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ICUREZZA ERRORISMO SOCIETÀ

Security Terrorism Society

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL - Italian Team for Security, Terroristic Issues & Managing Emergencies



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Within the informative-cultural chaos. Migration issue, national politics and anti-Jewish conspiracy

GIACOMO BUONCOMPAGNI

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Abstract

Among the various phenomena of hostility and aggression towards different groups, anti-Semitism has become increasingly prevalent in Europe in recent years.

Considering recent crises and the emergence of collective traumas, hate crimes and novel forms of anti-Semitism have materialized in political discourse and the digital sphere. This is due to the public and interactive nature of new information technologies.

The phenomenon of neo-anti-Semitism highlights identity issues in multicultural societies, specifically difficulties comprehending other cultures and histories or more recent transformations. This has significantly eroded the relationship between the public sphere and online societies, while at the same time encouraging anti-Semitic sentiments, conspiracy theories, infodemics, new forms of racism and denialism that are difficult to report even in the media. The overall objective of this study is to investigate the coverage of anti-migrant hate and obscured types of anti-Semitism. Despite being distinct topics, both are linked by the presence of stereotypical, occasionally aggressive, and confused narratives in the public discourse. Journalism frequently fails to identify and rectify these narratives, thus perpetuating information disorder.

Tra i vari fenomeni di ostilità e aggressione nei confronti di diversi gruppi, l'antisemitismo è diventato sempre più diffuso in Europa negli ultimi anni. Considerando le recenti crisi e l'emergere di traumi collettivi, crimini d'odio e nuove forme di antisemitismo si sono materializzati nel discorso politico e nella sfera digitale. Ciò sembra essere dovuto alla natura pubblica e interattiva delle nuove tecnologie dell'informazione.

Il fenomeno del neo-antisemitismo pone in questione problemi di natura identitaria nelle società multiculturali, in particolare le difficoltà di comprensione di altre culture e le loro storie o trasformazioni più recenti. Ciò ha eroso in modo significativo il rapporto tra la sfera pubblica e le società in rete, favorendo al tempo stesso sentimenti antisemiti, teorie del complotto, infodemie, nuove forme di razzismo e negazionismo difficili anche da riportare mediaticamente. L'obiettivo generale di questo studio è quello di indagare la copertura dell'odio anti-migranti e delle forme oscure di antisemitismo. Pur trattandosi di argomenti distinti, entrambi sono accomunati dalla presenza di narrazioni stereotipate, talvolta aggressive e confuse nel discorso

pubblico. Il giornalismo spesso non riesce a identificare e rettificare queste narrazioni, perpetuando così il disordine dell'informazione.

Keywords

Migration; conspiracy; journalism; media; discrimination; hate speech, migrazione; cospirazione; giornalismo; media; discriminazione; discorso di odio

Introduction

Social animosity is gaining predominance in diverse modes of communication including journalism, politics, and judiciary, irrespective of the opinions expressed and the content disseminated.

This substantially compromises not only respect for the Others and the quality of already overloaded information but also the legitimacy (and accountability) of all stakeholders who interact, provide, and consume media products within Mediapolis (Silverstone 2009; Maddalena, Gili 2017).

This is accompanied by contemporary developments in constantly changing communication: infodemics, conspiracy theories, new racisms and denials. These range from the trivialization to denial of the Holocaust, with acts of intimidation and violence that impact multiple Western nations and take on paroxysmal tones in Eastern Europe and the Arab countries.

The recent rise in anti-migrant and anti-Semitic sentiments appears to be influenced by long-standing stereotypical images, fears and prejudices that are embedded in our collective psyche. These are often ideologically polarised and focus on the migrant or foreigner as an all-encompassing danger, regardless of the circumstances or individuals involved.

The paradox of this situation lies in the fact that, as the digital infrastructure strengthens and facilitates the exchange of information and the establishment of networked social bonds, new communication environments have emerged, bringing unprecedented levels of risk and forms of groupism that merge feelings of solidarity with individuals who resemble me, with hostility towards those who differ from me. The role of the migrant as the “link” between information which is often distorted, unrefined public opinions, and specific anti-Semitic expressions and references, often taken out of context, becomes increasingly prominent.

