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Theresa Catalano

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, tcatalano2@unl.edu

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ROMANIES VERSUS THE MAFIA: “US” AND “THEM” IN ITALIAN CRIME REPORTS

Theresa Catalano
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE

Abstract: Denaturalization is the act of making something appear less natural or less human which functions to “subordinate other living creatures to human beings” and “to justify denigration of certain groups of people” (Santa Ana 1999). In this study, the denaturalization of Romanies in Italy as represented in newspaper crime reports was identified and compared to the opposing naturalization of Italian crime organizations. This was accomplished through careful, multidisciplinary, scientific analysis of over 20 articles taken from Italian newspapers of assorted political tendencies from the years 2005-2010. A corpus analysis was conducted and lexical choices were categorized as denaturalization, naturalization or derogation. Examples from texts were then examined in depth to reveal linguistic (such as metaphor) strategies involved in negative or positive representation of these groups. A Critical Discourse Analysis Approach combined with Cognitive Linguistics was employed to reveal an underlying racist and xenophobic ideology that categorizes Romanies as “Them” in Italian media. At the same time, Italian crime organizations such as ‘Ndrangheta, Camorra, and Cosa Nostra are portrayed as “Us” and seen in a positive light. Both processes combine to serve the dominant group's purpose of staying in power.

Keywords: Romanies, Mafia, Critical Discourse Analysis, Cognitive Linguistics, denaturalization, naturalization

Introduction

Italy is just one of many countries where discriminatory practices against Romanies occur on a daily basis (e.g. France, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, to name a few). Although much has been done in the last twenty years by human rights organizations to help Romanies, the situation does not appear to be improving significantly. Many Romanies have lived for decades in Italy and are Italian citizens, yet they are still treated as “foreigners”. After the fall of communism in the late 1980s new groups of Romanies have arrived in Italy and continue to arrive as new countries have been added to the

European Community (e.g. Romania in 2007). Although many Romanies who recently came to Italy to flee from war and persecution have no identification papers, (Schiavone, 1997) the majority of Romanies in Italy are Italian citizens¹.

Unfortunately, Italy has become a prime example of how racism toward Romanies has become institutionalized, and the Italian government (until recently headed by Silvio Berlusconi) has created an atmosphere in which systematic human rights violations of Romanies have become acceptable (Errante, 2009; see also www.everyonegroup.com). Some of these violations include physical violence, forced evictions, the fingerprinting of children and abusive raids. Stating that the presence of Romanies in Italy is a state of emergency, government officials began a campaign to document and fingerprint all inhabitants of Romani camps (EU Roma Policy Coalition, 2008), in violation of data protection provisions. As a consequence, the failure of the Italian government to condemn actions of racist aggression against Romanies has been condemned by numerous international human rights organizations. Human rights activists themselves have recently been targeted by the Italian government resulting in criminal charges of libel, slander and defamation due solely to their role in combating human rights violations against Romanies (Weber, 2010).

For the past thirty years, Italy's former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and his family have controlled roughly 90% of Italian media while Berlusconi and his government have "repeatedly attempted to muzzle critical Italian media and avoid scrutiny" (Pavli, 2010). Furthermore, through their power and control over the media and the public at large, the Italian government has manipulated the Italian people's attitude toward Romanies in Italy while at the same time presenting Italian citizens such as members of Italian crime organizations in a positive light. One way that the public's attitude can be influenced is through the use of media discourse, of which crime reports are a frequent topic when Romanies are the subjects (Catalano, 2011). In this study, the denaturalization of Romanies in Italy as represented in newspaper crime reports is identified and compared to the opposing naturalization of Italian crime organizations. This is accomplished through careful, multidisciplinary, scientific analysis of over 20 articles taken from Italian newspapers of assorted political tendencies from the years 2005-2010. This study combining

¹According to GruppoEveryone Human Rights Organization (based in Italy) there are currently not more than 55,000 Romanies in Italy, 40,000 of which are Italian citizens ("La condizione dei Rom", 2009).

quantitative and qualitative methods begins with a review of relevant literature and the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis combined with Cognitive Linguistics and grounded in Social Identity Theory. Next, a corpus analysis of Romani crime reports is conducted to search for overall patterns and tendencies. The categorizing of lexical choices as denaturalization, naturalization or derogation then follows this, and examples from texts are examined in depth to reveal linguistic strategies (such as the use of metaphor) involved in favorable or unfavorable representation of these groups. Next, the same procedure is repeated for crime reports concerning Italian crime organizations such as Cosa Nostra, La Camorra and La 'Ndrangheta. Finally, the two groups and the strategies used to present them are compared and interpreted and implications are discussed.

Theoretical background

In order to comprehend and interpret the data in the succeeding sections, it is necessary to review the theory behind it. Tajfel and Turner's Social identity theory (1985) is rooted in social psychology and gives us a foundation with which we can begin to understand the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination as it is reproduced by the mass media. This theory posits that we put others and ourselves into categories and groups. We compare other groups to our groups and develop a favorable bias toward the group to which we belong, ultimately desiring our group to be distinct from and positively compared to other groups. This theory is decidedly significant for the purposes of this paper, because it helps us to understand why Romanies are presented unfavorably in the Italian media, and Italian crime organizations are not.

In addition to Social Identity Theory, Cognitive Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are two important theoretical foundations/perspectives incorporated in the analysis for this paper. The goal of CDA is to reveal the role of discourse in the (re) production and challenge of dominance that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality (van Dijk, 1993b, p. 250). Moreover, CDA is especially useful in demonstrating how ideology is encoded in text (Hart, 2010, p. 23). Cognitive Linguistics on the other hand, is "a powerful approach to the study of language, conceptual systems, human cognition and general meaning construction" (Fauconnier, 2002). Cognitive Linguistics for the purposes of this paper, aids in Critical Metaphor Analysis. According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors are considered to be "conceptual instruments that embody otherwise remote concepts in ways that the public can readily understand" (Santa Ana, 1999, p. 195) and "...are pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action..." (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 1). Metaphor is central to both CDA and Cognitive Linguistics because they are both interested in forming a coherent view of reality (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 28). Cognitive Linguistics also helps in "recognizing linguistic strategies and illustrating how they are manifested in particular constructions and successfully

effected in the way that those constructions are cognized” (Hart, 2010, p. 7). Some of these representational strategies include referential strategies (concerned with how social actors are represented in discourse) and predication strategies (strategies that assign qualities to persons, objects and events) (Hart, 2010). Recent literature points to a trend to combine CDA and Cognitive Linguistics (see Hart, 2011; Hart & Luckeš 2007) to provide a multi-level more in-depth analysis and the two approaches/perspectives compliment each other nicely.

