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**ANGLO-AMERICAN MASS MEDIA AND THE ILVA CASE:
A LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE**

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Preface: Newspapers in modern Britain

As a method for communicating items of news, it is hard to imagine a less efficient way than newspapers. When you read a national daily newspaper, you are in fact reading about events which happened the day before and the content cannot be updated once it has been printed. The audience in the modern digital world have demonstrated a desire for more immediate and up-to-date news reporting. So bad are newspapers at achieving this that the owners, eager to remain a player in the huge news media market, all operate online versions of their products which unlike their printed cousins can be updated frequently. News can be sent via text message to a mobile phone which incidentally is likely to have access to the internet where online news sites are readily available from news broadcasters such as Sky, CNN or the BBC and from newspaper producers. TV news is broadcast 24 hours a day on channels such as BBC News 24 or Sky News, and radio news is usually broadcast at least once every hour. In both instances of broadcast news, any breaking events can be incorporated at any time should they be deemed to have enough news value.

So where does this leave the newspaper which, except for the addition of photography and colour, have remained almost unchanged since they first appeared in the seventeenth century? A useful starting point is to analyse the word ‘newspaper’. If we assume that news is generally taken to mean new information, then newspapers are generally misnamed. Well over half the content of even the most information-packed newspapers consist of advertising and non-news items such as interviews, obituaries, entertainment, and so on. In a content analysis conducted for her book *The Language of Newspapers*, Danutah Reah found that in their editions of Thursday, September 6 2001, the *Guardian* had a news content of 41% whilst for the *Sun* the figure was only 28%. Notwithstanding the ephemeral and quickly out-of-date nature of newspapers, the content is, if these figures are found across the range of British titles, mostly not actually news. (Reah, 2002).

Newspapers then should perhaps be more accurately called ‘journals’, that is a record of the day they are printed, or more accurately the events of and the issues which existed on the day before they were printed. Newspapers are, according to Reah, artefacts of the commercial and political world, and it could be argued the ideological and cultural world too; that is to say that they are a physical record or a journal which reflect the time in which they are printed and are not a serious competitor for the kind of interactive, dynamic and up-to-the-minute news found elsewhere.

Nevertheless, newspapers are still sold in the UK in their millions every day.

There is still quite an appeal to sitting down with a



cup of tea and a biscuit to read the paper. Thousands of people enjoy them on coffee breaks at work and for many, Sunday afternoons just wouldn't be the same without the crossword or the previous day's sports results. In these respects, newspapers quite undeniably have the edge over TV or internet news. Circulation figures are measured by the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) and are published in a variety of places. Perhaps the easiest source for the data is the *Guardian* newspaper which publishes the figures for each month's sales in its media supplement. The numbers below show the figures taken from the *Guardian* for August 2009 with an analysis of the circulation compared to the same month from 2008.

Newspaper	August 2009	August 2008	Percentage change
<i>Sun</i>	3,128,501	3,148,792	-0.64
<i>Daily Mirror</i>	1,324,883	1,455,270	-8.96
<i>Daily Star</i>	886,814	751,494	18.01
<i>Daily Record</i>	347,302	390,197	-10.99

Newspaper	August 2009	August 2008	Percentage change
<i>Daily Mail</i>	2,171,686	2,258,843	-3.86
<i>Daily Express</i>	730,234	748,664	-2.46
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	814,087	860,298	-5.37
<i>The Times</i>	576,185	612,779	-5.97
<i>The Financial Times</i>	395,845	417,570	-5.2
<i>Guardian</i>	311,387	332,587	-6.37
<i>Independent</i>	187,837	230,033	-18.34