The purpose of this research was to challenge the prevailing trend of reducing the issues of “immigration” and “anti-Semitism” to the realm of communication, and instead offer a comprehensive analysis of their various dimensions. This necessitated a departure from the narrow scope of commu-

nicative means typically examined and a closer examination of the broader phenomenon.

“Migratory and anti-Semitic communicationism” assumes that migrations and hatred towards Jews are predominantly influenced by communication. According to this theory, factors in the communicative sphere are crucial in explaining every single event, depending on its representation in the media.

However, it is incorrect to believe that the foundations of xenophobia have a mainly media-based origin. But there can be no doubt that currently, the significance of information and communication has become increasingly critical in the identification, narration, and comprehension of “total” social phenomena. The integration of various perspectives is necessary for a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Achieving and maintaining this habit of action can be challenging for individuals without continual reminders and support from crucial community relationships that promote open-mindedness and a non-skeptical approach to critical thinking.

1. Methodological note

This article presents a quantitative and qualitative exploratory analysis of news articles regarding antisemitism (traditional and hybrid) and other forms of contemporary hatred published in leading Italian media during a specific period. The article’s aim is to investigate the prevalence and representation of these phenomena objectively, without subjective evaluation. The text is written in clear and concise language with necessary information and logical structure, using technical terms that are explained when first used. The structure is balanced, and sentences and paragraphs flow logically, creating causal connections between statements. The language is formal and free from grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, colloquial words, and unnecessary jargon. Consistent citation style is used, and quotes are clearly marked. Precise word choice is employed to convey meaning more accurately where technical vocabulary is available.

The sample comprises two important and historic Italian newspapers, namely *Corriere della Sera* and *La Repubblica*, selected for analyzing the print media and the leading newspapers available in their digital form on Facebook.

To be precise, this study collected posts from the public profiles of these newspapers on the social networking site. The data was obtained by conducting a keyword search via the CrowdTangle platform, a Facebook tool for monitoring public page and group content. The tool exports fundamental interaction metrics, post types, and message or link text.

The study period spanned from January 2017 to December 2021, analysing content.

From three distinct media environments: print newspapers, television news, and an online platform.

More precisely 3267 news items were reported in print newspapers, while the ten online newspapers analyzed published 4389 posts.

Each news item was digitised and indexed by date, newspaper, themes, subjects, and interviewees.

By indexing and digitizing, we reconstructed the attention given by various newspapers in Italy to racial hatred and anti-Semitism. Simultaneously, we traced migratory patterns linking these narratives, which contributed to the dissemination of information disorder and violence.

Relevant content was considered, focusing on the historical, political, and cultural intentions of the actors discussed in the media landscape. This included analysis of the period under study and events that took place.

Content deemed as “empty” or relating to news and political debates that did not centre or closely connect to the described fact regarding anti-Semitism and hatred were omitted from the analyzed (tele)newspaper.

For the sake of clarity and order, the analysis refers to journalistic information deemed most relevant to the research, taking into account the temporal context (the periods under examination) and the national political-cultural context (incidents of violence, political elections, crises, etc.). This information is presented chronologically within a well-defined social structure.

Each paragraph will open with a news item that encapsulates the hidden dimension of anti-Semitism and the issue of migration as reported in the journalistic field.

To begin, we present the results published in print and digital newspapers on the Facebook platform between 2017 and 2021.

To facilitate a comparison between emerging content, time periods, contexts, and media types, three reference macro categories have been identified following the filtering operations of the data corpus. These categories include: the type of article/topic (nature and positioning of the news); interviewees (actors involved); important issues (media event).

The methodological framework chosen, at this stage of the work, aims to give “meaning and voice” to the quantitative data, thus seeking not only to discover and interpret the hybrid forms of hatred in the contemporary world, but also to reconstruct, in relation to these, the main interpretative frameworks (including pictures) on a specific topic, communication strategies and recurrent forms of public narration in the mediatized public sphere.

2. 2017. Traces of Hate and Italian newspapers



Source: [il Giornale.it](http://ilgiornale.it)

Since 2017, hate crimes in Italy have increased, predominantly targeting Jews and immigrants, reflecting alarming levels of racism and xenophobia, according to a recent OSCE report. Extensive research supports these findings, with sources such as Cox (2017), Idos (2018), Vox (2017-2018), and Rome Charter Report (2017-2018) highlighting how narratives in traditional and digital media are fraught with fragmentation, violence, confusion, and intolerance towards those seen as 'other' or diverse.

