INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

Beyond Humanitarian Narratives: Critical Perspectives on Media, Migration, and International Cooperation

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Wednesday, March 20 - Sala Poeti
15.30 | I Session – Humanitarian Communication: Ethic and Political Aspects

Keynote Speaker:
Suzanne Franks, City University of London, UK
Missing out on the politics - Media coverage of humanitarian crises.

The reporting in the western media of disasters which occur in faraway countries (and especially in Africa) frequently follows a template which fails to take account of political circumstances. Very often journalism relies upon familiar stereotypes and fails to convey the complex underlying politics – using instead frames such as ‘primitive tribal hatreds’ or resorts to explanations based upon ‘natural disaster,’ when there are in fact complex underlying social and political causes to many crises and complex emergencies. There is a marked difference from the way that crises are reported when they occur in Western countries, where there is a far greater attempt to give underlying explanations and nuanced interpretation which takes account of political factors. In the words of the Kenyan journalist Binyavanga Wainaina these days ‘brown and black places are flat issues’.

This paper will analyse the way that so-called ‘humanitarian reporting’ has failed to take account of political explanations with reference to key case studies and it will also discuss the tendency to double standards in the way that journalists report events in different societies. It will moreover highlight the powerful and consciously apolitical position of international aid agencies in many of these situations - which is particularly significant given their increasing direct use of media to report upon events in the field.

Thursday, March 21 - Sala Poeti
9.15 | II Session – Media Production I

Deborah De Felice, Stefania Fragapane, Giovanni Giuffrida, University of Catania
Media representation of the unaccompanied foreign child: an analysis on online newspapers

Since the late 90s, the presence of Unaccompanied Foreign Children (MSNA), children who are in a country other than their own without adult reference figures, has been increasing exponentially. The data provided by the Committee for Foreign Minors showed a significant increase from 2006. Since the beginning of 2011, moreover, there has been increasing attention to this phenomenon by the media. The explosion of the "Arab Spring", which covers much of the North African countries, increased migration from the Maghreb (as of November 2011, 7,844 children are living on the national territory), which attracted the attention of the public in the form of humanitarian emergencies, for the management of which a strategic role is assigned to NGOs. According to the Ministry of the Interior, in the first six months of 2011 have entered Italy by sea 4,209 unaccompanied foreign children, 2,466 more than those in the same period the previous year (almost 90% of these children arrived in Sicily and Lampedusa).

The extent of this influx, global and local at the same time, the impact that media representation has on the perception of the host society and on the institutional choices for coping with immigration, the increasing use of the Web as a privileged space for news’
consumption, pose new questions aimed at understanding what is the image of unaccompanied foreign minors conveyed by the media. Unaccompanied foreign children are at the center of a crossroads between laws and policies that proclaim “the best interest of the child”, and laws and policies designed to control migration flows and characterized by an emergency and security logic, whose fate is linked, in fact, to the human, social and economic resources that local areas possess and may decide to use for their hospitality within a complex legal framework.

This paper, through the collaboration of expertise in the sociology of law, sociology of communication and information technology, will analyze the representation of unaccompanied foreign minors on some online newspapers, compared at the national and local levels. To this end, we will analyze on one hand the process of news construction, to highlight the space devoted to news on unaccompanied foreign children in both quantitative and qualitative terms, the language used, the role assigned to international cooperation. On the other hand the paper, through an information system built ad hoc, will focus on news consumption to understand reading profiles and preferences on the subject.

Karina Horsti, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

*Intersections in victimization: Gender, age, religion, race and ethnicity in mediated pro-asylum activism*

The paper analyzes the framing of asylum seekers in the context of mediatized pro-asylum activism in Finland. Media framing and public debate of two cases are compared. In 2007, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, together with secular activist groups, successfully used the mainstream media and the social media in their campaign against the deportation of three female asylum seekers. In 2012, two Afghan asylum seekers camped outside the Parliament in Helsinki in a hunger strike for two months protesting the negative decisions. The Church and the secular pro-asylum activists supported publicly. However, the protest did not create a similar public support as in 2007. On the contrary, even in the case of racist incidents against the Afghan hunger strikers, there was not much public support for them. The paper examines how framings in and around journalism construct representative figures of some asylum seekers who qualify for “our” support but not of others. This selective victimization is constructed in the intersections of gender, age, religion, race and ethnicity. The paper concludes that the engagement of the powerful institution, the Evangelic Lutheran Church can raise the issue of asylum seekers to the journalistic agenda. However, only if the media is able to use practices of cultural proximity and domestication, a figure of a suitable victim can appear.