These figures make for interesting reading. The only newspaper not to suffer a fall in sales over the twelve months to August 2009 was the *Daily Star*. The general trend for sales of national daily newspapers in Britain is, according to these figures, one of decline. It would be too simplistic to say that the decline was due entirely to the fact that news is more readily available elsewhere since as we have seen above, newspapers have not really been at the forefront of news dispensation for a long time. There are other reasons which may account for this decline. Maybe during the economic downturn and recession which affected most of the world throughout 2009, people decided that little luxuries such as a daily newspaper were dispensable as they sought to cut down on expenditure, or perhaps it was due to the closure of small newsagents which have for years provided delivery services and which unlike supermarkets tend to always be located in heavily populated areas within walking distance of most of the residents. Many of these shops fell victim to the recession. On the other hand, the fast-paced modern world does not, for many, allow for quite so many coffee breaks and quiet moments in which a crossword or anagram puzzle is attempted. Maybe it's a combination of all of these factors but whatever the reasons, an industry cannot afford to sustain such losses over a long period of time.

1. Journalism in Britain

In this chapter I will make a general description of British news production. At the very first point I want to clarify that news are necessary partial lies, because it is impossible to describe an event as a whole: we need to make a selection of the facts of the reality we want to represent.

Starting from this step, my main concern is to show that the content of newspapers is not facts about the world. *News is a discourse which represent the world through language*. As a semiotic code, language include a structure of social and economic values which it imposes on everything is discussed. So news inevitably shapes the facts it deals with. In this sense news is a representation, a practice which intervenes in *the social construction of reality*.

1.1 Narrative in the news

I want start the analysis of news practice by saying that it is based on *narrative*. According to Edward Branigan “narrative is one of the ways we organise and understand the world”, it is “a way of organising spatial and temporal data into a cause-effect chain of events with a beginning, a middle and end that embodies a judgement about the nature of events”. All media, both real and fiction forms, are subject to this kind of shaping and all stories, in whatever media and whatever culture, share certain features. But certain types of media are able to “tell stories” in different ways; that is the case of news (Branigan, 1992).

As we have already said, narrative is the organisational structural principle through which a story, an event or any situation is represented. However, this structure often do not reflect perfectly the concrete and is modified to fit the expectations of whose will read (the world being organised in different basic structures, a concept I will deal hereinafter). This means that *narrative structure influences the judgement of audience* (readers in our case): the way in which a story (or event) is told induce people to take side about the fact, positive or negative. In

other words, the structural possibilities available to tell a fact are able to influence the receiver idea about it, positively or negatively according to the way it is exposed.

Tzvetan Todorov, a Bulgarian linguist, studied that in all stories is established a simple three-point schema: 1. Equilibrium; 2. Disequilibrium; 3. New equilibrium. The “once upon a time” moment (equilibrium) is disrupted by a series of closely related events (disequilibrium) which conduct to a different final equilibrium (new equilibrium). To someone this theory may sound like the recurrent time-line of every story, with a beginning, a middle and an end; but this is deeper: the Todorov “equilibrium” do not simply describes a status quo, it also explicates how this is set up and why in a certain way and not in another (Todorov, 1977).

Todorov’s theory may be very useful in the interpretation of news; in reading a news we will ask ourselves what is the background and how was the state of affairs before the fact became newsworthy. Also the “end” of a news is far from being surely adherent to reality. For example, newspapers often speak about the end of wars similarly to the “and so they all lived happily ever after” of the fairy tale. They do so as to leave out stubborn elements of the war that in fact go on happening: people suffering for injuries, arms trade, etc.

The French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss argued that all stories have a dependence on binary oppositions, a conflict between two qualities or terms. He was not interested in the events order of the plot, but in looking beneath it for deeper paradigmatic arrangements of themes. If this concept is applied to the study of reality, it produce key boundaries or differences within cultures, with internal divisions and unequal weight or value attached to one side of the pairing (all the reality is based on the concept of difference). This theory can go alongside to the concept, elaborated by the French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, that language often produces meanings through defining terms as being the opposite of other terms: good – evil, black – white, etc. It takes us to the definition of semiotics (Lévi-Strauss, 1958).

1.2 Semiotics, sociolinguistics and social discourse

Also called “semiology”, semiotics can be defined as the study of signs or, better, as the study of the social production of meaning by sign systems, of how things come to have significance. Verbal language is just one of many system of meaning; other systems can be defined and studied, such as gesture.