Amidst a complex and troubling backdrop, various challenging issues have emerged in Italy and across Europe over the past five years. These multifarious issues require nuanced and complex solutions. For instance, the debate concerning immigration and terrorism following the 2015 attacks in Paris, or the relationship between the right to information and freedom of expression for citizens in light of recent cases of information manipulation, such as in the Brexit case or the 2016 US presidential elections where the Republican businessman Donald Trump and Democratic candidate Hilary Clinton engaged in a highly contentious debate with significant verbal hostility on digital platforms.

Another significant topic recently discussed in the public and scientific spheres, following the advent of fake news, is that of hate speech. This term, coined by American jurisprudence, refers to the use of derogatory and unconventional language on the internet, often filled with intolerance and aimed solely at offending those who hold differing opinions or creating discriminatory attitudes towards certain social groups (Materassi, Pezzoli 2019; Buoncompagni 2021). Amid the prevalence of misinformation and the pursuit of sensationalism, the focus shifts towards the authenticity of journalism in reporting

reality. This brings to light the potential for distortion and the establishment of protocols for selecting, prioritising, and presenting news. In news reporting, the danger of conforming to the expectations of the media establishment or the wider system is paramount. Journalism's hallmark of impartiality is being replaced by a priority of avoiding errors which leads to homogenization of editorial choices and the adoption of mainstream views (Neuman, 2017).

This risk is present even in the particular instance under investigation: the depiction of hybrid forms of hatred and anti-Semitism in the media.

The worldwide dissemination of news, ideas, beliefs, and images converts information into "shared events". This creates an impression that data is synonymous with knowledge, blurring the lines between the value of a post or tweet and that of a conversation. Additionally, it allows baseless rumours to be presented as credible communication (Wolton, 2009).

Examined the materials published in the print media (*Corriere della Sera* and *Repubblica*) and the articles from ten Italian digital newspapers, highlighting the aforementioned three dimensions. These dimensions facilitate the organization and comparison of the annually compiled data for each medium.

Additionally, subsections were created for each dimension to properly categorize news with similar traits, and to visually represent the data.

Firstly, it is noteworthy that both *Corriere della Sera* and *Repubblica* report around 20% of national news and foreign affairs.

Some recent noteworthy news in Italy includes "Anti-Semitic posts target Fiano," a Democratic Party member of parliament, and "The extermination that became a tourist attraction". "Shock at the post in Auschwitz" is a clear instance of what scientific literature refers to as dark tourism.

At the international level, the media coverage of "Le Pen's inner circle referring to Hitler as 'uncle'" caused controversy. In France, there were numerous criticisms of United States President Donald Trump's handling of anti-Semitic violence and incidents involving black immigrants.

Culture pages also comprise a significant portion of news coverage.

The *Corriere della Sera* (26.3%) dedicated significant space during 2017 to the theme of "Memory". It also welcomed voices of artist-citizens who have experienced and portrayed the horrors of the concentration camps and Nazism on television or through theatrical presentations. *Repubblica*, however, focuses on the issue of the Holocaust, which is connected to the role of education and the school. Additionally, they present useful cultural and artistic products to enhance the teaching and learning process and raise awareness

among the new generations. The percentage of their emphasis on this topic is 34.9%.

It is not coincidental that the primary “media events” covered in newspapers this year concerning episodes of anti-Semitism, took place during those anniversaries which hold historical significance for Italy. Examples of such dates include January 27th or April 25th.

Among the topics examined, the Holocaust is the most prevalent (34.9%), followed by discussions regarding its political and cultural implications (23.3%), and numerous instances of physical or verbal aggression towards members and representatives of the Jewish community, political authorities, or family members of Holocaust victims, irrespective of their Jewish heritage.

Within the reports of both newspapers, institutional matters related to the political-judicial world were the most frequently cited figures (CdS 24.7%; Repubblica 28.1%). Among the most recurrent names was President Sergio Mattarella, who was both a victim of verbal attacks and a mediator during times of crisis.

The presence of the survivors’ perspective had varying degrees of representation according to the data.

