Metaphorical Representations of Migrants in the Italian and British Press During a Time of Crisis

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Abstract

Metaphors have a way of influencing the way we feel and think about political and societal issues. The goal of this paper is to examine the metaphorical portrayal of immigrants who entered Italy and the UK between January and December 2011, a time when both the economic and migration crisis occurred. The study follows a mixed-method approach, combining corpus linguistic and critical metaphor analyses in order to identify the metaphorical expressions employed by the press—and the politicians they quote—in the construction of migration discourse. The underlying conceptual metaphor of each metaphorical expression was identified and the findings have shown that the conceptual representation of migrants is centred around the following source domains: NATURAL DISASTER, CONTAINER, INVASION and ANIMAL, with a strong predominance of the first. The discourse focuses on identity-related concerns as they relate to constructs of the 'other' and how immigrants are portrayed as a threat and risk. Future research will investigate the metaphorical representation of intra- versus extra-European migrants and will consider both routine and other 'migration crisis' periods.

Keywords: migration discourse, metaphorical framing, corpus linguistics, critical metaphor analysis

1. Introduction

Migration has become subject of criticism and heated debates both within Europe and the UK. Since the 1980s, a growing number of migrants have turned Italy from a traditional country of emigration to one of immigration. Over the years, both the Italian state and society have had to make adaptation efforts due to the quick nature of this inversion in migration patterns. A concern with how immigrants are viewed and represented in the host community has emerged alongside institutional efforts to regulate immigration and the legal treatment of foreigners. The first immigration law was passed in 1986 as a result of the gradual shift in public opinion towards intolerance and fear, including violent attacks. According to Caruso (2013), this transformation was also noticeable in the terminology used to classify the 'other', with a switch from the term *straniero* (foreigner) to *immigrato* (immigrant); the foreigner was typically seen favorably and rarely as a danger to social cohesiveness. The immigrant, on the other hand, came to be viewed as a significant economic and social burden who did not make any useful contributions to the nation (Tarter, 2001).

In 2011, the matter of immigration held a primary role in the political agenda of the country. In the course of the year, 331,000 new residence permits were released, of which 42.7% for family reasons and 36.0% for work reasons. Between January and August 2011, 52,000 people arrived by boat from North Africa and Italy was called to cope with the emergency (UNHCR, 2011). In the wake of the Arab Spring, irregular migration towards Italy and arrival by sea increased exponentially, applying specifically to refugees and asylum seekers. In fact, the number of asylum requests submitted in 2011 was three times the figure for 2010 (SPAR, 2011; UNHCR, 2012). The debate with France for the case of the Tunisian migrants, as well as the request to activate the burden sharing sent to the EU institutions, brought the discussions on immigration to a wider and international context.

Immigration has been, and continues to be, one of the most prominent topics in UK public debate as well. Policymakers and politicians have paid a great deal of attention to migration policies over the past decades. Quite often they cite public demand for greater action to reduce immigration levels or face issues related to migrants, and illegal immigrants in particular. There is a tendency to blame politicians for the scale of migration, both intra and extra EU. UK media coverage of migration is one of the main sources from which the public get their ideas about immigration (van Klingeren et al., 2015). Indeed, newspaper coverage relating to migration

increased sharply since the election of the Conservative-led coalition government in 2010, especially after the introduction of measures to reduce net migration in 2011 and 2012 (Migration Observatory, 2016). Economic issues, along with arguments regarding EU and illegality dominated the discussion of immigration problems.

Indeed, the reality of the period, characterized by rising unemployment and economic instability, significantly exacerbated already-existing societal issues and had an impact on how immigration was viewed, especially in the press. Economic hardship has been shown to have an impact on people's beliefs and values, leading to less support for immigration (Jonsson & Petersen, quoted in Eydal & Ottosdottir, 2009). Critical reflection is required in light of both these shifting socio-economic and political conditions, as well as the increasingly problematic depiction of migrants in public discourse and the press.

2. Metaphors in Migration Discourse

Representations of migrants are created through language, and in turn, power dynamics are reproduced. It has been argued that a certain behaviour of a person or a group is perceived as being more stable and unchangeable the more abstract the manner in which it is described (Galyga et al., 2019). Abstract language is used less when reporting about negative behaviour of in-group members than when reporting about similar behavior of out-group members (Geschke et al., 2010). Much research has been carried out in exploring the discursive working of metaphors, and it is common in the study of discourse on migration to focus on the linguistic modification of the so-called RASIM terms, an acronym of *refugees*, *asylum seekers*, and *immigrants* (Baker et al., 2008; KhosraviNik, Krzyzanowski, & Wodak, 2012). The use of metaphors to represent abstract concepts constitute an in-group reaffirmation mechanism, unifying in-group members who share a common understanding of said metaphors and 'othering' those who do not (Krzyzanowski & Wodak, 2017). Wodak and Reisigl describe this as follows:

> "Water," natural disasters like "avalanches" and "flood disasters", military activities like "invasions", all persuasively representing "immigration" or "migrants" as something that has to be "dammed", are examples of collective symbols, just as the "ship" metaphor symbolizing the effects of immigration as an "overcrowded boat", and the "house" and "door" metaphor that metaphorizes the in-groups' (e.g., "national") territory as a "house" or "building" and the stopping of immigration as "bolting the door" (2001, p. 381).