In addition to looking at theories that aid in interpretation of the data, it is also necessary to examine relevant studies. Several leading scholars have conducted work on the history of Romanies in Italy, and Eastern Europe, their susceptibility to discrimination, current policies and social and economic conditions (Conte, Marcu & Rampini, 2009; Errante, 2009; Dell’Agnese & Vitale, 2007, 2005; Miskovic, 2009; Piasere, 2004; Sigona, 2009, 2006, 2005, 2003, 2002; Sniderman, 2000; Tileaga, 2005; Vitale, 2008, 2004). Well known for his research on Romanies in Italy, Nando Sigona’s work is extremely relevant to this paper because of the attention he gives to linguistic factors in public discourse and their relation to social and economic factors (2003, 2005). In particular, his work on labeling focuses on the relationship between labeling and policy and on the role they both play in the building of bureaucratic identities for the political system to manage and categorize this group as “Other” (2003). In addition, Costi’s work on the criminalization of the Roma in Italy is also highly relevant (2010). Costi helps to shed light on the way in which right-wing populism has struck a chord with the Italian people and caters to the fears of the “*Other*” to gain support for its anti-immigrant and anti-Roma reforms. Additionally, the author identifies how political discourse and government policy in Italy have not only sought to represent the electorate’s needs, but have also helped to (re) construct them, consequently reproducing social hostility and further segregating the Roma community from Italian society (Costi, 2010, p. 105). As shown above, there exists much literature on the denaturalization of Romanies and their political/social/economic history in Italy but there appear to be no studies that tie in the Mafia’s role in reproducing the negative representations. Therefore, this paper will add to this body of literature by hailing from a different (Cognitive Linguistics combined with CDA) perspective together with the contrasting of Mafia representations in the media in order to further demonstrate the central claim of this paper which is that media crime reports of Romanies are biased, and lead to negative social cognitions of this group.

Method

The twenty-two articles selected for analysis in this paper come mainly from highly respected national newspapers in Italy with a wide range of political tendencies including *La Repubblica* (left), *Il Corriere della Sera* (center left), and *Il Tempo* (right), with a few of the articles from local versions of *Il Corriere*

della Sera such as *Il Corriere Fiorentino* and *Il Corriere Veneto*. The articles (ranging from years 2005-2010) were found in a two-stage process. In the first stage, a search was conducted for types of crimes that were commonly reported (as per a www.google.it search of common crimes). Common crimes found in the search included *scippo* [bag-snatching], *furto* [theft], *rapina* [robbery], *stupra* [rape]. After the types of crimes occurring were identified, a second www.google.it search was conducted pairing the term *rom* [Romani] with the words used to denote commonly committed crimes as determined by the previous search (e.g. – *Rom, furto* [Romani/theft]). After multiple searches it was determined that the word *nomadi* was used interchangeably with *rom* to identify Romanies in Italy. This term was then searched together with the types of crimes listed above and terms such as *arrestato* [arrested] and *accusato* [accused] as well as *rom* and *arrestato/accusato*. For Mafia crimes, the search terms *Mafia, Cosa Nostra, Camorra*, and *'Ndrangheta*² were used together with crimes typically associated with the mafia such as *omicidio* [homicide] and *estorsione* [extortion]. All articles were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Articles must be a “first-time crime report”, that is, the first report of a crime after the offender has been identified or arrested and not for example, an article discussing the crime after it has been initially reported.
2. Articles must adhere to a length of 1-3 pages (approx. 200-800 words in order to keep files at parallel lengths)
3. Articles must fall within the time frame of 2005-2010.³

It is important to note that with the exception of Text 10 in the Romani texts, articles chosen for analysis report crimes for which suspects have been arrested, accused or charged, but not convicted. These articles were found in the cronaca, [news] or local sections (for example, Firenze) of the papers. Types of crimes reported in articles featuring Romanies included petty theft (the majority), physical assault, and homicide, while Mafia crimes included homicide, drugs and arms trafficking, extortion, fraud and usury.⁴

For the analysis, articles were first converted into plain text format and then run through a corpus analysis (using AntConc 3.2.2 concordance program software) for each group separately (Romanies and Mafia). The corpus analysis revealed a type/token count for each group, counting and ranking all words in each text according to frequency. Next, lexical choices were divided into the following three categories derogation, denaturalization (animalization) and naturalization (see **Introduction**) and placed in **Tables B.1-B.6** found in **Appendix B**. The corpus analyses count function words (*in, at, the, a*) as well

² The term “Mafia” is an umbrella term referring to all Italian crime organizations, while Cosa Nostra, La Camorra and La 'Ndrangheta are currently the most powerful sub-groups.

³ Articles were selected within this time frame in order to limit the number of texts due to the scope of the paper, and to keep texts files in parallel time frames.

⁴ These represent the crimes found in articles that fit the selection criteria.

as content words (*nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs*) but categorizations of lexical items and discussions of corpus analyses focus on content words since function words do not have the same type of semantic content that *nouns/adjectives/verbs/adverbs* do, and are not relevant in the same way. E.g. function words such as *the, in, and on*, do not offer many alternatives because of grammatical constraints and thus are not as noteworthy as in the case of the choice between trustworthy and piece of trash to label the person accused of the crime. Following the categorization of lexical choices, examples from a representative sample of texts were examined in detail to bring to light the various strategies used in the portrayal of Romanies and Mafia groups in Italian online newspapers. These strategies include those found frequently in the data and consist of referential and predication strategies, transitivity, erasure, metaphor and others, and serve to present the groups negatively or positively.