The *Corriere della Sera* receives many testimonies annually (25.2%), with a focus on January and February 2017, which document the persistent fear and anguish experienced by victims associated with the onset of the Nazi extermination policy. Subjectivity is avoided throughout. Technical terms are clearly explained upon first use, while clear and concise sentences with logical flow provide comprehensibility. The paper follows conventional academic structure, with factual, unambiguous titles and consistent formatting. Language remains objective, value-neutral, and free from ornamental, emotional, or biased expressions. Passive tone and impersonal constructions are used. Standard language and grammar, with no colloquialisms, informal expressions, or unnecessary jargon. The structure is clear and balanced, avoiding any biases. Precise, subject-specific vocabulary is used whenever possible. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are flawless.

On the other hand, *Repubblica* includes coverage of the annual political debate between centre-right and centre-left parties alongside the confirmed cases of anti-Semitism during the lead up to January 27th. Additionally, a considerable amount of space is allocated to the opinion pieces provided by fellow journalists (15.4%) and cultural figures (22%). These articles aim to provide readers with a moment of reflection and insight. The individuals involved in this case are widely known to the public and have a significant sensitivity to the Holocaust theme for ethical-political or biographical reasons. Alternatively, they may be intellectuals who have studied the Holocaust

and right-wing extremism through research, investigations or theatrical-cinematographic representations.

Even within the digital realm, *Corriere della Sera* (fig.8-9) appears to uphold its established “agenda” by specifically drawing attention to the subject of anti-Semitism within political discourse (39%) through sharing links to corresponding articles from its website on its Facebook pages (93.8%). The employment of photographs or video news is seldom observed.

Repubblica (fig.10-11) employs a comparable media format but focuses on a greater amount of historical and cultural content, such as testimonies and perceptions surrounding the Shoah, as well as content related to the most prevalent incidents of hate crimes (37.5%).

The investigation of information shared on the Facebook platform enabled the expansion of research and analysis of contents shared amongst other Italian newspapers, facilitating meaningful comparisons. For 2017, significant data can be found in the digital editions of *Avvenire* and *Libero* among the ten newspapers evaluated.

In the former, the historical and cultural theme concerning the Holocaust prevails over the editorial choice to feature content primarily on incidents of anti-Semitic hatred, contradicting prior observations.

Contrarily, the digital newsroom of *Libero* appears to have a communication approach that is almost the opposite: it pays minimal attention to political debates (6.3%) and news concerning Jewish heritage or cultural awareness initiatives that were disseminated during the first few months of the year (25%). Furthermore, accounts of anti-Semitic events are predominant both locally and internationally (68.7%).

Before analysing the upcoming years, it is crucial to note that in the digital realm, on platforms, the boundaries of interaction are constantly evolving. This development has a significant impact on journalists’ interactions with sources, and an audience that frequently and adeptly utilises social media channels. It is noteworthy that this differs from traditional press and television information. The integration of “platformized” digital information requires a thorough reassessment of criteria for determining newsworthiness, including collection, information management, means, and editorial lines (Sorrentino 2015; (Sorrentino, Splendore 2022).

Despite the vast and intricate issues, such as anti-Semitism, journalists must amalgamate their conventional gatekeeper approach with the web’s aggregative logic and social media’s dialogic approach.

3. 2018-2019. Systemic racism and “migrant anti-Semitism”



Source: [il Fatto Quotidiano.it](https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it)

The year 2018 begins with socio-politically significant local-national events, widely covered by the Italian media.

Some major events to highlight include the frequent arrival of migrants along the southern coasts of Italy, the political elections that resulted in the formation of Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte's first government, and the (almost) terrorist attack carried out by Luca Traini, who specifically targeted the inhabitants of Macerata in the Marche region.

All events that can be identified as “total media facts,” where attempts to re-colonize the public sphere through politics and traditional media are prominently highlighted, sometimes reveal an ethno-racial concept of citizenship (Manieri, Quassoli 2020).

In the first few months of the year, Amnesty International (2018) received 787 complaints of offensive, racist, and discriminatory messages circulating on the internet. The reports focused primarily on political candidates during the election campaign, with 77 of them being later elected.

Facebook was the most complained-about channel, accounting for 73% of the monitored messages (of which 49.3% were textual posts).

The central theme of the reports was the migratory phenomenon. 91% of the statements were directed towards migrants and immigrants; whereas 11% of the declarations pertained to discrimination of a religious nature which included conveying anti-Semitic and Islamophobic sentiments.

It is in this environment of tension that the initial “hybrid” types of racism and anti-Semitism emerge.