Migrants, therefore, are framed as a threat through the use of semantic units such as metaphors and symbols.

The role that metaphor plays in political discourse has always been of great interest to metaphor scholars (Charteris-Black, 2005, 2014) and previous studies have revealed a large number of metaphors in which immigrants are the target and negatively presented as the 'other'. Both Van Der Valk (2003) and Charteris-Black (2006) for example, in analyzing right-wing political discourses on immigration in France and Britain respectively, found WATER metaphors to be among the most prominent, depicting immigrants as a danger and as losing control over immigration. Interconnected with WATER metaphors, Charteris-Black also identifies the frequent use of the CONTAINER metaphor, as containers frequently hold liquids and which could build up pressure and burst.

The use of metaphors of water and other liquids in discussions about migrants creates a powerful image of the country being overcome by waves of people, indeed research on the Italian and British press has shown how these metaphors can present migrants as a potential threat both on the countries' people and their resources. Terms like *ondate/waves*, *afflusso/influx*, and *flusso/flow*, for instance, are frequently used by politicians and journalists to describe the arrival of immigrants. By portraying the situation as out of control, these terms help to justify the action of stopping or blocking their movement (Caruso, 2013). In a study carried out by Caruso (2013) on the Italian press, the WAR domain was also quite frequent and included metaphorical expressions such as *un esercito di/an army of*, which led to the conceptual metaphor IMMIGRANTS ARE AN INVADING ARMY. "Such metaphors are used to construct relations between immigrants and the government (and the people they represent) as conflicting and potentially violent, thus legitimating practices of exclusion from national borders" (Caruso, 2013, p. 16).

Against this background, the aim of this paper is to identify the metaphorical expressions and the conceptual metaphors that emerge from the analysis of discourse related to migration during a time of crisis. More specifically, the focus is on the metaphorical portrayal of migrants entering Italy and the UK in 2011, a year that was marked by the Arab Spring and the economic crisis. Metaphors have the potential to affect how we think and feel about specific issues because of their relationship to the preconceived images we have.

3. Corpus and Method

The social and economic effects of migration is portrayed, as previously mentioned, in the press. Among the mass media, the press is commonly regarded as the most reliable source of information and the one with the greatest capacity to propagate ideologies and social beliefs in the day-to-day production of news (Martinez Lirola, 2013). Newspapers were chosen for this study because they are crucial in constructing social reality, indeed, according to Taylor (2009), journalists choose and produce news in the same way that readers choose newspapers that mirror their views and opinions. To comprehend why texts, and in particular texts relating to immigration, are created in the ways they are, the relationship between the press and society must be carefully understood (Martinez Lirola, 2013). According to van Dijk (in Martinez Lirola, 2013, p. 18), "as shown elsewhere in Europe today, elite discourse in politics and the media increasingly yields to racist rhetoric portraying immigrants as a threat and as scapegoats of the economic crisis". The host country's media discourse is most likely the prime influence on how a host society will perceive migrants and it has been shown that the language used facilitates a prejudiced perception of migrants (Geschke, Sassenberg, Ruhrmann, & Sommer, 2010).

Clearly immigration was the main criterion when selecting the newspaper articles, and specific search terms, which will be outlined below, were used. The corpus includes 336 newspaper articles totaling 157,794 words in the time frame January 1st to December 31st, 2011. The Italian newspapers are the two top-selling national dailies: *Corriere della Sera* and *Repubblica* along with two regional newspapers, one from the north: *Eco di Bergamo* and one from the south: *Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno*. For the UK, two tabloids: *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express* and two broadsheets *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* were selected. It should be noted that this study will not focus on the differences in metaphor usage across text types but will investigate the metaphorization of migration in Italy and the UK during a specific time of economic and migration crisis.

The methodological framework used here combines corpus linguistics and critical metaphor analysis. The search terms used are those selected by Taylor (2009) in her study on the representation of immigrants in the Italian press based on influential research carried out at Lancaster University (Baker et al., 2008) regarding the representation of immigrants in the UK press. Taylor states that "no clear metaphorical patterns emerged from the collocation analysis" (2009, p. 25), therefore, the intention here is to examine all the concordance lines which include the following search terms in order to identify linguistic metaphorical expressions:

- In Italian: *rifugiat*/profug** OR *richiedent* asilo* OR *immigrant*/immigrat**, *extracomunitar*/clandestin** OR *migrant** OR *stranier**

- In English: *refugee** OR *asylum seeker** OR *immigrant** OR *illegal immigrant** OR *migrant** OR *foreigner**

The search terms *straniero* and *foreigner* were included in the analysis as well to understand if the original positive connotations of the terms still hold or if they have become synonyms of *immigrato* and *immigrant*. Choosing the word *foreigner* "can be considered euphemistic because it is more neutral and does not imply the connotations of the word *immigrant*" (Martinez Lirola, 2013, p. 15).