Results: Romanies in Crime Reports

Corpus analysis of crimes attributed to Romanies brings to light some interesting terms occurring frequently in the articles, but because of the limited scope of this paper, only the most relevant term will be discussed: the term *nomadi* [nomads], which in the corpus analysis ranked 25th out of 1650 word types with 24 tokens. Despite the fact that much research has been conducted in the past (Bravi, L. & Sigona, N. (2005); Sigona, 2002, 2005; Errante, 2009; Vitale, 2004) that demonstrates the dehumanizing nature of this term, this analysis reveals that Italian newspapers, regardless of political tendency, still adopt the word *nomadi* frequently and slightly more so than the preferred term of this group in Italy which is *rom* (ranked 31st with 21 tokens).⁵ *Nomadi* besides being inaccurate (many have been in the same camps for over 20 years) covertly creates a model of this group as different, lacking social boundaries and definitely not like *us*. The use of labels such as *nomadi* can be viewed in official Italian government documents as an expression of Foucault's **régime of truth** (Foucault, 1998). According to Foucault, 'the truth' is "linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produces and sustains it and to effects of power which induce and which extend it" (as cited in Sigona, 2005, p. 746). Therefore, the Italian government's (and consequently, the media's) use of the heteronym *nomadi* has the purpose of defining this group as a 'nomadic culture' and thus justifying their placement in camps, isolated from mainstream society. In addition, use of this term reinforces the idea that Romanies are not Italians and do not 'belong' to Italy (Sigona, 2005, p. 746). The term has become so commonly used that Italians equate *nomadi* to *rom*. This leads to the semiotic

⁵ It is worth noting that in Italy, Romanies cannot be referred to as "Romani" because in Italian this means "people from Rome" or can also connote fans of the "Roma" soccer team. Therefore, "Rom" has become the preferred term and although activists and in-group members often use the capital "R", to distinguish the "rr" sound in Romanés, and to differentiate from the derogative use of "rom", like most adjectives referring to nationalities or ethnicities, it was found not to be capitalized in media discourse.

processes of *erasure* (rendering actions or events invisible through ideology) in which sentences such as the following become the norm:

Sospettati dell'omicidio sono tre giovani nomadi stanziali, cittadini italiani: due sono stati fermati [Suspected of the homicide are three young sedentary nomads, Italian citizens: two were stopped]. (Rissa al bar...2009)

This example illustrates how the term *nomadi* has become so naturalized that the true meaning of the word has been effectively erased so that the oxymoron “sedentary nomad” is no longer oxymoronic to the journalist or editor (and most likely, the readers) of this article. Thus *nomadi* has become a term of reference and its meaning of “not having a permanent home” is no longer active.

The corpus analysis also revealed interesting patterns of transitivity, and the processes of passivization/activization were found to occur systematically in the data. Transitivity (first put forward by Hopper & Thompson, 1980) is “the system that is concerned with how entities and actions in a situation are coded in the language.” (Ryder, 2006, p. 40). Thus, whether a participant in a text chooses a more or less transitive representation of an event, can serve various stylistic functions such as marking point of view, distinguishing text genres and subgenres from each other, and representing characters as powerful and responsible or the reverse (p. 40). Because of this last function, transitivity analysis is especially useful in critical discourse analyses such as this paper. The following is an analysis calculated using corpus analysis results.

Total actions by Romanies 37	Active 29 = 78%	Passive 8 = 22%
Total actions towards Romanies by non - Romanies 37	17 = 46%	20 = 54%

Table 1 | Activization/ passivization⁶

Table 1 demonstrates the systematic activization of (mostly) negative actions carried out by Romanies (e.g. *hanno rapinato* [they robbed], *hanno aggredito* [they attacked], *hanno spintonato* [they pushed], *glihanno sferrato al volto* [they grabbed his face] and contrasting majority passivization of police or other non-Romani actions towards Romanies (e.g. *sono stati condannati* [they were sentenced], *sono stati arrestati* [they were arrested], *sono stati fermati* [they were stopped]). These choices give participants different degrees of power

⁶ Action verbs were identified through the corpus analysis and then manually counted as passive or active by the author.

depending on how event-like the process is in which they are involved (Hopper and Thompson, 1980). Thus in the example *hanno rapinato [they robbed]*, the Agents (Romanies) are represented as extremely powerful, especially in relation to the Goal (the clerk) (Ryder, 2006, p. 44). This functions to foreground “their” negative actions (Khosravini, 2010, p. 7). At the same time when the Agent is part of the in-group (in this case, Italian law enforcement), the passive sentence (*sono stati arrestati [they were arrested]*) gives the Goal (the Romani offenders) extremely low power. Thus by choosing a different type of process (passive vs. active), the author ‘downgrades’ the process and creates a more complex stylistic effect that legitimizes law enforcements’ actions. This is in turn a type of metaphorical encoding that recodes Goals (the accused Romanies in this case) as less affected participants and decreases the perceived power of the natural Agent (Ryder, 2006, p. 45). In addition, the omission of the Agent in negative actions towards Romanies appears to be a pattern and occurs in 72% of passive sentences in texts with law enforcement as the Agent. In essence, the negative actions of Romanies are accentuated while the negative actions of law enforcement officers are downplayed.

After looking at the corpus analysis, lexical items were categorized as denaturalization, naturalization, and derogation, and are found in **Tables B.1-B.3** of **APPENDIX B**. The charts display few examples of naturalization (2%) and many of denaturalization/animalization (66%) and derogation (32%)⁷. One could argue that this is natural since they are being accused of crimes, however, when looking at the reporting of Mafia crimes (see **Results: Mafia crime reports**), a different story unfolds.

In addition to the categorization of lexical items, different linguistic strategies were identified that were used to present Romanies in a negative light. These strategies are listed below together with examples from the texts (strategies adopted from van Dijk 1991 and Hart 2011).