These contemporary forms of prejudice possess important features, one of which being their capability to magnify pre-existing stereotypes, like that of the cosmopolitan Jew who holds the destiny of the world in their grasp. The second issue is the constant creation of tension between demography and democracy through the dissemination of beliefs, labels, and disconnected narratives leading to high levels of conflict among people. This happens in a context where debates related to the actual or perceived demographic impact of migratory flows from the South to the North of the planet, as a consequence of decolonisation and globalization, are starting to invade public discourse. (Baibar, 2021)

Further information needs to be included regarding the current data, as well as reflecting upon the political and economic climate in Italy.

Numerous cases are connected to events where individuals of the Jewish faith and/or the State of Israel are the focus of attention, linked to the migration of individuals into our nation. These events include Remembrance Day, the Giro d'Italia departing from Israel and their seventieth anniversary, clashes in Gaza, and the appointment of Liliana Segre as a senator for life.

During the examined two-year period, tensions are evident in both traditional and digital media as a continuum.

Firstly, in the print media of 2018, there is a significant amount of political content (CdS 23%; Rep. 29.3%) pertaining to national news (CdS and Rep. 15%) and international news (CdS 19%; Rep. 23.5%). It is worth noting these findings. Most of these focus on the speeches of institutional politicians, typically affiliated with centre-right parties and often accused of employing racist and xenophobic language, which can be traced within Jewish communities in Italy.

Even when examining the data related to the interviewed subjects or those involved in the information process, it is evident that the highest percentage pertains to political institutions and Holocaust survivors. Alongside the numerous testimonies and institutional awards presented to the elderly victims, the narrative of the two newspapers emphasizes on the verbal clash between parties or the “disapproving” opinions of President Mattarella and Senator Segre. “Liliana Segre notes that there has been a resurgence of fascist violence and calls for the removal of the term ‘race’ from the Constitution. President Mattarella, on Remembrance Day, likens Auschwitz to a deadly virus that is poised to re-emerge.”

Considering the political aspect of communication and information, the period of 2018-19 has evidently observed a persistent challenge that remains unanswered, giving rise to an increasingly detrimental communication envi-

ronment. This issue is anticipated to fuel further problems in the upcoming years.

This paper examines the prevalence of online political incivility and its impact on contemporary public discourse. It assumes a potentially problematic correlation between media and incivility, and argues that the phenomenon serves as a clear indicator of societal degradation. The study employs a range of objective evaluative measures to analyse the issue. Technical term abbreviations will be clearly explained upon first usage. The paper will adhere to conventional academic structure and formatting, with an emphasis on precise and formal language. All citations and footnotes will be consistent with established guidelines. In the context of cultural diversity and the relationship with others, this phenomenon reaches its pinnacle by intertwining migration and anti-Semitic issues or recognizing an escalation from migration to Jewish-related issues.

Given what has been discussed, it is unsurprising that a highly politicised and uncivilised social and media landscape returned in a similar manner during 2019. This year was characterised by some scholars as a phase of temporal stabilisation and normalisation of hatred and mistrust in an already traumatised Europe that was already facing several crises (Eriksen 2017; Spezia 2020; Giaccardi, Magatti 2020).

Most prominent headlines (24.3% CdS; 21.9% Rep.) focus on the employment of the word “race” by journalists and politicians, as well as instances of institutional racism. *La Repubblica* highlights political articles (27.3%) discussing the numerous efforts made to create effective regulations in order to fight anti-Semitic hatred or hate speech in local institutional settings.

In the digital sphere, *La Repubblica* and *Corriere della Sera* have displayed preference for sharing content via hyperlinks and pictures inserted in their articles, as compared to 2017. Figures 9 and 10 illustrate that the majority of the space is allocated to political discourse (Rep. 46%; MC 43.8%). Other data presented disclose the insufficient attention given to cultural facets of the Jewish world and the historic-social factors of the Holocaust.

The situation in 2019 exhibited parallels, as both newspapers displayed comparable attention towards anti-Semitic events and the corresponding public debate. The name of Senator Liliana Segre is frequently mentioned in the articles and posts under analysis, as she is often subjected to verbal abuse in the comments sections on online newspaper platforms. Numerous articles in the press, including those online, report on incidents of vandalised Jewish cemeteries and defaced religious buildings in central Italy and other European countries like France. Additionally, due to the large presence of irregular immigrants, there is a high risk of domestic terrorism.

