis, but “just” from poorer countries like Bangladesh.

*“And don't tell us they are refugees: all the statistics tell us that less than one in ten is a refugee, 90 and more percent have illegal immigrant status. I will quote you a striking case, a country from which many of these illegal immigrants come, Bangladesh.” (Grimoldi, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

2) Grimoldi also frames illegal immigrants from an economic perspective. Because they flee from poorer countries, they are attracted by Italy’s social benefits for migrants, and come to Italy mainly to profit from its economic and social infrastructure.

*“Simply those who come here phone home and say: it's true, there really is a country of suckers who pay for your house, who pay for you to be fed, who pay for your phone recharge, who pay for your cigarettes. So, they all leave to come to Italy [...]” (Grimoldi, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

3) Furthermore, clandestine migrants are often criminals who have committed crimes in their home countries, and will continue to commit crimes when on Italian territory. Therefore, an increasing number of clandestine immigrants means an increasing number of committed crimes.

*“Not only that, as Prosecutor Nordio says, not the bad guys in the League: more illegals equal more crime! So, we have also decided to double crime and offenses in our territory. Congratulations to President Renzi and this government!” (Grimoldi, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

3.1.) Clandestine immigrants are not only “simple” criminals, but often also potential terrorists who increase the risk of terror attacks in Europe.

*“Too bad there have been no measures to curb the arrival of illegal immigrants, many of whom are also potential terrorists [...]” (Grimoldi, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

### ***Interpretation of the speech by Fabio Rampelli (Brothers of Italy)***

#### **1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity**

Like most speeches of the League and Brothers of Italy, Rampelli’s identity construction of Italy must also be deduced from his critique of the current Italian government.

1) The current Italian government has legalized illegal immigration by not fighting illegal immigration and not combating human trafficking.

From this results a legal framing of Italy: Italy should be a stronger constitutional state. The Italian government should enforce its laws more strongly, fight human traffickers and their businesses, and criminalize illegal immigration.

*“How do you, on the one hand, declare that you want to control or counter wild migratory flows and, on the other hand, feed this economic circuit, which has now exploded and has staggering figures? We are now talking about over 100,000 people arriving in Italy every year, 150,000 in 2014.” (Rampelli, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

*“But the measures can only be tuned into a clear horizon and with an equally clear perspective. You have decriminalized the crime of illegal immigration; yours is a different perspective.” (Rampelli, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

2) The current Italian government has wrongly allocated its resources by allowing thousands of illegal migrants to cross the border and providing them with financial aid, while letting those truly in need of help die in the Mediterranean Sea.

From this results a humanitarian framing: Italy should prioritize the admission of refugees according to the necessity, and not let particularly vulnerable groups, like women and children, die.

*“So, if you are not capable or if you have a conflict of interest with red and white cooperatives or at least certain part of red and white cooperatives that profit from this phenomenon, let the judiciary intervene, let someone do this dirty business and go and understand the reason why we spend hundreds of millions of euros and fail to give reception in an orderly and decent way to those who need reception.” (Rampelli, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

## **2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees**

Rampelli makes a differentiation between refugees and migrants. This differentiation is based on their need of protection. Hereby, he implies that migrants are in less need of protection than refugees.

1) Refugees are framed from a humanitarian perspective. They are innocent and particularly vulnerable people fleeing war or persecution. Furthermore, many of them belong to groups even more in need of protection, like women, children, and the elderly.

*“In fact, there is no difference between those who drown children and women, that is, innocent people, than those who declare a death sentence for infidels. There is no difference.” (Rampelli, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

1.2.) Refugees are also victims of human traffickers. They are innocent victims of criminals who use people’s suffering to their own advantage.

*“And you don't say this only in the subdued statements made to the media these days, but Europe says it as well: there is only one way, and that is to treat the smugglers, i.e., slavers, for what they are, i.e., murderers, and to declare war on them, exactly as we did against Al Qaeda terrorists or ISIS terrorists. In fact, there is no difference between those who drown children and women, i.e., innocent people, versus those who declare a death sentence for infidels. There is no difference.” (Rampelli, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

2) Illegal migrants can also be victims of human traffickers, but do not come from the same humanitarian plight as refugees do. The definition of migrants remains quite vague. However, the quote implies that when comparing them to refugees, they need fewer humanitarian support.