Figure 1 below illustrates the frequency of the search terms in the two languages.
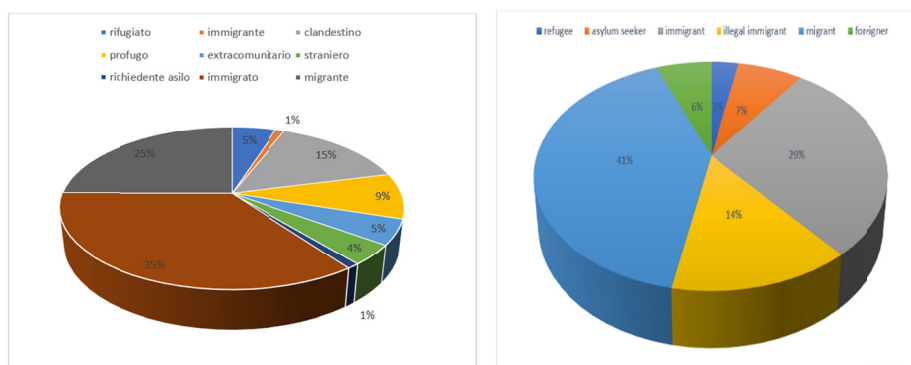

Figure 1. Immigrant-related terms

As mentioned above, all concordances containing the search terms were analyzed. According to Sinclair, a

concordance may be defined as "a collection of the occurrences of a word-form, each in its own textual environment" (1991, p. 32) and is normally presented in the KWIC (key-word-in-context) format with the keyword, or node, running down the centre, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Example concordance lines of *immigrati* and *immigrants*

The co-text of the search terms is analyzed in order to identify linguistic metaphorical expressions following the MIPVU procedure (Steen et al., 2010), which is a more detailed version of the Pragglejaz Group's MIP procedure (2007). The first step of the procedure involves reading the co-text surrounding the search terms word by word to find metaphors at the linguistic level. According to this procedure, the contextual meaning of each lexical unit must firstly be established, secondly, one must determine if the lexical unit has a more basic contemporary meaning in other contexts compared to the one in the given context. If the lexical unit has a more basic meaning in other contexts than the given context, one must decide whether the contextual meaning contrasts with the basic meaning but can be understood in comparison with it. For example, the use of *afflusso/flow* to describe the increasing number of migrating people as in 'afflusso di immigrati' and 'flow of unskilled immigrants', contrasts and can be compared to its basic meaning which refers to "the continuous movement of a liquid in one direction" (Macmillan English Dictionary).

Three dictionaries were used as a point of reference in the English language for the establishment of lexical units, basic meanings, and distinctness of contextual and basic meanings: (a) the corpus-based Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners, (b) the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English—in order to have a second opinion about specific problems and (c) the Oxford English Dictionary—"to achieve a deeper understanding of the semantic structure of a lexical unit" (Steen et al., 2010, p. 186). In the case of the Italian language, the Treccani dictionary was used because of its cultural importance and authoritative source.

Following the procedure, the lexical units *afflusso/influx* and *flusso/flow*, examples of which can be seen in Figure 3, have been marked as metaphor-related words.

Figure 3. Example concordance lines of *afflusso* and *flow*

Afflusso (noun)

a. Contextual meaning: fig.: *l'afflusso dei forestieri* [Treccani]

b. Basic meaning: L'affluire di liquidi verso una parte determinata [Treccani]

c. Contrast: Yes, the basic meaning involves the influx of water whereas the contextual meaning involves the abstract influx of foreigners into a country.

Comparison: Yes, we can understand the movement of people in terms of the movement of water.

Flusso (noun)

a. Contextual meaning: fig. Movimento continuo di persone o cose (anche astratte) che susciti l'immagine dello scorrere [Treccani sense 3]

b. Basic meaning: In senso proprio, scorrimento di un liquido o altro fluido su una superficie o attraverso un determinato condotto, e, con valore concreto, la quantità stessa di liquido, ecc. che fluisce [Treccani sense 1]

c. Contrast: Yes, the basic meaning involves the flow of water or liquid whereas the contextual meaning involves the abstract flow of people.

Comparison: Yes, we can understand the flow of people in terms of the flow of a liquid.

Influx (noun)

a. Contextual meaning: a large number of people or things coming to a particular place [Macmillan sense 1]

b. Basic meaning: The flowing of a river or stream into another river, a lake, or the sea; the point at which this takes place, the mouth of a river [OED sense 1b]

c. Contrast: Yes, the basic meaning involves the influx of water whereas the contextual meaning involves the abstract influx of people into a country.

Comparison: Yes, we can understand the movement of people in terms of the movement of water.

Flow (noun)

a. Contextual meaning: the continuous movement of a line of vehicles or people [Macmillan sense 1a]

b. Basic meaning: the continuous movement of a liquid in one direction [Macmillan sense 1]

c. Contrast: Yes, the basic meaning involves the movement of a liquid whereas the contextual meaning involves the abstract flow of people.

Comparison: Yes, we can understand the flow of people in terms of the flow of a liquid.

