Migration and Nationalism in Italian Political Discourse on Facebook and Twitter

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Abstract

Italy underwent major changes in its demographic structure in the fi rst decade of the twenty-fi rst century. Foreign populati on rose from 1.3 million in 2001 to almost 5 million in 2014. At the same ti me social networks, especially Facebook and Twitt er, have established themselves as a powerful means for sharing informati on andopinions, playing a considerable part in everyday politi cal communicati on.

Nati ons are well-established constructi ons in our society, and they represent a very att racti ve benchmark for personal and social identi fi cati on. Politi cal speeches, media discourse and popular culture constantly reiterate the myth, culture and history of nati ons, reaffi rming and preserving their positi ve image. Diff erent forms of nati onalism are in fact acquiring a renewed vigour due to some recent events that have involved Europe, namely the immigrati on issue and the fi nancial crisis.

The approach of politolinguisti cs will be applied on the posts published on Twitt er and Facebook by some of the most representati ve members of Italian politi cal parti es (Renzi, Salvini, Grillo) between 2014 and 2017. A series of quanti tati ve and qualitati ve methods, in the traditi on of corpus assisted discourse studies (Parti ngton 2006), will be employed to analyze the way these politi cians organized and presented their discourse about migration.

Keywords
discourse analysis, corpus linguisti cs, Facebook, Twitt er, migrati on, nati onalism.