Comparing this data with that collected for other digital newspapers on Facebook reveals a more balanced selection of published content, with a public agenda quite similar to others.

The following graphs, relating to the online newspapers *Fatto* and *Avvenire*, demonstrate a diverse and unprecedented situation regarding the themes covered by print newspapers and news services.

The social environment of Facebook is increasingly recognised for its role in creating echo chambers and cultural bubbles, where audiences only seek out information that confirms their existing beliefs. However, the platform can also offer a diverse range of voices, ideas, and viewpoints on complex topics such as anti-Semitism, thanks in part to well-considered editorial decisions. This contrasts with concerns that informational pluralism may soon become merely an illusion, due to the power of chatbots and algorithms (Quattrociochi, Vicini 2017).

The autonomy of the image format of photographs is a noteworthy aspect of digital information as they can stand alone without the accompanying text.

Frequently, images are shared independently of attached articles, thereby obtaining the status of a “media text”. This trend has been observed across all online newspapers in 2018-19, with varying degrees of frequency each month (ranging from a minimum of 2% to a maximum of 9%).

In general, the focus should be on providing an orderly account of incidents of physical and online violence against the Jewish community or Lilliana Segre during her election as senator. Additionally, it is important to report interviews and accounts of victims who have been brutally assaulted, as well as the attack on the Pittsburgh synagogue in the United States and the vandalized Jewish cemeteries in both our country and the regions of France. Violence in stadiums, accompanied by racist and anti-Semitic chants during the arrival of registered migrants in southern Italy, is also a major concern.

The news format appears to rely on an efficient strategy of familiarizing viewers with daily events and content to build trust in the economic media system.

As we will explore in detail, the two-year period spanning 2018 and 2019 ushered in an era of turbulence and unease in our nation. This was typified by sensationalized news reporting, political party mistrust, heightened social unrest, and the resurfacing of age-old “Jewish myths” in both Italy and the wider global community through various media platforms.

The episodes of anti-Semitism and anti-migration are classified, in order of relevance, as conspiratism, anti-Zionism, neo-Nazism, trivialization of the Holocaust (mockery of the Holocaust), and anti-Judaism (Christian and religious anti-Semitism). Of note, anti-Judaism themes (such as blood libel and deicide) have significantly increased in the last five years. Episodes such

as Shoah denial are only prevalent in the context of neo-Nazism. However, myths adapted to the Israeli reality generate support in more diverse sectors, including the extreme left, ethno-regionalism, ecologism, anti-elite groups, and Islamism (Taguieff 2015; Pasta 2018; Santerini 2020; Munich 2022).

Anti-Semitism is openly expressed in the media through aggressive and demonising iconographic and lexical forms that merge migrant and anti-Semitic narratives. Newspapers reproduce these contents limit themselves to those that successfully circulate in the virtual world. However, they lack depth and objectivity.

4. 2020-2021. Infodemic and the society of suspicion



Source: il Corriere della Sera

The year 2020 began with a unique and unforeseeable event that has become one of the global society's side effects that is here to stay: the Covid-19 pandemic.

This global shock has compelled billions of people to halt their daily activities and stay locked in their homes, leaving schools, factories, and offices vacant for months. With the hospitals being the only places "visited," they were on the brink of collapsing in early March. From March 2020, Covid-19 enforced a prolonged period of isolation with intermittent opening and closing phases across multiple countries, including Italy. This continued until mid-2021, causing a shift towards online relationships.

Our daily routine has become increasingly platform-based, with home, school and workplace activities taking place exclusively in digital spaces.

During the pandemic, the term “infodemic” emerged and was coined by political scientist David Rothkopf (2003), later adopted by the World Health Organization during the crisis. The term refers to the excessive amount of news surrounding a specific event, leading to public confusion, media overload, and institutional harm, ultimately impairing our cognitive capacity to digest information effectively.

The third part of the analysis of media content regarding anti-Semitism during the 2020-2021 biennium aligns with this dramatic framework.

The overabundance of information generated uncertainty, antagonism, division, and animosity towards individuals who are not part of a particular group, whether they are migrants, tourists, or neighbours, as they are all considered potential carriers of the virus.