*“So, if you are not capable or if you have a conflict of interest with red and white cooperatives or at least certain part of red and white cooperatives that profit from this phenomenon, let the judiciary intervene, let someone do this dirty business and go and understand the reason why we spend hundreds of millions of euros and fail to give reception in an orderly and decent way to those who need reception.” (Rampelli, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015)*

## **Parliamentary debate from June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015 on actions adopted for the management of migratory flows**

### ***Interpretation of the speech by Giorgio Brandolin (Democratic Party)***

#### **1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity**

1) Brandolin frames Italy from a legal perspective. He emphasizes that Italy is bound to its constitution and its constitutional values. The constitution presents the legal basis for how Italy is to be governed. Italy must adhere to the constitution by perpetuating human dignity, and the right to asylum.

*“However, I believe, I conclude, that we want to strongly reject the provocations of those who in recent hours have thought they could close the borders following the example of France. It would be the very denial of the concept of a united Europe, the betrayal of our constitutional values and those that led six states to sign in 1957 [...]” (Brandolin, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

2) Furthermore, Brandolin frames Italy from an international perspective. Italy is part of the European Union and a strong supporter of the concept of a “united Europe”. Europe’s union is not only a financial, but also a moral union: member states should support each other, contribute to solidarity, and to the promotion of peace. Brandolin emphasizes that he strongly supports the European Agenda on Migration, as well as the European measures made since the Extraordinary Meeting of April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

*“On May 13, the Commission adopted the European Agenda on Migration; an agenda that is a European response that combines domestic and foreign policy, makes the best use of the existing European Agentive and instruments, and involves everyone: member states, institutions,*

*international organizations, civil society, local authorities, and third countries.” (Brandolin, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

3) Brandolin also frames Italy from a cultural perspective. He emphasizes that since many years, flight and migration have been part of Italy’s history, and that people from different home countries have always searched for protection in Italy.

*“Since time immemorial, we know, people have moved from their homelands in search of better economic conditions or to escape war and persecution. I remember that in the 1990s, the Italian emergency was called Albania, and I knew it on my territory. In 2011 it was called the Arab springs. Today it is called Libya, Eritrea, Somalia, and Syria.” (Brandolin, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

## **2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees**

In his speech, Brandolin does not mention the term “refugee”. Instead, he differentiates between so-called “legal” and “illegal” migrants, thus redefining refugees as legal migrants.

1) So-called legal migrants are framed from a humanitarian perspective. They mainly flee because of war or persecution in their home country and are often granted the right to asylum in Italy. Their countries of origin are mainly countries in an aggravated humanitarian crisis:

*“Since time immemorial, we know, people have moved from their homelands in search of better economic conditions or to escape war and persecution. I remember that in the 1990s, the Italian emergency was called Albania, and I knew it on my territory. In 2011 it was called the Arab springs. Today it is called Libya, Eritrea, Somalia, and Syria.” (Brandolin, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

1.2.) Furthermore, legal migrants consist not of mainly young men, but of entire families who must leave their home countries. This means that legal migrants mostly consist of particularly vulnerable groups, like women and young children.

*“Since 2012 and still in 2015 Syria, Somalia, Eritrea and Mali have been among the main nationalities of arrivals by sea, often counting alone well over 50 percent of the total. Testifying to the worsening situation is the fact that more and more families are leaving than in the past when it was mostly and only young people who embarked.” (Brandolin, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

2) So-called irregular migrants are mainly framed from a legal perspective. They enter the country irregularly and probably do not migrate for humanitarian reasons. However, Brandolin does not elaborate on economic migration.

*“First, reduce incentives for irregular migration, particularly by seconding European migration liaison officers to Europe’s own delegations in strategic third countries [...]”.*

3) All migrants, legal and illegal, are being instrumentalized by right-wing political forces. Brandolin criticizes that they are being painted as the enemy that must be fought in order to defend the home country:

*“I am referring to the League, which for months has been fighting a media crusade against the immigrant using words like bulldozers, rifles, and yet when there is a vote in Strasbourg - I remind everyone - a package of European solutions, it dodges and does not vote. The immigration emergency yes favors propaganda, and so maybe immigrants end up being convenient even for the League or other political forces.” (Brandolin, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

### **Interpretation of the speech by Luca Frusone (Five Star Movement)**

#### **1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity**

In Frusone’s speech, the construction of Italy’s own identity falls quite short, as he focuses almost solely on his critique of Italy’s governing coalition. However, the following dimensions can still be deduced from his criticism:

1) Frusone frames Italy from an international perspective. Italy is part of Europe and the European Union. However, in this crisis, Europe is assuming a more and more dominating role, and prescribing actions against sovereign states, for example through the Dublin regulation.