Francesco Pira, Università di Messina

*Migration and Media: a survey of the phenomenon of social perception from traditional medias to social networks.*

In the age of mass-mediated communication, external factors significantly impinge on the process of comprehension and interpretation of the Other. Such factors are partly responsible for the ambivalent, multi-faceted character of communication, to such an extent as to turn it into *anticommunication.*

A preliminary definition of the concept of *anticommunication* is crucial in order to analyze the ways in which the migratory phenomenon is dynamically perceived and, ultimately, to evaluate how such perceptions have changed in the transition from analogic to digital medias. The springboard for the present analysis is the identification of the two levels on which the
communication process develops: mass-mediated communication and direct communication between/among individuals. The advent of the Internet seemed to offer an opportunity to overcome this dualism. The global village was supposed to remove all barriers, including linguistic and cultural ones, as well as to afford ever-increasing financial opportunities. This disintermediation gives birth to a new sense of community, a public space wherein it is possible to find effective solutions to collective problems.

Still today many questions remain unanswered, especially when we consider the potentialities, but also the risks inherent in this new space. Today’s journalism looks more like information spreading than like news building. It is clear that, in such a context, the greatest challenge consists in looking for a possible convergence. If each of us represents a node on the Web and if, as Castells argues, this situation results in the phenomenon known as mass auto communication, then everything depends on each individual’s capability to aggregate, to dialogue, to generate a flux of communication which may allow for the building of a new cultural model –what Jenkins refers to as participatory culture –, a concept based on informal authority and on the collaborative construction of credibility.

Starting from field research and case-studies, including critical situations, the proposed contribution will discuss the impact of the new media, as opposed to the traditional ones, in terms of their capability to diffuse high-value social messages among people and across communities.

Andrea Pogliano, Università del Piemonte Orientale “A. Avogadro”

The burden of the humanitarian representation. Media frames and public opinion on migrants and immigration

With few exceptions, news frames on migrants and immigration have not been studied in detail by scholars. Working on the representations of migrants produced in 30 years by 8 Italian weekly newspapers, focusing on photographs and headlines, I found three major frames: securitarian, humanitarian and assimilative. The first frame is the result of the representations of specific migrants as a threat; the second frame insulate few migrants constantly reproduced in pictures, representing them as innocent victims. The analysis of the latter frame acknowledge for a logic that appear to be typical in Italian weekly journalism: to represent neither an innocent victim nor a “threatening migrant” means, in the immigration storytelling, to reintroduce hope and future in the story. But only few migrants (second generations, entrepreneurs, temporary workers) have a recognized “right for hope” in the media. Is it a consequence of a long-term dominant position of the humanitarian frame? The best way to answer, sociologically, these question, is by moving from news production to news reception, from frame building to frame effects. Are these frames uncritically reproduced by the audience? Are them subverted? Do people recognize and use the connections – established by media production – between typical pictures of specific migrants and the news frames? The paper is intended to discuss some results of a research about news framing effects of immigration conducted on a sample of university students in the North-West of Italy. The research have been carried on as an experiment, as is typical in framing effect researches, dividing the sample into three homogeneous groups, each of them facing a package of news articles and news pictures. The packages put together typical journalistic representations of the frames mentioned above.
The contribution investigates the possibility of the emergence of “alternative” frames, other than the usual representation of migration in mainstream medias, typically characterized by limitation in the single dimensions of social alarm and crime [Binotto, Martino, eds, 2004; Marletti 1991; Dal Lago 2001; Altheide 2002]. The focus is on some examples that can challenge the “securitarian” and emergency frames, with the aims to reflect on patterns of construction of specific representations of otherness by the Italian journalism, as well on the role that some “players” (different from those generally more visible, the politicians) can play in the inclusion into public discourse, if not a different image of the Otherness, at least more complexity, in terms of contents, images and interpretative keys. In this sense, the representation of “voices” of immigrants themselves or by civil society subjects and third sector (NGOs, activists, committees, etc.), acquires particular importance.

Starting from data and materials collected as part of research project for the “Charter of Rome” observatory [www.cartadiroma.org; Binotto, Bruno, Lai, eds, 2012], we isolated a case study particularly significant to analyse different dynamics in media representation: the occupation of a crane (in Brescia, October-November 2010) by some migrant workers to protest against the fraud they have suffered during an amnesty, and their claim for regularization of their residence status.