These parts of the text become material for further study in order to identify metaphors at the conceptual level following the framework of Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA). CMA "is an approach to metaphor analysis that […] aims to reveal the covert […] intentions of language users" (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 34) which is based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to Fowler (1991, p. 89), "Critical Linguistics proposes that analysis using appropriate linguistic tools, and referring to relevant historical and social context, can bring ideology, normally hidden through habitualization of discourse, to the surface for inspection". CDA aims to "make explicit political and ideological motivations that would, otherwise, be implicit or concealed" (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 29).

CMA, therefore, analyzes metaphors in the context in which they occur and consists of three stages: identification, interpretation and explanation. These three stages are quite similar to Fairclough's (1995) three stages for conducting CDA, which, in turn, follow Halliday's (1985) functional linguistics, which argues for a view of texts in which they can be analyzed with reference to the following metafunctions: ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning.

In the case of this study, CMA focuses on identifying the metaphor keywords that potentially conceptualize migrants and, in turn, immigration. This step is about classifying the findings according to source domain, and about suggesting a conceptual metaphor that a certain linguistic metaphor might be a realization of. Once again, in the case of *afflusso/influx* and *flusso/flow*, the WATER source domain was assigned and conceptual metaphors such as IMMIGRATION IS A NATURAL DISASTER, IMMIGRANTS ARE A WAVE/A TIDE/A TSUNAMI—as we will see below—were identified.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Conceptual Groupings

After having analyzed the concordance lines and collocates, four major conceptual groupings were identified in the corpus as a whole: NATURAL DISASTER (60%), CONTAINER (21%), INVASION (11%), and ANIMALS (8%).
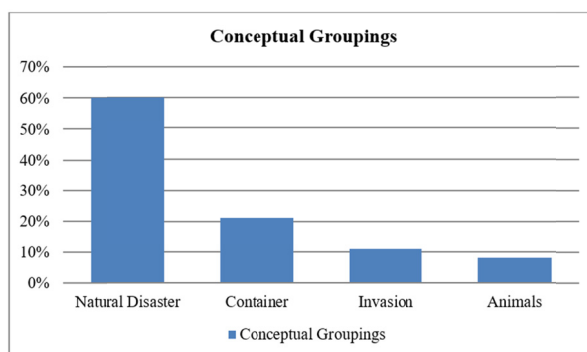
Figure 4. Prevalent source domains

The NATURAL DISASTER source domain is the most frequent in the corpus. It mainly refers to the migrants and the political actions taken by the states. The second-most important source domain is CONTAINER, referring mainly to political measures adopted or to be adopted by the countries.

4.1.1 IMMIGRATION IS A NATURAL DISASTER

As posited by Crespo-Fernandez, "metaphors that evoke natural phenomena base their dysphemistic capacity on the association between the target domain (immigration in this case) and a dangerous and wild nature as source domain, which leads to the consideration of immigration as something irrational and chaotic, as a threat which should be avoided at all costs, for the sake of the survival of the host societies" (2013, p. 101). IMMIGRATION/MIGRANTS ARE A NATURAL DISASTER has been identified in migration discourses across different national contexts (see Taylor, 2021). Their status in contemporary migration discourse is well-established in diverse contexts, contributing to the strategic use of 'othering'.

WATER metaphors, along with references to 'exodus', are predominant in the coverage of migrants in this period. Immigrants appear as an uncontrolled and uncontrollable mass of water. For instance, metaphors that represent excessive waves or flows are frequently used to convey both the destructiveness of floods and a rise in the rate of migration.
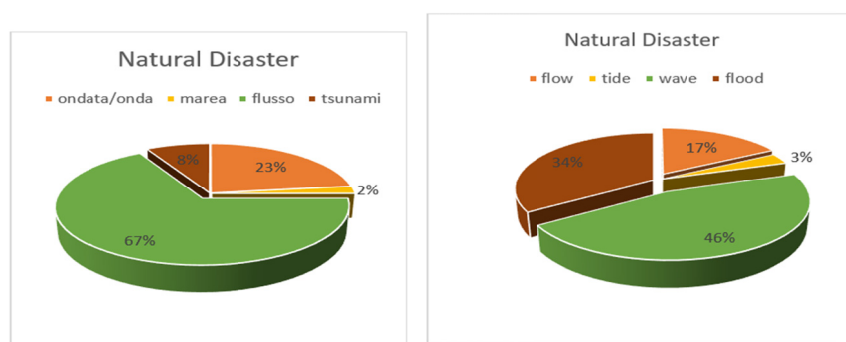
Figure 5. NATURAL DISASTER metaphor keywords

WATER metaphors

Mulsoff, in his work concerning the British immigration debate, summarizes a set of standard metaphor scenarios that "account for more than 90% of all ideologically relevant metaphors in the corpus" (2015, p. 45): SPACE-CONTAINER, MOVEMENT, ACTION and EFFECT. The most frequent WATER metaphors are part of the MOVEMENT scenario, and they include metaphor keywords such as *flood*, *tide*, or *wave*. Mulsoff, along with other metaphor scholars have linked these WATER metaphors also to the SPACE-CONTAINER scenario: "if too many immigrants come in, this increases the *pressure* inside to *bursting point* and necessitates the erection of new *barriers*" (2015, p. 45).