A) *REFERENTIAL STRATEGIES* (how social actors are represented in the discourse)

Text 4:

¹⁾ *I carabinieri di Reggio Emilia l’hanno battezzata la <<Banda dei denti di latte>>, perché composta da cinque bambini. Piccoli nomadi rumeni che però nonostante l’età, erano ladruncoli specializzati in furti in appartamento, presi con le mani nel sacco mentre tentavano di entrare in un’abitazione nel centro di Reggio Emilia.* [The Reggio Emilia police baptized them “The baby-teeth gang” because they were made up of five kids. **Little Romanian nomads** that in spite of their age were petty thieves/ pickpockets specialized in apartment theft, caught

⁷ Percentages were rounded to the nearest ten. Words that did not refer to Romanies or did not fall into any of the three categories are not listed.

red-handed while they tried to enter a house in the center of Reggio Emilia].⁸

The example above illustrates the referential strategies of nationalization (with the nationym Romanian) and dissimilation (nomadi), whereas the example below demonstrates collectivization and the use of deixis (words such as pronouns used for purposes of positioning) to emphasize the “Other” and put forward a topos⁹ of burden.

Text 6:

2) << *E mi spiace che adesso che sono in carcere siamo **noi** cittadini a mantenerli*>>. [“And I’m sorry that now that they’re in prison it’s **us** citizens that have to support **them**”.]

B) *PREDICATION STRATEGIES*: (Assigning qualities linguistically to persons, objects, events, actions, and social phenomena)

Text 8:

1) *Nomadi slavi, **topi di appartamenti specializzati**, ladri acrobati **organizzati e meticolosi***. [Slavic nomads, **specialized apartmentrats**, **acrobatic** thieves **organized** and **meticulous**]

⁸ All translations were carried out by the author.

⁹ A topos is a standard argumentation scheme that represents the common-sense reasoning typical for specific issues (Hart, 2010, p. 66).

The description of the accused as *specialized, acrobatic, organized* and *meticulous* serves the purpose of emphasizing the offenders' skill in committing crimes, which ultimately adds to negative stereotypes (not to mention the entertainment value of the article) and is not a positive image of the offenders. Moreover, the term [*apartment rats*](a term commonly used to refer to thieves in apartment buildings) transfers all the negative qualities of these rodents to Romanies.

Text 6:

4) <<*Quello che ricordo di più è che aveva le mani sporche di sangue, la bava alla bocca, sembrava drogato*>>. [“What I remember most is that he had hands dirtied with **blood, foam at the mouth**, and seemed drugged”.]

In example 4), we see again the animalization of Romanies as they are attributed with qualities normally associated with animals such as [*foam at the mouth*], and being [*dirty with blood*].

C) *BIASED NEWS GATHERING* – e.g. – No quotes from Romani people or witnesses were found in any of the articles (Texts 1-11). Crimes are described in detail from the perspective of the victims and law enforcement authorities only. Additionally, it is clear from the articles that the Romanies have not been convicted of the crimes at the time the article was written, but the journalists ignore this aspect of the law and precede to describe the crime and the offenders as if they have been convicted. This ignores the offender's right to due process and convicts them in the eyes of the public.

D) *SELECTED QUOTING OF ELITES* – e.g. (Text 6 below, but also found in Texts 1,3, 8,9,11)

5) <<*Credo sia giunta l'ora di fare pulizia sul nostro territorio e cacciare chi non ha il diritto di restare*>>... [“I believe it's time to **clean up our** territory and **throw outthose who** don't belong”...] (Said by Northern League leader Arturo Calligaro to local authorities].

In Example 5) the use of *our* and *those who* are in clear contrast to each other and point to Petersoo's (2007) idea of the all-inclusive (in this case) Italian **we** that creates a sense of *we-ness* between the speaker and the readers of the article. Riggins (1997, p. 8) proposes that pronouns such as “our” and “we” are “most revealing of the boundaries separating Self and Other” —an important aspect of national identity formation and maintenance (as cited in Petersoo, 2007 b, p. 420). This **we** cannot be taken for granted for its contribution to a sense of national Italian identity, nor can the ability of the reader be under-estimated in unconsciously picking up the ‘national’ references hidden behind these small words (Petersoo, 2007, p. 432). The quoting of elite members of Italian society (such as Arturo Calligaro) serves to legitimize the topoi of burden and crime.

E) *STEREOTYPING* - (below, headlines of Text 11 but also found in Texts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9)

6) *Il bimbo giocava sul balcone tre rom hanno tentato di rapirlo.*

[The baby was playing on his balcony three Rom tried to kidnap him]

Example 6) reinforces the age-old myth that Romanies will steal your babies, and hails from an article that repeatedly admits the lack of evidence against the accused, yet continues to falsely alarm the public to the supposed threat that Romanies bring to their children.

F) *OVER-COMPLETION*¹⁰

This final example (below) displays over-completion by highlighting the lack of documents (although it is generally not the norm for children to carry I.D) and using the passive to portray the actions of the police towards the Romani children.

Text 4:

7) *I ladruncoli, che erano senza documenti validi, sono stati accompagnati in caserma e identificati.* [The pickpockets, **without valid documents**, were accompanied to the station and identified].

All of the above examples contain lexical choices that create metaphors to characterize Romanies in a negative light. The following chart categorizes and tabulates the metaphors found in the above-mentioned articles.

* Percentages were rounded off to the nearest ten.

Referring to the above chart, the dominant metaphor is ROMANIES ARE ANIMALS (similar to Santa Ana, 1999) given the fact that it is higher in number and percentage of uses. By using certain lexical choices in particular contexts the examples previously listed provide the structure of the source domain (animal) and map it onto the domain of Romanies. This creates a correlation of Romanies correspond to Italians as animals correspond to humans (model taken from Lakoff, 1980). In this way, the public can now apply their framework of thinking about animals to the Romani people. This has now become an important way the Italian public has come to conceptualize Romanies.