Through a mix of non-standard [Ricolfi 1997; Marradi 2007] and generally qualitative [Altheide 1996] methods of analysis on news television content, related (with some modifications) to the frame analysis [Entman 1993; Barisione 2009] and critical discourse analysis [Van Dijk 1988]) are investigated: a) the more general media representation of the “Brescia case”; b) the communicative role of the players involved, including immigrants themselves and other subjects that support them; c) the construction of a television “field”, discursive and symbolic [Bourdieu 1980, 1992, Foucault, 1971], to represent the conflict.

The analysis allowed to focus on the ability and practicability of a “speech power” (even to potential capabilities of counter-narration) by subjects that normally constitute a voiceless otherness in Italian news-media.

Among main evidences, the analysis showed the immigrants’ capability, when they gain voice, to express very alternative frames, characterized by pragmatism and concreteness. The civil society voices, instead, seem to be still on abstract and less effective representations: fully incorporated in Italian antiracist tradition (and based on generic references to solidarity and acceptance) the voices of these subjects show evident limitation regarding “competition” in media-arena, toward the construction of an open and intercultural society.

Giacomo Solano, Università di Milano Bicocca

From ‘extracomunitario’ to ‘clandestino’: the immigrant in the media discourse

The presentation aims to analyze the representation of immigrants and immigration in the Italian mass media, with particular reference to the terminology used.

In this regard, in order to summarize the findings of the previous research carried out in Italy, I’ll underline the terminology used and, in particular, the passage from the use of the term ‘extracomunitario’ (non-EU immigrant) to the word ‘clandestino’ (illegal immigrant). Both terms are used to speak about the more problematic part of those arriving in our country.
While in the past the word ‘extracomunitario’ was used to label the newcomers negatively, nowadays this term has been almost completely abandoned in favour of the term ‘clandestino’.

Just to show the use of this second term, I will illustrate the findings from a research carried out on the news (and more particularly in the title) of the news agency Ansa, published on the website in 2010.

In order to give a complete picture of how Ansa represents immigrants, I’ll show the most recurring terms, connecting the words used with two other important aspects: the topics and the types of news (e.g.: daily news, deepening news etc.)

Immigrant/s is the most recurring label, although Ansa uses (often in an inappropriate way) the term ‘clandestino’. This occurs especially when the news refer to a negative and problematic idea of immigration. For example, while talking about immigrants as legal offenders, the news agency employs terms related to the clandestinity in more of 28% of total news. On the contrary in the case of immigrants presented as victims, this type of words appears in only one news item (out of 41).

In conclusion, mass media tend to reinforce the common vision of immigrants as problematic and/or criminal people. They reproduce this image through a very selective use of the terms. The role of the mass media in supporting this vision puts them in a central location with regard to the sphere of humanitarian aid and international cooperation. As matter of fact, this negative vision of immigrants could influence the decision-makers’ choices of policies, measures, financing etc.

Kaarina Nikunen

Hopes of Hospitality: Media, Immigration and the Politics of a Place

On the 26th of December in 1997 a ship carrying 836 Kurdish refugees wrecked on the coast of Calabria in Southern Italy. The paper explores the ways in which the arrival of mostly Kurdish refugees and the implementation of humanitarian discourse in the local politics that followed the arrival, became to shape the village of Badolato economically, politically and culturally. At the time Badolato was suffering from the typical problems of Calabria and Southern Italy: high unemployment figures, aging population and scarce visions for the future. The arrival of refugees opened a new opportunity of revitalization of the village with economic structures supported by the government. Humanitarian discourse served as an essential element in realizing the economic plan. The notions of hospitality and humanity were brought in to public discussion and reiterated in various occasions as the values that will carry Badolato forward. The plan, exceptional as it was, soon brought media all around from Italy and Europe to report the hospitality of Badolato.

By analyzing the media coverage from 1997 to 2003, the paper focuses in particular on the role of media in the process of re-defining the identity of a place in terms of humanitarianism and hospitality. With multiple data from media coverage to interviews and field notes the paper examines the ways in which media coverage is reflected in the political actions and private responses to the events. Moreover it shows how hospitality becomes a political strategy and a tool of survival for a small village and how the regional struggle of a place becomes consciously and inevitably connected with wider set of global relations.
Selenia Marabello, Università di Bergamo

The migration who produces: “discoursive reverse shots on migration and development.