WATER metaphors have been commonly used in immigration discourse over time. Martin (2018), in her study

concerning the framing of immigration in Australian newspaper reports ranging from 1854 to 2018, finds these to be the most frequent metaphors, while O'Brien (2003) posits that they were recurrent in the immigration restriction debate of the early 1900s in the United States as well. Taylor (2021), investigating the Times corpus from 1800 to 2018, found that LIQUID metaphors were used in conventionalized form from 1850 onwards, and that they collocated with terms such as *settler*, *emigrants*, *migrants*, *immigrants*, *refugees* and *asylum seekers* and that the number of lexicalisations increased over time. Thus, according to Taylor, "although long-standing, we have evidence that the metaphor continues to be creative and productive" (2021, p. 470).

Seeing as how immigrants often arrive by sea, the use of WATER or LIQUID metaphors in migration discourse has been considered to be topic-triggered (Charteris-Black, 2006; O'Brien, 2003), however, Santa Ana (2002) when analyzing the arrival of Mexican migrants into the United States also identifies the frequent use of WATER metaphors. According to Charteris-Black (2006), the employment of WATER metaphors in UK political discourse on immigration is quite fitting, both because of the arrival of immigrants to Britain by water, and because of the role the sea has played in the historical and cultural identities of the country. Moreover, he claims that the LIQUID metaphors which represent lack of control over migration are, "not so much about controlling the physical movement of people, but controlling the level of historical change in society over time" (2006, pp. 572−573).

Considering the common use of WATER metaphors in immigration discourse, it is clear that they have been identified in discourse concerning the Italian and British immigration crisis in 2011. A few instances of creative/novel metaphor were identified in the WATER source domain, however, the extensive use of these metaphors in the press have turned expressions such as 'flow of illegal immigrants' or 'influx of migrants' into conventional forms of referring to the arrival of migrants into the UK and Italy in particular.

IMMIGRANTS ARE A WAVE

Of particular interest is the metaphor keyword *ondata*/*wave* which is part of the conceptual metaphor IMMIGRATION IS A NATURAL DISASTER. The following example shows the use of both *ondate/waves* and *esodo/exodus*:

(1) *Le **previsioni** del ministro Maroni, che ha parlato di **esodo biblico**, si stanno avverando: basta che le condizioni meteo siano accettabili che su Lampedusa si **riversano ondate di migranti**.* [Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno 08.03.2011]

Minister Maroni's **forecasts**, which spoke of a **biblical exodus**, are coming true: so long as the weather conditions are good, **waves of migrants crash** onto Lampedusa.

(2) ***Migrants flood back** to Britain. Britain faces a fresh **wave of migrants** from next Sunday, when rules on benefits are relaxed.* [Daily Express 25.04.2011]

It is also interesting to note the verb *riversare/crash*, keeping in line with the movement of the waves. Indeed, this water metaphor is intended to make us believe that there will be a complete loss of control over immigration. Just like with uncontrolled water, the host societies will be devastated by the arrival of migrants (Crespo-Fernandez, 2013).

IMMIGRANTS ARE A TIDE

The following examples demonstrate how the arrival of immigrants is portrayed negatively, as a "risk" to Italy, the UK, and the entire EU during the period under analysis and which needs to stopped.

(3) *Temo **marea immigrati**. Siamo molto preoccupati per il rischio di una guerra civile e per i rischi di **un'immigrazione** verso l'Unione Europea di **dimensioni epocale**.* [Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno 22.02.2011]

I fear a **tide of immigrants**. We are very concerned about the risk of a civil war and about the risk of **immigration** to the European Union which will reach **historic dimensions**.

(4) *Il ministro degli esteri Frattini, a Tunisi, ha parlato di una possible missione Frontex dell'EU di pattugliamento per **arginare il flusso migratorio** dalla Tunisia.* [Repubblica 11.02.2011]

Foreign Minister Frattini, in Tunis, spoke about a possible EU Frontex patrolling mission to **stem the flow of immigrants** from Tunisia.

(5) *The **flood tide of new arrivals to our shores is still rising** despite the overwhelming opposition of the British public to this far-reaching change.* [Daily Express 05.06.2011]

(6) *In July, he warned that youngsters faced a life on benefits without stronger action to **stem the flow of migrant - workers**.* [Daily Express 07.11.2011]

IMMIGRANTS ARE A TSUNAMI

Although metaphor keywords belonging to the natural disaster source domain, such as *ondata/wave*, *marea/tide* and *tsunami* are conventional in migration discourse, this conceptualization continues to keep its dysphemistic form intact (Semino, 2008, p. 89).

(7) <u>*L'emergenza*</u> *immigrazione è provocata da uno "**tsunami** umano" che ha portato in Italia già ventimila migranti.* [Repubblica 01.04.2011]

The immigration <u>emergency</u> has been caused by a "human **tsunami**" which has brought twenty thousand migrants to Italy.

The use of the word *emergenza/emergency*, and its repetition in the corpus, emphasizes the seriousness of the issue by portraying it as a crisis situation.