Metonyms linked to metaphors such as ITALY AS A HOUSE (Roma are the *dirt* we need to clean up) are also incorporated and typically use the name of one thing for that of another with which it is closely associated, e.g. ‘*We are reading Shakespeare*’ or ‘*The Pentagon announced today*’. A total of 98% of all metaphors/metonymies found portrayed Romanies in a negative light while only 2% were positive. Both metaphors and metonyms “serve as a cognitive means by which we understand aspects of our world”, (Santa Ana, 1999, p. 199) and are enlisted to disparage Romanies. Rhetorical devices such as these have historically played a major role in the reproduction of racism. In Santa Ana’s (1999) famous study on media coverage of migrant workers, he documented how the media captured a public perception that dehumanized them. In Santa

¹⁰ Over-completion is a mode of description referred to as ‘the level of abstraction’ or the ‘relative degree of completeness’ which gives the reader an ‘irrelevant’ detail, that is relevant within a more general negative portrayal of a person or group (van Dijk, 1977, as cited in 1991, p. 185).

Ana's study, news writers were not viewed as overtly racist, but their continued use of the metaphor contributed to demeaning and dehumanizing the migrant workers. The newspapers have simply reflected the basic values of the dominant political group that subjugated migrants to other citizens (Santa Ana, 1999, 217). In the same way, the lexical choices listed above and the metaphors/metonymies they create show how biased newsgathering and lexical choices perform the functions of denaturalization and animalization and serve to justify unjust treatment toward Romanies.

TYPE	SOURCE DOMAIN	SUMS	%
METAPHOR			
<i>Negative</i>			
Dominant	ANIMALS, <i>e.g. foaming at the mouth, tracks, hunt</i>	33	31%
Secondary	UNSETTLED/TEMPORARY, <i>E.g. nomads, begging</i>	28	26%
	DEBASED PERSON, <i>e.g. gang, addict</i>	28	26%
Occasional	HUNTERS, <i>e.g. targeting; lure, bait</i>	1	1%
	TRASH, <i>e.g. dumped</i>	1	1%
	NATURAL DISASTER <i>e.g. cloud</i>	1	1%
<i>Positive</i>	VICTIMS <i>e.g. suffers = 2</i>	2	2%
METONYMY			
<i>Negative</i>	Romani "gangs" as animal skeletons, <i>e.g. disarticulated</i>	2	2%
	Italy as a house, <i>e.g. fare pulizia del territorio/ clean/rid our land of ...</i>	1	1 %
	Italy as a family, Romanies	12	11%

	unfit parents, hurt grandpa		
<i>Positive</i>	----		
TOTAL METAPHORS/METONYMS		107	100%

Table 2 | Metaphors about Romanies in Italy (modeled from Santa Ana, 1999)

Results: Mafia in crime reports

The corpus analysis from Mafia crime reports reveals some patterns different from those of Romani crime reports. The most marked difference is the overwhelming occurrence of kinship terminology. The total kinship terminology tokens equaled 62, and when grouped together they are the 5th and 6th most frequent out of 1669 word tokens. Only the following function words: *di* [of], *e*, [and] *a*, [to] *il* [the] and *in* are ranked higher in frequency than kinship terminology. Kinship terms included *clan/cosca/cosche* [*clan/s*], with 26 tokens, *figlio/i* [*son/s*], with 9 tokens, *famiglia* [*family*], with 8 tokens, *madre/i* [*mother*], and 5 tokens. Other kinship terms with tokens included *padre* [*father*], *fratello* [*brother*], *sorelle* [*sisters*], *nonnina* [*little grandmother*], *cognato* [*brother-in-law*], *genitori* [*parents*], *moglie* [*wife*] and *parentela* [*relatives/family*]. It is clear that because of the structure of some of the Mafia organizations, kinship terminology is employed to refer to and distinguish between groups. However, it is also clear by the saturation of the articles with this terminology that these relationships are being highlighted.

After the corpus analysis was conducted the lexical items found were placed into the categories of **naturalization**, **denaturalization**, and **derogation** (see **Tables B.4-B.6** in **Appendix B**). Results indicate a striking difference between results from Romani crime reports. Whereas in Romani crime reports the majority of lexical items fell under the categories of denaturalization and derogation (98%), only 26% of lexical items from Mafia crime reports fell under those categories while 74% were categorized as naturalization. This is a staggering difference when one considers the types of crimes being reported in Romani crime reports are no more dangerous or deadly than those in Mafia reports which include homicide, drugs and arms trafficking, extortion and usury.

In order to gain an understanding of the linguistic strategies employed in the naturalization of Italian crime organizations in media reports, it is necessary to examine in detail a representative sample of the texts. Here below are the strategies listed together with examples from texts reporting Mafia crimes.

A) REFERENTIAL STRATEGIES:

Text 6:

- 1) *La <<nonnina della 'ndrine>> è stata arrestata a Ceriale...* [The “**little grandmother**” was arrested in Ceriale...].

Text 4:

2) *Un mese dopo ammazzano il “paciere” Franco Spiritoso, in un bar affollatissimo.* [A month after they kill the “peacemaker” Franco Spiritoso, in a crowded bar.]

The use of the nicknames “little grandmother” and “the peacemaker” is another way (in addition to the use of kinship terminology) of giving the Mafia a voice in how they are portrayed, in contrast to Romani crime reports. Not only is the offender referred to as “the grandmother” but with the diminutive *-ina* suffix, she is made endearing. The use of nicknames and highlighting of family members is a key strategy in the naturalizing of Mafia crimes. According to Diego Gambetta, author of *Codes of the Underworld*, nicknames are more widespread among criminals than among ordinary citizens and “nicknames rarely if ever serve a singular function, but instead simultaneously play a variety of roles within the social environment in which they occur – none of which... are particularly strong, unambiguous, or always intended” (2009, p 238). In crime organizations such as Cosa Nostra and the Camorra, nicknames are given to nearly every boss and represent an “unequivocally unique, identifying feature. A nickname for a boss is like stigmata for a saint, the mark of membership in the System¹¹” (Saviano, 2008, p. 56). Nicknames can be used to both favor and hamper identification of criminals, but in the case of the articles analyzed, the nicknames are used together with the legal names so neither of those purposes could be fulfilled in these articles. Why then, do the media, who also know the offenders by their legal names, insist on including these nicknames in the articles? Perhaps this is part of a strategy of intimacy indicating the journalists are part of the inner circle and indexing a familiar relationship, which allows the offenders to be viewed as individuals vs. aggregates.