Through an anthropological exploration of a well-known co-development project named Ghanacoop, the paper will analyse how development lexicon, market practices and cultural codes are combined and re-formulated by collective migrants involved in development. The various social actors involved in the project through traditional media (OIM, economic actors, local institutions) produced discourses on migrants as agents of change in both countries of emigration and destination. Particular attention will be paid to the project’s narrations and descriptions within national and international media as well as the process of acquisition and re-signification of media production by the Ghanacoop members. Ghanacoop participated in international conferences on migration and development, in Italy took the public floor on racism, and wrote an autobiographic book positioning itself in contrast to migrants’ depictions as victims or targets of social actions. The engagement toward development and the start up of an income-generating enterprise became an opportunity for Ghanaian migrants to position on transnational and national space in Ghana and particularly in Italy. They thereby embodied the development discourse on diaspora by presenting themselves as the new economic, social and cultural resource for both countries of origin and destination.

A critical analysis of the narrations related to diasporas’ engagement to development as well as of the plurality of the discourse of a project’s actors will show the tactics and the decodification process of this migrants’ group to change the current “images-discourse” about migrants in the Italian context.

Ore 14.30 | III Session – Humanitarian emergency and border control

Valentina Bartolucci, Università di Pisa

The migrants’ invasion: Symbolic construction of a humanitarian emergency in the Italian policy discourse in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings

This paper looks at the symbolic construction of a humanitarian emergency connected to the migration from North Africa that resulted from the outbreak of the Arab uprisings. It seeks to examine some of the properties of the Italian state discourse on migration as instantiated by governmental officials under the Berlusconi administration and embedded in legal procedures. The state discourse is analyzed at two different levels: (1) strictly political, instantiated by members of the government and; (2) bureaucratic, instantiated in legal procedures with the purpose of ensuring proper management and control measures. The period of analysis goes from December 17, 2010 to the dismissal of the government of Silvio Berlusconi in November 12, 2011. Parallel to the textual analysis of the phenomenon of migration as a top security concern for the government and of migrants as a social menace, this paper also looks at the socio-political effects of this threat construction, including increased surveillance practices and forced repatriation justified in the name of security. The theoretical framework for the analysis is a multidisciplinary Critical Discourse Analysis approach relating discursive and socio-political aspects of the Italian political discourse on migration in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings and the effects of it in the day-to-day policy procedures.
Emanuela Dal Zotto, Università di Milano
The recourse to the category of emergency for the representation and the management of forced migrations

From February 2011 the fall of Ben Ali in Tunisia first and the war in Libya then caused the escape of 60000 people to the coasts of South Italy, in particular to the isle of Lampedusa. Due to the “difficult situation of emergency caused by the disembarkation of thousands of North Africa citizens”, on 12 February 2011 the Premier Silvio Berlusconi declared “till 31 December 2011 the status of emergency in the whole nation”. The document of 12 February 2011 recognizes the need of humanitarian assistance in addition to that of “an effective opposition to illegal immigration and the identification of subjects dangerous to the national public order and security”.

The number of people who reached the Italian coasts on 2011 is surely incredible if compared to that of the previous years and of the people escaping to the lands near Libya after the war, but it doesn’t seem enough to speak about emergency. Politics and media used a frame of the emergency to set the arrivals from North Africa and it seems it was intended to involve activities and special actions to manage them, as the immigration plan of Civil Protection called “North Africa emergency”. These activities, result of an ambiguous discussion that swings from the necessity to protect Italian citizens (security emergency) to that to receive people escaping war (humanitarian emergency), didn’t consider the specificity of migrants with important consequences on their life conditions and on their new lease on life.