(8) *Arrivano meno <u>stranieri</u>, ma è **emergenza** per i <u>rifugiati</u>.* [Repubblica 28.10.2011]

Fewer <u>foreigners</u> arrive, but it is a <u>refugee</u> **emergency**.

Water metaphors involve three distinct features of immigration which include direction, size, and force (Cunningham-Parmeter, 2011). With regard to direction, the 'flow' is from Tunisia towards the EU and the UK, the size has reached historic dimensions—the references to massive flows and influxes are too numerous to list, and the force is that of waves crashing.

Tóth et al. (2018) assert that considering the emotional connotations and inferential potential of the NATURAL DISASTER source domain, it highlights various aspects of the target domain: (i) the large number of migrants, (ii) their arrival is uncontrolled and uncontrollable, (iii) it imposes a grave danger on us, and (iv) it must be stopped.

4.1.2 THE NATION IS A CONTAINER

Chilton (2004, p. 118) suggests that "the spatial-containment schema grounds the conceptualization of one's country as a closed container that can be sealed or penetrated". Not only does it refer to the country as a container but also to what it holds inside (e.g., public services), which needs to be safeguarded from external threats. The NATURAL DISASTER and CONTAINER metaphors are connected, according to Charteris-Black (2006), seeing as how one refers to fluid and the other can contain it. He asserts, moreover, that "the emotion of fear can be aroused by disaster and containment scenarios through the perforation of a boundary around the container allowing the inflow or outflow of liquids" (2006, p. 569). A rapid flow of fluid in a confined area causes the fluid level to increase, thus creating pressure from within the container, just as the sudden, uncontrolled arrival of migrants in the host country results in a feeling of insecurity.
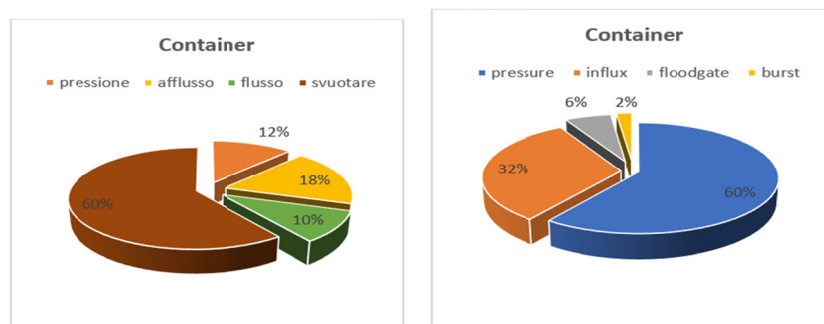

Figure 6. CONTAINER metaphor keywords

The metaphorical word *pressione/pressure* highlights the presence of the underlying conceptual metaphor THE NATION IS A CONTAINER, in which the nation, actually in almost all the cases, the island of Lampedusa, is conceptualized as a container. Lampedusa's geographical status as an island—just as Charteris-Black argues for Britain—encourages perceptions of it as a container. Charteris-Black (2006, p. 576) claims that the arrival of migrants tends to weaken this container because it leads to social change and loss of control and security. In fact, as mentioned above, a massive arrival of immigrants implies a pressure from the interior of the container which may eventually perforate its boundary. Take the quotation that follows:

(9) *Il presidente del Consiglio regionale pugliese, Onofrio Introna, interviene sull'impegno richiesto dal governo alle Regioni per alleggerire la **pressione migratoria** su Lampedusa.* [Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno 05.08.2011]

The president of the regional council of Puglia, Onofrio Introna, reports on the efforts which the government has asked the regions to make in order to relieve the **migratory pressure** on Lampedusa.

(10) *"That is the largest <u>influx</u> of people Britain has ever had and it has placed real **pressures** on communities up and down our country, not just **pressure** on schools, housing and health care—though those have been serious—but social **pressures** too," said Mr Cameron.* [Daily Express 15.04.2011]

The PRESSURE metaphor is both compatible and coherent with the WATER metaphors found in the corpus and can especially be linked to the FLOOD metaphor which evokes the image of a large body of water exerting pressure on a dam (Tóth et al., 2018).

Another metaphorical expression linked to *pressione/pressure* is *scoppiare/burst* as illustrated in the following examples:

(11) *Allarme immigrati arrivati da Lampedusa "Il Cara ora **scoppia"*** [Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno 02.08.2011]

Immigrant alarm arrived from Lampedusa "The *Cara* is now **bursting**"

(12) *BRITAIN is rushing towards a **bursting** point after new statistics yesterday revealed net migration had rocketed to a record high.* [Daily Express 25.11.2011]

If something filled with air or water bursts, or if you burst it, it breaks suddenly because there is too much pressure inside it or against it (Macmillan Dictionary). In this case the asylum seeker reception centre and Britain are containers and the pressure inside (asylum seekers/migrants) are about to make the containers burst.