From this also results a legal framing: Italy should persist more on its national sovereignty. The Italian government should represent Italian interests in front of the European Union, rather than being bossed around by Europe.

*“So, I hope that, at least this time, someone will pound their fists in Europe and really make it clear that Italy is fed up with this Europe, which only asks us for sacrifices, which is not at all supportive of us in these respects, in fact the various nationalisms that were supposed to be put aside in the appearance, in the vision of a united Europe, come out.” (Frusone, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

*“But to do this, you need a real government, you need someone who matters in Europe, you need someone who is not maneuvered by Europe.” (Frusone, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

#### **2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees**

Frusone only very briefly focuses on the identity construction of migrants, as the focus of his speech lies on his critique of the government. However, the following dimension can still be deduced:

1) The majority of migrants are framed from a humanitarian perspective. Frusone mentions that many migrants flee from their home country because of war and extreme poverty.

*“Migration flows will become a constant - this we also need to understand - if wars continue, if the impoverishment of Africa continues.” (Frusone, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

## ***Interpretation of the speech by Gianluca Pini (League)***

### **1. Who are “We”? Constructing national identity**

1) Like the other speakers of the LN and FdI parties, Pini also emphasizes the moral, nationalist dimension. First and foremost, Italy is the country of Italians. Italy is obliged to help its own citizens before helping foreigners, and this is especially true for Italy’s most precarious groups. According to Pini, Italians in general, but especially poor Italians are entitled to economic and social support before foreigners are.

Following this argumentation, the Italians, and not the foreigners, are those who provide for the economy and the overall well-being of the country:

*“I was saying how there is no trace within this resolution of the most dramatic, also in terms of costs and social tensions, of problems of coexistence, basically impossible, with those who clandestinely, irregularly and illegally arrive in our country claiming to have much more favorable treatment than the real poor that there are in this country, Italy, who perhaps with their work, before they lost it, have contributed to the welfare of everyone.” (Pini, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

2) Pini frames Italy from an international dimension. He mentions that Italy is part of the European Union; however, this framing comes from a point of skepticism rather than praise. He criticizes that instead of sharing responsibility between member states and acknowledging that many apparent refugees are illegal migrants, the EU continues to focus only on the distribution of humanitarian refugees. The EU has left Italy alone with the burden of illegal migrants.

*“We, therefore, are not voting against this solution for a specific substantive reason, which to some extent we all agree with-perhaps we ourselves, before many other colleagues from other parliamentary groups, have called for there to be a Europe that shares responsibility, not one that offloads what the issues are onto others-but we are voting against it as a political matter, because to address in the Schengen Committee only and exclusively the share of the problem-let's call it that-regarding asylum seekers is reductive and is an exercise, in our opinion, in futility.” (Pini, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

### **2. Who are “They”? Characterizing and classifying migrants/ refugees**

Pini generally acknowledges that there exists a legal difference between “humanitarian refugees” and “economic migrants”. However, simultaneously, he argues that more than 90 percent of people arriving in Italy are not refugees, but illegal

migrants. Thus, his speech almost solely focuses on the framing of so-called illegal migrants. The following dimensions result:

1) Clandestine migrants are framed from a legal perspective- this results from the term “clandestine”. They enter the country illegally and their migration reason is not humanitarian, but economic.

*“In fact, this kind of resolution may be yes reinforcing in terms of the debate in the European forum, but it does not solve the other big issue, the other big issue, that of illegal immigrants coming to us for economic reasons and not for humanitarian protection reasons.” (Pini, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

2) Clandestine migrants are also framed from an economic perspective. They are a burden to the country and its social system, but also to Italian citizens. Illegal migrants take away money and social benefits that Italian citizens, especially the poorest Italian citizens, would be entitled to.

*“I was saying how there is no trace within this resolution of the most dramatic, also in terms of costs and social tensions, of problems of coexistence, basically impossible, with those who clandestinely, irregularly and illegally arrive in our country claiming to have much more favorable treatment than the real poor that there are in this country, Italy, who perhaps with their work, before they lost it, have contributed to the welfare of everyone.” (Pini, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*

3) Furthermore, Pini frames illegal migrants as potential threat for Italy’s security. He argues that many of them do not come to Italy to pursue an honest occupation, but rather to commit crimes or even promote terrorism.

*“Once again, however, it is spoken of here with a veiled hypocrisy, because only the part of asylum seekers, people who can somehow get international protection, is spoken of, while the whole other part of migrants who come here illegally, perhaps to commit crimes or, perhaps, as several prosecutors’ offices in this country now say, to flank terrorism, is not spoken of.” (Pini, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015)*