This paper aims to check if the creation of an emergency frame can be considered as a response to the inability to understand and to manage the phenomenon of contemporary forced migrations.
To do that the paper intends to explain:
- how the construction of the emergency frame occurred
- which actors took part to its production and reproduction
- which procedures arose and with which effects on their subjects

Maria Gabrielsen Jumbert, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)
Whose security in the Mediterranean? Contrasting Border Control and Humanitarian Narratives and Representations of Migrants at Sea

The Mediterranean has over the past years become not only the interface between two contrasting continents, but also the scene of humanitarian suffering for so-called irregular migrants seeking to reach Europe by sea. Hundreds drown every year during the risky journey. This paper analyses how these migrants are represented in different ways in the contexts of humanitarian aid on the one hand and border control on the other, and will highlight the contrasts between them, but also how they mutually influence each other.
A central focus to study these narratives will be the efforts to build up a European external border surveillance system (EUROSUR), which is supposed to be operational by the end of 2013. EUROSUR has among its stated objectives to “save more lives at sea”, in addition to the more self-interested efforts of protecting Europe's borders and hindering undetected entries. This is the result of a direct influence of the humanitarian narrative on the border control narrative. However, these narratives take fundamentally different forms according to the agencies formulating them, both emphasising “security”, but with different referent subjects for this security. The border control discourse, influenced by border guards along the Southern shore of the European Union (EU), European policy makers, security-military agents as well as the security industry, focuses mainly on the need to secure the EU maritime border against unwanted migrants from the outside, with various media narratives echoing these
“security needs”. Yet, as illustrated above, this border control narrative has over time also integrated the humanitarian aspect, with EUROSUR’s aim to “reduce the death toll at sea” as the best illustration. The humanitarian narrative however, influenced by NGOs and International Organizations specializing in the protection of refugees and migrants, focuses mainly on the security of the migrants themselves, a narrative that is also echoed in national and international media, with images of drowning and rescued migrants serving as a powerful mobilizing factor. This humanitarian narrative however also has to take into account the European political agenda of managing and limiting the number of irregular entries into Europe, in order to be heard. This paper will address the question of the moral challenges related to the co-existence, mutual influence, but still fundamental differences, between these two types of narratives.

Mika Aaltola, The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Finland - Tallinn University, Estonia

*Violence of Global Flows: Portraying and Policing Human Mobility from West Africa to Europe*

Politics of compassion for the suffering distant other has a spatial dimension. The mental separation between communities of good-doers and the communities of distant suffering refers to a global map that has existed since the colonial times. However, it is claimed that the static spatial imagery camouflages and insulates many of the actual contexts of suffering. Suffering is increasingly being embedded in the flows of people across political boundaries and across non-sovereign spaces, such as the maritime. Global migration flows constitute a purposeful repetitive action whereby people move and are moved between physically disjointed positions. These flows of people are disrupted when they collide violently with boundary practices of existing political community. The mass suffering results from the active efforts to contain the global flows of people escaping their increasingly inhospitable localities plagued by multiple crisis factors. This essay charts the European imageries of the flows of people from the Western Africa to the Canary Islands. Instead of leading to a spectacle compassion, the drowning, and stranded people were seen as signs of Europe being engulfed by illegitimate masses. The public cognition inverses the situation: Europe becomes the endangered community and compassion was redirected towards it as a political body instead of being directed towards the sufferers of adversity. The essay examines the discursive practices whereby the suffering of others can be left unacknowledged through making their struggle to stand for a community under siege by outside elements.

**Ore 16.30 | IV Session – Media Production II**

**Emily Bauman**, New York University

*Jump Cut to Development: Internal Migration Narratives in the PRC*

Since Reform and Opening in 1978, the People’s Republic of China has witnessed the largest internal migration in history, a mass movement of rural workers to urban locations that tells the story of China’s recent economic development as well as profound social destabilization. Numerous grassroots NGOs have arisen to address problems of labor rights, medical care, and urban assimilation experienced by migrants via hotlines, training workshops, hospital visits, and labor mediation. Given lack of government support and in some cases direct governmental obstruction, the majority of these organizations rely on international funding from intergovernmental agencies, iNGOs, and foreign universities. This paper looks at selected, primarily video-based material used to promote international awareness and
support as well as videos produced by migrants as part of self-development and self-awareness training. External-oriented videos such as those featured by Compassion for Migrant Children/INCLUDED and the Migrant Resource Network exist in counterpoint to self-created videos featured in Hua Dan’s Film Media Project as part of their confidence-building workshops. Together they reveal a tension between a Western-based migration master narrative of redemption, a narrative that is reinforced by PRC policies oriented to the return rather than urban integration of the country’s “floating population,” and the migrants’ own assimilationist ethics and aesthetics of balance, self-empowerment, and realizing of one’s dreams. They also reveal that migration in China is not only a movement of people but a movement of identities – from “peasant” to “migrant” – and of ideologies. Successful migrant-oriented NGOs in China must shift from a neo-Communist language of activism and social change historically associated with the country’s peasant population to a language that embraces the logic of multi-national capitalism, both visually and rhetorically. Labor NGOs such as Little Bird and the Institute of Contemporary Observation promote their clients’ interests within the context of “sustainable development” and “corporate social responsibility,” while at the same time appealing to international labor standards to protect them. In attempting to balance the competing paradigms of the country’s recent cultural history, the folk and the global, their media narratives reflect back to the West new questions about the nature and purpose of humanitarian intervention within international systems of production.