IMMIGRANTS ARE A LIQUID

The terms *afflusso/influx* and *flusso/flow* have the same conceptual basis. As happens with *pressure*, these terms conceptualize immigrants as a fluid that can perforate the boundary of the container that represents the nation at a conceptual level. By using *afflusso continuo*, the portrayal of water incessantly flowing/entering emphasizes the conceptualization of the emergency and the risks.

(13) *Lampedusa sta **scoppiando** con **l'afflusso** <u>continuo</u> di nuovi arrivi dalla sponda nord Africana.* [Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno 23.03.2011]

Lampedusa is **bursting** due to the **<u>continuous</u> influx** of new arrivals from the coast of Northern Africa.

(14) *Lo rende noto il ministero degli Esteri in reazione all'ipotesi dell'Italia di dispiegare forze di polizia per **contenere il flusso di immigrazione**.* [Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno 14.02.2011]

The Minister of Foreign Affairs makes it known in reaction to the hypothesis of Italy to deploy police forces to **contain the flow of immigration**.

(15) *Il piano Maghreb si può sintetizzare in tre punti: aiutiamoli a casa loro, **svuotiamo la vasca** e **chiudiamo un rubinetto** che, purtroppo, <u>ancora</u> **sgocciola**.* [Repubblica 10.04.2011]

The Maghreb plan can be summarized in three points: helping them at home, **emptying the bathtub** and **turning off the tap**, which unfortunately **is** <u>still</u> **dripping**.

Roberto Maroni, the pro-Lega Minister of the Interior, advocate of bilateral agreements with the governments of countries such as Tunisia, as well as with Libya's National Transitional Council, upon the finalization of the accord with Tunisia, explained that the measures would prevent clandestine immigration and thus allow Italy to 'turn off the tap' of irregular migrants from North Africa (Paoletti, 2014).

The existence of a clearly defined container implies a conscious controlling entity that fills or empties the container—just as a government controls the flow of people into and out of the country. The solutions proposed match the metaphors used to define the problem (Charteris-Black, 2006).

(16) *In a speech urging the country to brace for a <u>difficult and long road back to prosperity</u>, the Prime Minister will argue that the <u>uncontrolled</u> **influx of migrant workers** under Labour severely damaged the economy as well as putting intense strain on social cohesion and public services.* [Daily Express 28.01.2011]

4.1.3 IMMIGRATION IS AN INVASION

This conceptual metaphor represents migration as an invasion of the nation and migrants as dangerous invaders.
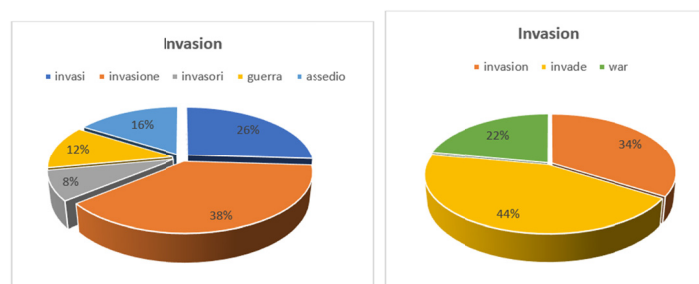
Figure 7. INVASION metaphor keywords

(17) *Control **immigrant invasion** to help young unemployed* [Daily Express 05.11.2011]

IMMIGRANTS ARE AN INVADING ARMY

Immigrants are conceptualized as violent invaders arriving in great numbers, advancing towards the borders of the host countries ready to conquer them, against whose attacks one must protect oneself.

(18) *O l'Europa si pone seriamente il problema di aiutare l'Italia o tra poco saranno **invasi da immigrati**, non solo l'Italia ma anche i Paesi limitrofi*. [Corriere 28.03.2011]

Either Europe seriously considers helping Italy or soon it will be **invaded by immigrants**, not only Italy but also the neighbouring countries.

(19) *Dire che l'isola è stata **invasa dai tunisini** senza una **dichiarazione di guerra** non è tanto errato*. [Eco di Bergamo 27.03.2011]

Saying that the island has been **invaded by Tunisians** without a **declaration of war** is not completely wrong.

(20) *"Noi siciliani", sottolinea Miccichè, "siamo gente buona, solidale, generosa, solare, ma non siamo fessi. I lampedusani sono disperati, si sentono **sotto assedio**, **minacciati da un'orda invadente**, affamata, pericolosa. Non sono clandestini", prosegue, "non sono profughi, ma un **esercito** pronto a tutto, che **ha occupato** Lampedusa. L'Italia **ci liberi dall'invasore"**.* [Corriere 28.03.2011]

"We Sicilians", emphasizes Miccichè, "are good people, supportive, generous, sunny, but we are not stupid. The people of Lampedusa are desperate, they feel **under siege**, **threatened by an intrusive**, starving, dangerous **horde**. They are not illegal immigrants", he continues, "they are not refugees, but an **army** that is capable of anything, that **has occupied** Lampedusa. Italy, **free us from the invader**".

As highlighted in Tóth et al. (2018, p. 187), "the emotional effects and inferential potential of the metaphor […] centres the attention of the public on (i) migrants as a large hostile army, (ii) arriving with the intent of aggression and invasion, who (iii) threaten our very existence, and against whom (iv) the last lines of defence are our borders (v) which must be protected by any means".