The next text example indexes the power of the organizations and uses terms such as [*rooted*] and [*roots*] to show us that we know where they come from. They are not strangers and they are **tied to the land** and the geographic location. Hence, they provide another example of naturalization.

Text 7:

3) *Una famiglia originaria di Casignana, al confine con Bovalino, che si era poi **radicata** a Gioiosa dove aveva costituito, con i Mazzaferro, **una delle cosche più potenti della ‘Ndrangheta ionica.** [A family originally from Casignana, on the border with Bovalino, that was **rooted** in Gioiosa where they had built, with the Mazzaferro, **one of the most powerful clans** of the ‘Ndrangheta of the Ionic Sea.]*

B) PREDICATION STRATEGIES:

In the examples below we see the predication strategy of assigning linguistic qualities to events, actions, or people. In this case, a narrative of mystery and intrigue is introduced into the text with the phrase *mysterious fire*.

¹¹ The “System” is the in-group term for the Camorra. The term “Camorra” is not used inside the organization to refer to themselves.

This theme continues in Example 5) with *the difficult puzzle* (also translated as brainteaser or riddle) and takes on an almost playful tone as if this is a riddle we all can join in to solve.

Text 3:

4) *Ma il mese scorso, l'auto del fratello era stata presa di mira da uno misterioso incendio.* [But last month, the brother's car was targeted by a **mysterious fire.**]

5) *Nel difficile rompicapo di Borgetto ci sono tre omicidi in quindici mesi...* [In the **difficult puzzle/riddle** of Borgetto, there are three homicides in fifteen months...]

In example 6) (below) not only is the familial relationship emphasized but also there is reference to past generations and the idea of *omertà* – that is, one of the original features of the mafia when it began as a secret honor society. Here this notion of “men of honor” is perpetuated even though this is hardly the case for modern members of Mafia groups.

Text 4:

6) *Una mafia che si tramanda di padre in figlio, il rampollo di un boss chiamato ad uccidere un altro boss. Un omertà atavica.* [A mafia **handed down from father to son, the descendant** of a boss called to kill another boss. **A code of silence** going back **generations.**]

C) *BIASED NEWS GATHERING/ VAGUENESS*

In many of the crime reports analyzed for this paper, the actual crime is barely described. Instead, the emphasis is placed on police operations and family relationships of the accused Mafia members (Texts 3, 4,5, 6,9,11).

D) *SELECTED QUOTING OF ELITES*

Text 4:

7) <<Da questo scenario tragico traspare che a Foggia i genitori mafiosi insegnano ai figli a fare lo stesso mestiere che hanno fatto in passato>>, afferma il coordinatore della Direzione distrettuale antimafia di Bari Marco Di Napoli. <<Questo è un fenomeno che sconcerta- aggiunge- **ma la situazione è sotto controllo**>>. [“From this tragic scene shines through that in Foggia mafiosi parents teach their children how to do the same trade they did in the past”, affirms the coordinator of the Director of the District Anti-mafia of Bari, Marco Di Napoli. “This is a phenomenon that bothers us” – he adds – “**but the situation is under control**”.]

Another pattern in the data is the tendency for the names of police and DDA (District Anti-Mafia Directorate) officials to be quoted as seen in the above example. This gives the overall impression that we should not be worried about Mafia crimes, because Italian authorities have them “*under control*”.

E) *OVER-COMPLETION*

Text 6:

8).. *dove si trovava ospite di parenti risultati peraltro estranei alle indagini.*

[... where she was a **guest of relatives who were not however, involved in the investigation**].

In Example 8) we see a type of over-completion in the opposite direction (as opposed to Example 7) in Romani crime report results), which attempts to disassociate the other family members from the crime and to correct negative expectations.

F) RECURSIVITY

This final example forefronts the Hollywood-ization of the mafia exposing the semiotic process of recursivity in mafia crime reports. Recursivity is the projection of an opposition present at some level of relationship onto another level (Gal & Irvine, p. 974). Example 9) reports the arrest of a high-profile member of the ‘Ndrangheta who referred to himself as “Scarface” on Facebook.

Text 11:

9) *Manfredi, infatti, aveva un profilo su Facebook e si faceva chiamare ‘Scarface’ come il trafficante di cocaina interpretato da Al Pacino nel film diretto da Brian De Palma.* [Manfredi, in fact, had a profile on Facebook where he called himself “**Scarface**” like the cocaine trafficker played by Al Pacino in the film directed by Brian De Palma].

The above example illustrates nicely the circular affect that Hollywood films such as “The Godfather” have had on mafia members. That is, the Mafia made an impression on Hollywood, which in turn glamorized the Mafia and made them appear almost honorable. In return, mobsters such as the above Pasquale Manfredi, enjoy envisioning themselves as the mobsters and “honorable men” portrayed by Hollywood. Some even go as far building their houses exactly like those found in the movies (e.g. Walter Schiavone who built a villa modeled after that of Tony Montana from Scarface (Saviano, 2008, p. 245)).

The lexical items found in the corpus analysis together with examples from the text create powerful metaphors that build social cognitions of Italian crime organizations in the minds of the public. The following chart lists these metaphors:

TYPE	SOURCE DOMAIN	SUMS	%
METAPHOR			
<i>Negative</i>			
Dominant/secondary	NON-HUMAN, SUPERNATURAL, <i>e.g., components, elements, phenomenon, cold, shadow</i>	16	12%

Occasional	ANIMALS, <i>e.g. tracks, fish, bloody, targeted</i>	12	9%
	DANGEROUS PEOPLE <i>e.g., brutal, cruel, dangerous,</i>	5	4%
<i>Positive</i>			
Dominant	FAMILY, <i>e.g., family, mother, father, son</i>	68	50%
Secondary	HOLLYWOOD, <i>e.g., Scarface, the peacemaker</i>	12	9%
Occasional	PLANTS, <i>e.g. roots, bud, fruit</i>	6	4%
	GAME, <i>e.g., pawn, puzzle</i>	4	3%
	MEN OF HONOR, <i>e.g., code of silence, leadership, crime of passion</i>	4	3%
METONYMY			
<i>Negative</i>	Mafia is a body, <i>e.g., disjointed</i>	2	1%
<i>Positive</i>	Mafia as an adventure, <i>e.g., mountain to climb</i>	1	1%
	Italy as a body, <i>e.g., transplant, organ, cells</i>	5	4%
TOTAL		135	100%