In Italian media, the pandemic coverage dominated the front pages of both print and online newspapers for several weeks. The media landscape over the last two years appears to be split into two distinct parts, reflecting humanity’s socioeconomic experience before and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The problem of anti-Semitic hatred (SW 16.9%; Rep.29.7%), which is associated with the annual political discussion surrounding Remembrance Day or the more urgent topic of the Holocaust (SW 26.7%; Rep.0.33.1%), appeared to fade away by the end of February 2020, particularly in print media, and was subsequently overshadowed by reports of the first coronavirus cases in Italy and the subsequent implementation of the first lockdown.

The data filtering operation revealed that following the initial months of enforced isolation, and with the onset of summer 2020 and subsequent to the first potential anti-Covid-19 vaccine announcements in October-November, news broadcasts circulated through shared posts on various platforms merging disparate concepts such as institutional information, health, racism targeting public figures of Jewish origin and unsubstantiated claims relating to virus treatments and conspiracy theories. Pseudonews frequently features names of religious leaders, pseudoscientists, victims, or perpetrators when discussing the “Great Reset”.

In this case, users have released various forms of content, such as audio messages, photographs, and videos, with the aim of casting doubt on the existence and danger of the virus. In some instances, they have attempted to create counter-narratives based on scientific theses presented by virologists or self-proclaimed experts, who are now widely discredited within the online community (Miconi, 2020).

It appears that newspapers are becoming mere receptacles for information, where freedom of expression is exercised without adequate verification,

particularly by individuals with proficiency in managing social communication and its related conflicts (Sorrentino, 2021). Videos and photos are effective forms of communication in the field of journalism. Consequently, much of this news has been reshared on Facebook in visual form, which has given a platform to both experts and conspiracy theorists. In some instances, these individuals have incorrectly identified the migratory phenomenon as the root cause of the Holocaust, both before and after the pandemic.

It is noteworthy to reference the utilization of George Soros' figure, which was repeatedly cited in conjunction with conspiracy theories on Facebook and in headlines from *Repubblica* and *Corriere*, both prior to and post the first lockdown in Italy. Examples include "Soros, the financier attacked from right and left. From speculation against the pound and lira to philanthropy to promote Open Society"; "Coronavirus Among Deniers and Hoaxes." The Real Reasons for False Beliefs: Gates and Soros' Top Priority Amongst Conspirators - Trumping Even the Covid-5G Hoax.

The pandemic has accelerated the use of social networks as ideal environments to create and maintain social connections during times of distancing and isolation. According to Deborah Lupton (2020), digital media played a pivotal role during the emergency to support relationships and demonstrate solidarity. Nevertheless, it also facilitated the vast spread of fake news, often associated with conspiracy-type narratives.

Several studies (Mian and Khan, 2020; Papakyriakopoulos et al., 2020) conducted automatic analyses of content on social platforms to investigate the spread of infodemics and conspiracy theories in relation to the health emergency.

The results reveal a significant prevalence of disinformation on Facebook and in online newspapers. A phenomenon exists whereby online rumours propagate via a network-type model, akin to that of a virus, and are reinforced by the challenges faced by users, politicians, and journalists who may lack awareness or capability in determining fact veracity and source reliability.

The data collected from both conventional media and Facebook correlate with the findings reported in the literature, although the scope of the study was restricted to the subject of anti-Semitism. This prejudice continues to persist as the most persistent and concealed form of hate during the health emergency period. The infodemic, conspiracy, and denialism are on the rise from 2021 onwards. This is due to the production of the vaccine, which some perceive to be too fast and ineffective, as well as alternating closures resulting from the increase in infections. The Italian government has introduced numerous self-certifications to be completed in case of recovery or illness as a virus monitoring tool. In the media, as well as in most news services that frequently disseminate and dissect viral content from social networks, the

most prevalent topics pertain to instances of anti-Semitism and the ongoing political discourse concerning “Covid-19” and “green” initiatives, in addition to debates surrounding vaccines and vaccine skepticism.

The Holocaust theme, which unites diverse public narratives developed by different audiences across various media environments in the pandemic’s second phase, predominates in print and most selected online journals, particularly *Corriere della Sera* (39.3%) and *Repubblica* (24%). There are numerous citizens from the Jewish community and historian-intellectuals within the media who seek to comprehend and articulate to their audience the profound episodes of violence and unfounded correlations between the Shoah and the pandemic in 2021. The data collected reveals a notable preference among newspapers, particularly those with an online presence, for publishing political and news content that displays “incivility”.