Giuseppina Bonerba, Università di Perugia

The Humanitarian Narrative In Cinema: Examples And Issues

Numerous studies have shown that the representation of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers that the media construct is founded on stereotypes and strategies that fuel fear and hostility towards foreigners in public opinion, as they are seen as a source of social disorder and a danger to public order. Within this media system, however, cinema, and in particular Italian cinema, has demonstrated in recent productions such as Terraferma by Crialese, Villagio di cartone by Olmi, Io sono Li by Segre, and many others, a particular attention towards critical reflection on the themes of immigration and acceptance, to the extent that Ilvo Diamanti has identified “an intent to challenge the group think conveyed by the media” in this humanitarian narrative. Moreover, in addition to these cases, the audio-visual production of NGOs can be considered, which consists primarily of short films and documentaries, which circulate on the web and in dedicated spaces. It is of interest to analyze the language they use, the audience they attract, and the effect they have on this audience.

Using these considerations as a foundation, the proposed contribution aims to verify whether, and if so, how, these narratives contribute to the development of a global awareness of the humanitarian space and a collective social image. Some widely distributed films will therefore be considered in detail, outlining cases of empathic representation of the condition and suffering of the migrant, and, through an analysis of their content, and textual and linguistic strategies, the strategies adopted to raise the awareness of the viewer will be described. The analysis will then go on to study some documentaries, docu-fiction, and short films produced and distributed by NGOs, to investigate similarities and differences with the aforementioned film productions, while taking into account their different modes of production, textual typology (film, documentary, short film), and circulation, in terms of both distribution and audience. Conclusions will be reached by verifying audience feedback to these two different types of film production, through the collection of interviews and an analysis of their critical reception.
Sara Saleri, Università degli studi di Bologna

*The story of a crane. A contended discursive space*

In November 2010, for 16 days, a group of migrants occupied a crane in a construction site in the downtown of Brescia, a medium size town in the North of Italy. The migrants were protesting against the Italian law on legislation, which makes almost impossible to migrants to legalize their stay in Italy.

The migrants, going up to the crane and performing this extreme form of protest, opened a vertical breach in the cityscape, which at the same time worked as a space – precarious and provisional, but nevertheless concrete – for mediation, where different instances and different subjectivities could meet. Hundreds of people (both migrants and Italians) gathered below the crane, day and night, expressing their solidarity; local people from the neighbourhood brought blankets and food for the migrants; demonstrations took place all around Italy, invoking the recognition of citizenship rights to migrants.

The protest – quickly become a headline news – provided a chance for the media (both local and national) to present the migrants under a new light, as actors of social change, as full citizens, part of a society that can find ways and spaces for dialogue. The media had the chance to open a perspective on migration as a complex process and to oppose the dominating representation depicting migration as inevitably linked to menace and insecurity.

But did the media take this chance?

The paper, trying to answer this crucial question, analyses differences and intersections between different discourses and narrations of this event, integrating them with direct participant observations, drawing on a PhD and Post-doc research on migration in Brescia. The analysis considers the representations proposed by mainstream media (both national and local), as well as those conveyed by “alternative” media (such as Radio Onda d’Urto, which became the “megaphone” of the demonstrators), by migrants, activists and associations involved in the protest. Starting from a socio-semiotic approach, enriched by interdisciplinary influences, the paper tries to deconstruct different reconstructions, to identify themes, values and ideologies conveyed. The paper focuses in particular on a series of concepts which became dominant in the “crane debate” and investigates how different social actors used them. Concepts such as right, citizenship, identity converted into battlefields, where a struggle took place, in order to define the discursive frame which would describe the event.

Antonia Cava, Università di Messina

*Migrants as shadows. discourses on foreigner*

Media represent immigration in a pathological way. Events about immigrants are usually decontextualized and without critical analysis. This descriptive approach seems to prevent the chance to use new interpretative categories which are able to create a new “phenomenology of migration” that considers the complexity of migratory stories.