Table 3 |Metaphors about Mafia groups (modeled from Santa Ana, 1999)
**Percentages were rounded off to the nearest ten.*

Of the above metaphors/ metonyms, 26% are negative and 74% positive. The overwhelming dominant metaphor for this group is MAFIA ARE FAMILY. This familial image is perpetuated over and over in the articles with references to clans, fathers, sons, and almost any type of family relationship possible. In addition to the many positive metaphors, the emphasizing of nicknames and names of police operations also adds to the entertainment value of the articles

(as seen in predication strategies in Results: Romanies...) and helps to frame them and place them in the category of “entertainment” instead of “crime report”. That is, it is not real - it is glamorous and something to admire. Unfortunately for those who suffer the consequences of Mafia crimes, this is not the case.

Conclusion

It is not the intention of this paper to accuse the Italian mainstream media of racism, or of being closely associated with the mafia or viewing the mafia as good, but rather to raise the level of consciousness as to how media discourse contributes to the dominant power structure’s framing of events. It should be acknowledged that many articles surfaced, in particular in *La Repubblica* and *IlCorriere della Sera* that were sympathetic to the plight of Romanies. This represents a serious effort being undertaken by Italian journalists and activists to change government policies and overall attitudes of Italian people towards these groups. Nonetheless, the following quote by Ian Hancock in 1987 provides an eerie reminder of how slow social change is to occur. “More and more, Gypsies themselves are initiating, and participating in, moves to end this situation, and to challenge discrimination in the news and in the media”, “The cycle is at last being broken” (p.133). However, it has been more than twenty years since this was written, and yet, as this analysis reveals, discrimination against Romanies is still widespread in mainstream media. Journalists and activists can talk the talk in pro-Romani articles, but can they change their negative representations of this group when discussing common news genres like crime? Unless journalists raise their consciousness as to how they are reproducing the dominant ideology, their implied goals of social justice and change will not occur.

The media’s negative representation of Romanies (and positive representation of Italian crime organizations) was accomplished by lexical choice, various referential and predication strategies, metaphor/metonymy and via the vast access to the public that the media has. One must not forget that since leaders have access to the media, and critical studies involving the reproduction of racism rarely reach the public at large (van Dijk, 1992), this makes the common ideology difficult to change. In general, the tendency in Italian media crime reporting seems to be to animalize/de-naturalize crimes committed by Romanies while at the same time naturalizing crimes committed by groups considered “Us” such as Italian crime organizations. This bias represents the reproduction of a racist and xenophobic ideology in Italy that allows for the entire ethnic group, whether they were involved in the crime or not, to be held accountable for the crimes of a few, or for the crimes of a few to stand metonymically for the fact that the whole group is involved in crimes. Thus ethnic identity is converted into social identity making genetics and “race” responsible for criminality (Ian Hancock, 2011, PC).

At the same time, crimes committed by Italian crime organizations (although abundantly reported) are downplayed and the actual criminals are

portrayed positively. In many of the Mafia crime reports analyzed, the actual crime is barely described. Instead, the emphasis is placed on police operations and family relationships. In addition, the Mafia crime reports reveal a pattern of not including any references to the victims (or description of how they have suffered) but instead they concentrate on the offenders and their families. This is in contrast to Romani crime reports where emphasis in articles was placed on the severity of each crime and the consequences to the victims, including numerous interviews with victims and their families.

This does not mean that there is nothing being done by official organizations in Italy to fight the Mafia. There is a long list of people, such as judges Giovanni Falcone and other high-ranking officials who have lost their lives in the battle against the Mafia. People like Roberto Saviano (author of *Gamorrhah*, 2008) represent a modern movement of everyday citizens trying to combat the Mafia (in his case, the Camorra) by portraying them in books and movies as the un-glamorous criminals that they are. Also worth mentioning is the fact that the Italian media are not by far the only media involved in the reproduction of racism, rather it seems that involvement in these processes seems to be the norm, not the exception (see Santa Ana 1999, Augoustinos and Every, 2007), nor is Berlusconi's government the only one engaged in unfair treatment of Romanies and migrants in general (e.g. Sarkozy).

Not only is the aim of this paper to reveal Italian mainstream media's subtle role in the reproduction of ethnic inequality, but also to gain some understanding as to why organizations such as the Camorra and 'Ndrangheta are still very strong, and why it is so difficult to reduce their power. Not only are Romanies represented negatively, but also a strong enough stance has not been taken in Italian media against Italian crime organizations because of the unconscious favorable way in which they have been framed. In order to change the frame, a new language is required (Lakoff, 2004, p. xv). A challenge to discourse analysts in Italy might be to expand their forum of academia and reach into the public realm. If Italy truly wants to solve its crime problems, it needs to first make a serious effort to change its unjust policies (such as those mentioned in the **Introduction**) towards Romanies and other migrant groups, and follow recommendations made by the European Commission and other human rights organizations such as Everyone Group, which with the recent demise of Berlusconi, may prove easier than in the past. I would argue, however, that the media (and those in power that control and regulate it) need to stop using Romanies as "scapegoats" for the more serious crimes committed by Italians. Politicians serious about ridding Italy of these powerful organizations need to take a look at why the media is using words to describe the mafia the way they want to be described. In the same way, Italian citizens need to be asking why the mafia is presented so positively in media crime reports because as anti-mafia activist Roberto Saviani explains, "È proprio attraverso le domande che si può arrivare a costruire una società in grado di dare

risposte”[And so it is through the process of questioning that we can build a society that is able to give the answers] (2008).