Anti-Semitic incidents comprised nearly half of all published posts in 2021 on *Corriere* and *Repubblica* (38.7% *CdS*; 41% *Rep.*). Content revolving around political and institutional matters is frequently discussed, but it should be highlighted that it only seems to address the ongoing health emergency. In reality, Covid-19 serves as a mere backdrop to the dispersed and divergent discursive creations surrounding concepts such as “conspiracy,” “neo-Nazism,” “green vaccine,” and “fake news.” One of the most noteworthy incidents that drew the focus of both Italian and international media was the attack on the US Capitol in Washington on the 6th of January 2021. The police and major American media monitored the profiles of the robbers, who were subsequently apprehended mainly through social networks. The perpetrators were described as a “transversal crowd” in terms of economic and social status that were responsible for the violence. Finally, amongst other digital newspapers considered, *Libero* and *Avvenire* appear to differentiate themselves from the mainstream agenda regarding what has emerged in the digital journalistic scene during the health crisis. Focusing solely on individual cases involving institutional figures or those known to the general public as victims or perpetrators reveals a presence of 67% of such cases. This approach pushes to the background the more “common” cases and everyday discussions of anti-Semitism and the “novax” phenomenon at the local level.

5. Conclusion

To address these issues, it appears that simply providing “good and complete information” (or counter-narratives) is no longer sufficient. In addition to this, efforts must be made to curtail sensationalism and increase the information operator’s awareness and knowledge (even scientific) regarding the phenomenon at hand. This will enable the media audience to better compre-

hend current events. Although not a new query, the information industry has been urged to take action on this matter for some time.

Journalism is today a demanding vocation. Collecting, presenting and interpreting news through any medium - press, cinema, radio or television - demands not only technical expertise in light of the remarkable progress in communication technologies, but also the ability to fathom and explain the intricate and swiftly changing landscape of contemporary times. (The Training of Journalists, Unesco, 1958, pp. 11-12).

To conclude this analysis, this paper aims to assess the level of media coverage surrounding anti-Semitism and contemporary forms of hatred in Italy. This will form the basis of a grid for focus groups in law and information. It establishes the critical questions that arise in relation to journalistic communication of hate crimes and the issues that persist with regards to the media-tization of “migrant” anti-Semitism. The paper will briefly present the main aspects that have emerged regarding the “state of the art” in this area:

– *State of art*

It can be challenging to identify or define a singular media agenda and its features. There is frequently a crossing-over of content reported in both traditional and online media. Counter-narratives or pseudo-events arise from the nature of ongoing social emergencies, which in turn reinforce or replicate certain theses widespread in society.

This situation contributes to inflated polarization and misinformation levels due to the large volume of accessible data and connected audiences.

The public sphere is fragmented. The media logic of entertainment dominates, although news and insights into the Jewish world’s historical and cultural aspects or significant national institutional events (such as January 27th) are occasionally present.

– *Critical issues*

Emotional evaluations that support strong opinions are commonly favoured in traditional and digital media. The portrayal of migrants as a public nuisance is a recurring theme in the public discourse each year. In instances, migrant discourse has been integrated with anti-Semitic rhetoric, further complicating the fact-checking process for information professionals and users.

It is evident that identifying the normative dimension of information on anti-Semitism and migratory phenomenon presents challenges. To address this, there is a need to enhance slow journalism and training for journalists in complex themes such as “denialism” and “conspiracy theory”, without oversimplifying or generalizing the issue.

Journalism should strive to go beyond reporting events and their associated emotions, and instead actively seek out the path towards accepting and appreciating differences. This involves reframing the production of news as an exercise in understanding and evaluating the newsworthiness criteria to mitigate any potential harm caused by media in the public sphere.

The issue at hand is that while the public discourse highlights the disparity between on-screen and off-screen relationships, it falls short in providing us with the necessary means to comprehend it objectively. Some media outlets and political ideologies have over time propagated animosity and apathy, which sociologist Silverstone has labelled as “repression strategies”.

Perhaps it is time to create a righteous and accountable public sphere, consisting not only of information, but also of other components. A space is defined by relationships, social communication, attention, and listening to others; a novel media environment where the stories of our society are constructed.

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