The spectacular representation of immigrant almost causes a deterioration of his image and favors the recourse to stereotypes, prejudices and emotions rather than the reality of the stories of migration. On the other hand even the image of the migrants’ countries is very distorted (Ghirelli 2005). Inappropriate language and content would define a controversial scenario.

In this paper we will investigate the medial spaces that create a new discourse on immigration (Maneri e Meli 2008) though recognizing the Italian media system eclipse related to the world
of immigration. In particular, we will analyse the Italian case of Babel Tv, Sky Channel born in November 2010: a project that reveals how the media, in certain cases, have an extraordinary effect in enhancing the diversity.

We must give “communicative citizenship” to immigrants as soon as possible. We study, therefore, a schedule undertaking such important operation of “narrative decentralization”. Babel Tv deals with immigration through its protagonists and describes the normality of their permanent presence in our society which is able to produce significant social and cultural changes. Immigrants, in this way, are not perceived as “barbarians” in a foreign land - always on the edge of the geographical context of destination – but they become active players in this area and especially the protagonists of the media symbolic space.

It’s interesting to consider the real opportunities that migrants have to transform “double absence” (Sayad 2002) into “double presence”: a double presence which is understood as cultural creativity both in countries of origin and destination. Therefore it’s possible to leave the idea of immigration as ontological condition and the belief that these biographies are marked by a source that writes an infinite destiny. Actually any difference is reversible (Queirolo Palmas 2010). Only in this way it’s possible the transition from the hetero-definition symbolic violence to the freedom of self-definitions.

Ore 14.30-18.00 | Workshop on **Media and Social Communication**

**Marco Carniani and Barbara Andreani**, Ondemigranti Project

The paper has as its object the discursive practices produced by the representatives of the Immigrants' Council of Perugia, where in a few days local media institutions have linked irregular immigration to crime events and to the lack of public security in the historic city center. By this way the nexus between insecurity and the presence of migrants - of which people are already well aware (Montesperelli, 2012) - has been reproduced; thus, the representatives of migrants have dediced to face publicly the issue of integration and the "defense of legality". Our contribution puts together the results of an investigation carried out between May and July 2012 and conducted via documentary and ethnographic materials, following like a shadow the representatives of migrants in their communication activities such as meetings, preparation of press releases, interviews with reporters, organization and management of public meetings. By analyzing of the sequence of the contacts of Council members with the institutions and local media, our investigation has shown that the attempt to break the generalization process equating migrants to criminals has - paradoxically - renewed the consensual production of a representation of migrants as a problem (Maneri, 1998); moreover, it moved the their critical intentions towards an undertaking to become part of the local "moral community". Despite the possibility of declare firsthand the integration issues and the legality theme, the access ways to the media debate showed - as pointed out by Sayad (2002) about the condition of “dominated” - as the attempt to fit into the public discussion has embedded and symbolically weakened the Council members in a other-directed speech, flattened on the issue of security.

**Claudia Santoni**, Universita’ di Macerata

*The Hotel House narrative on the local press between criminal emergency and social integration.*

This paper aims to illustrate how the local press in the recent years has represented the Hotel
House of Porto Recanati. Hotel House is a huge vertical building of about five hundred small flats that in the course of time have been becoming a core of destination and life for different origins immigrants.

I have studied this place that is often a violence and crime scene through two research approaches. The first one was in 2010 when I analyzed it through a quantitative methodology (semi-structured interviews to fifty-six families); then in 2012, I examined the adaptation process of the second generation of immigrants that live at the Hotel House through a qualitative empirical research based on the observation and autobiographical narrative interviews.

The results of this research - some of them are just in print and other ones are in progress - indicate that a spatial segregation of immigrants in an isolated and separated area represents a block to the social integration in the local community. As a consequence, the second generations of immigrants that live at the Hotel House of Porto Recanati are often isolated and not integrated in the society they live in.

According to the results in this conceptual framework, it has been interesting to integrate the empirical research with the observation of the images of the Hotel House widespread in the local newspapers. What news are reported? What fearsome images are used to describe the Hotel House? And what things are hidden by the journalists?

In recent years, the local press, marginalizing this area, has often contributed to disseminate forms of discrimination and prejudice. Wherease, this reality is highly complex and articulated that involves different interpretations and issues in a multicultural perspective to be comprehended.

The paper will also explains the methodology used for the selection, the interpretation and the analysis of this case study.