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[1 Attivisti EveryOne leuoparlamentare Renate Weber deposita interrogazioni parlamentari.html](#)

Text

11:<http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2010/06/08/il-bimbo-giocava-sul-balcone-tre-rom.html>

Mafia Crime Reports:

Text1:http://www.corriere.it/Primo_Piano/Cronache/2005/10_Ottobre/21/blitz.shtml

Text2:http://www.siciliaonline.it/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=117356&Itemid=2

Text3:

<http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2009/02/22/omicidio-di-borgetto-vendetta-di-mafia.html>

Text4:<http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2009/01/17/nella-guerra-di-mafia-di-padre-in.html>

Text5:<http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/2009/02/01/boss-ucciso-in-una-sala-da-barba.html>

Text6:http://archivio.lastampa.it:80/LaStampaArchivio/main/History/tmp1_viewObj.jsp?objid=10467102

Text7:http://archivio.lastampa.it:80/LaStampaArchivio/main/History/tmp1_viewObj.jsp?objid=75271

Text8:http://www.iltempo.it/interni_esteri/2010/07/13/1179435-maxi_bltz_contro_ndrangheta.shtml

Text 9:http://www.iltempo.it/2007/11/05/571470-lotta_alla_mafia.shtml

Text10:http://www.iltempo.it/frosinone/2009/06/18/1037606-camorrista_arrestato_carabinieri.shtml

Text

11:http://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2010/03/16/news/ndrangheta_manfredi-2685005/

Appendix B. Categorization of lexical choices

Table B.1 Naturalization of Romanies

NATURALIZATION	*TOKENS referring to ROMANIES
gentile [kind]	1
soffre [suffers]	1
TOTAL NATURALIZATION	2/ 105 = *2%

* Percentages were rounded to the nearest ten.

* Starred terms don't refer to Romanies but are used in connection with activities by Romanies.

Table B.2 Denaturalization of Romanies

DENATURALIZATION	TOKENS referring to ROMANIES (or actions towards Romanies)
<i>ammassati</i> [crammed in]	1
<i>nomadi/e</i> [nomads]	24
<i>smantellata / disarticolata</i> [dismantled, disarticulated]	2
<i>adescavano</i> [to bait, lure], <i>usate come esca</i> [used as bait], <i>adescatrici</i> [enticer, lurer]	3
<i>tracce, traccia</i> [track/s]	2
<i>sangue</i> [blood]	1
<i>bava alla bocca</i> [foaming at the mouth]	1
<i>sporco/che</i> [dirty s. and plural]	2
<i>*elemosina/accatonaggio</i> [begging]	4
<i>abusivi , irregolari sprovvisti di documenti</i> [illegals, unlicensed, without documents]	4
<i>*rabbia, infuriati</i> [anger, angry]	2
<i>topi d'appartamento</i> [apartment rats]	1
<i>aggressore, aggressione, aggressive, aggredito, aggrediti</i> , [attacked, attackers, aggressors, aggressive, aggression]	12
<i>cacciare</i> [kick out, hunt]	1
<i>predatorio</i> [predatory]	1
<i>*minacce, minacciandolo, minacciato, minacciandone</i> [threats, threatening him/it, threatened]	4
<i>una nuvola di ragazzini</i> [a cloud of little kids]	1
<i>scaricati</i> [dumped]	1
<i>violenta/o, violenza</i> [violence]	2
TOTAL DENATURALIZATION	69/ 105 = *66%

*Percentages were rounded to the nearest ten.

Table B.3 Derogation of Romanies

DEROGATION	TOKENS referring to ROMANIES
Types of criminals = <i>scippatori</i> [bag snatchers], <i>ladri</i> , [thieves] <i>ladruncoli</i> , [pickpockets]	6
<i>banda</i> [gang]	9
<i>drogato</i> [drugged]	1
<i>senza scrupoli</i> [without scruples]	1
<i>sgangherato</i> [ramshackle]	1
<i>battezzata</i> [baptized] (sarcasm)	1
<i>specializzati esperti</i> , organizzati, meticolosi, acrobati [specialized, experts, organized, meticulous, acrobats] (ironic)	7
<i>anziani</i> , <i>bambini</i> [elderly/ children – used to highlight anti-family values via Romani crimes toward them]	8
TOTAL DEROGATION	34/ 105= 32%

*Percentages were rounded to the nearest ten.

Table B.4 Naturalization of Mafia

NATURALIZATION	TOKENS REFERRING TO MAFIA
Boss, super-boss	21
Non correva buon sangue [bad blood between them]	1
kinship terminology (e.g. padre, madre, famiglia, figlio, etc..)	62
References to Hollywood (e.g. – [Scarface])	1
Operation names (e.g. Big Bang, Pandora)	5
Legato/collegato/collegarsi/colle ge [ties, bonds]	5
Nicknames of Mafia members e.g. eccellente [the excellent, the top],	6

il ragazzo terribile, [the terrible boy] il paciere[the peacemaker]	
Game terminology, e.g. pedine, [pawns] rompicapo [puzzle]	4
radici/radicata/* rampollo/frutto/ emerge/ mietere [roots, rooted, bud, fruit, emerge, reap]	6
trapiantati/ organo/ batteria/ polsi [transplanted, organ, cell, wrists]	5
omertà [conspiracy of silence]	1
la leadership[the leadership]	1
vertice [he climbed to the peak of the organization]	1
passionale/ passion [crime of passion, passion for]	2
TOTAL NATURALIZATION	121/155 = 78%

* This word means descendent but in the sense of a bud sprouting from a plant

Table B.5 Denaturalization of Mafia

DENATURALIZATION	TOKENS REFERRING TO MAFIA
esponenti/ component/elemento [exponents, components, element]	9
agguato/mirino/ presa di mira/ braccato [trap, targeted, hunted]	8
cruento [bloody]	2
disarticolazione, smantellata [disjointed, dismantled]	2
fenomeno [phenomenon]	1
pesce [fish, e.g. – we're not talking about a little fish here]	1
l'ombra [the shadow]	1
organizzazione [the organization]	2
tracce [tracks]	1
Infiltrazioni [infiltrations]	2
TOTAL DENATURALIZATION	29/155 = 19%

Table B.6 Derogation of Mafia

DEROGATION	TOKENS REFERRING TO MAFIA
brutale/ crudele [brutal, cruel]	1
freddo [cold]	1
pericolosi [dangerous]	3
TOTAL DEROGATION	5/ 155 = 3%

II PART

EDUCATION