4.1.4 IMMIGRANTS ARE ANIMALS

In the corpus, the conceptual metaphor IMMIGRANTS ARE ANIMALS – which also dehumanizes migrants - is the least frequent, however, several metaphorical lexical units are employed. There is no explicit reference to a particular animal that would therefore lead to attribute its use to the source domain, however, the choice of *caccia/hunting* implies that the groups of migrants are perceived as animals who can be lured or baited, attacked, hunted and eaten.
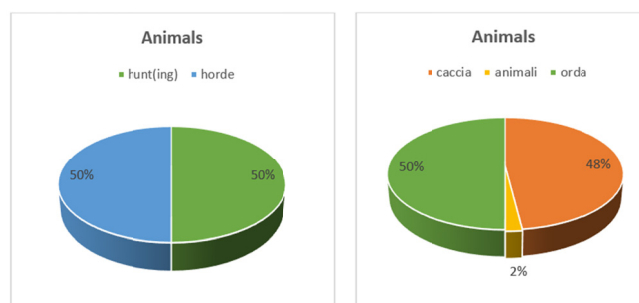
Figure 8. ANIMAL metaphor keywords

(21) *L'altra notte, alcuni giovani a bordo di un furgoncino si sono messi **in caccia di tunisini** <u>fuggiti</u> dal centro d'accoglienza per riportarli indietro.* [Gazzetta del Mezzogiorno 31.03.2011]

The other night, some young people on board a van **went hunting for Tunisians** <u>who fled</u> from the reception centre in order to bring them back.

(22) *"Sempre così, **ci trattano da animali**".* [Corriere 11.03.2011]

It's always this way, **they treat us like animals**.

(23) *A man is led away to a coach by a UK Border Agency officer after a **hunt for illegal migrant workers**.* [Daily Express 23.06.2011]

(24) *Theresa May has warned that entry controls will be toughened in a bid to stop **hordes of immigrants**.* [The Guardian 06.11.2011]

The metaphorical keyword *orde/hordes* is used both in Italian and English in the place of a specific animal.

horde (noun)

a. Contextual meaning: Chiefly depreciative. A large group of people, especially one which is disorganized, disorderly, or threatening; a rabble, a crowd, a throng. Also more loosely (chiefly in plural): a large number of people (of a specified type). [OED sense 2a]

b. Basic meaning: A large (moving) group of animals, typically one considered as dangerous or destructive. [OED sense 2b]

The ANIMAL metaphor cooccurs with the NATURAL DISASTER metaphor seeing as how their uncontrolled movement and unpredictability are implied, which explains the necessity to 'trap' them (Arcimaviciene & Baglama, 2018). It is no wonder that an ANIMAL metaphorical term such as *horde* is used together with a NATURAL DISASTER metaphor keyword like *flood*:

(25) *We'll end the **migrant flood** vows Theresa May—Theresa May has warned that entry controls will be toughened in a bid to **stop hordes of immigrants**, who have been gathering at French ports, from smuggling themselves into the UK.* [Daily Express 06.06.2011]

Despite its negative connotation, the use of this metaphor offers a slightly different evaluation of migrants because it gives an idea that migrants, albeit dangerous, can be dealt with and taken care of. This metaphor further distances migrants by placing them on a lower level of existence in the hierarchical structure of the Great Chain of Being (Lakoff & Turner, 1989) and creates an emotional distance, and further detachment, between 'us' and 'them'. The NATURAL DISASTER and ANIMAL metaphors create stereotypical images of irrational and instinctive living entities that "can naturally cause chaos and danger to the security of rational and organized human beings/'us'" (Arcimaviciene & Baglama, 2018, p. 10).

5. Conclusions

This paper has focused its attention on the metaphorical expressions used during a particular time of economic crisis in Europe. The massive arrival of (illegal) immigrants led to discourses concerning expulsion and repatriation. Immigrants were represented as a threat and danger and much attention was placed on the need to legislate and control immigration to prevent further problems, especially regarding the economy:

[…] public services have been put under intolerable pressure as England has become the most overcrowded place in Europe. For the working-class, immigration has meant lower wages and mass

unemployment since 80 per cent of new jobs go to migrants. [Daily Express 05.06.2011]

La nostra gente è in allarme. Già la nostra economia è in ginocchio. Ulteriori stanziamenti economici per l'immigrazione [...] Una «lista della spesa» che non finisce mai. [07.08.2011]

Our people are alarmed. Our economy is already on its knees. Further public spending on immigration […] a never ending «shopping list».

Santa Ana suggests that while certain orientational metaphors are fixed and "impervious to change" and others are highly conventionalized to the extent that they may only reveal change over an extensive period of time, political and social metaphors "are negotiable". He states that "in contrast to highly conventionalized domains such as love, political domains are openly debated and discussed, hence the underlying structure of these domains can change" (1999, p. 218). Further research therefore, could include investigation on how metaphorical representations in the press of extra-European migrant groups differ from intra-European migrants, how the representations of these migrant groups differ between Italy and the UK, and how the representations of these migrant groups differ between routine and other crisis periods.

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