Semiotics highlights that our perception of reality is itself constructed and shaped by the words we use in various social contexts. In a sense, language determines much of our feeling of things. This theory arises from an anthropological study of language made by two famous linguists: Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf. They combined the assumptions of linguistic relativity and linguistic determinism to prove that conceptions of reality are peculiar to different speech-communities.

Relativity maintains that languages differ radically in their structures; this is simply demonstrated by the fact that different languages possess different vocabulary systems relating to comparable conceptual areas: for instance, Eskimos have in their language detailed distinctions between kinds of snow, while English having just few nouns to separate different snowy condition (not types of snow).

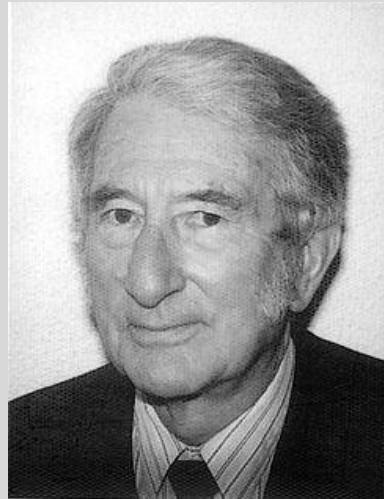
Determinism said that differences of linguistic structure cause the speakers of different languages to “see the world” in different ways. Language users are predisposed to categorize their experience according to the mental map engraved in the semantic structure of their habitual linguistic usage.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is in a sense followed and enriched with a functionalist theory made by the British linguist M. A. K. Halliday. He said: “The nature of language is closely related to the functions it has to serve; these functions are specific to a culture. The particular form taken by language is related to the social and personal needs that language is required to serve”. Modernizing this idea can be very useful in our matter; all the features of a speech act (from pronunciation and accents to lexical selection) are influenced by culture. For instance, American linguist William Labov demonstrated that variants in pronunciation correlated systematically with the age, the sex and especially the socioeconomic class

of speakers. So, starting from kinds of pronunciation, we can make taxonomies of groups of individuals of different classes, generations and sexes, talking with different degrees of formality (Halliday, 1978; Labov, 1972).

It appears than that the phonetic structure of people's speech reflects their social position and the circumstances in which they are speaking, but it also expresses their view of the way society is organized, and of their own position within the social network. An example could be the switching from an official language (English rather than Italian, French, etc.) to a dialect of a small town, and vice versa: the choice which the villager can make between the two "languages" expresses a view of the world, an ideology dividing local from external values. A similar situation can be found in bilingual communities (e.g. in Puerto Rico, both Spanish and English are official languages), where one of the languages signifies solidarity and local identity, and the other embodies an official, external view of the world. Also personal pronouns usage and choice (in those languages where two second personal singular pronouns are available, one to address a person in a formal way, the other informally) are useful in this field. The pronoun systems are a representation of social relations, part of the mechanisms for reproducing the orders of power. The ideological systems lying under choices of name or pronouns are relevant in media studies.

Halliday introduced the term "register" in contrast with dialect; dialect was variation of language according to user, register was variation according to use. In Halliday's theory, registers are differentiated by the formal linguistic features which typically occur; for example, scientific writing is marked by technical vocabulary, syntactic complexity and other features. Agreeing or disagreeing with



Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday.

His internationally influential [systemic functional linguistics](#) model of language (linguistics is the study of "how people exchange meanings by 'languaging'") is the starting point of every study on how media influences audience through language.

the notion that a language consists of a set of registers, the central point of this concept is very important for the *theory of language representation*.

The linguistic construction of discourse always relates to its contextual circumstances. They have been proposed several schemes for classifying the contextual forces influencing linguistic variation. But the *causes* of linguistic variation are not verifiable features of the immediate context; they are fundamentally *social, political and economic*, outside the speaker's control. In this sense, the choice between formal and informal addressing dealt with previously in the pronoun study absorbs a highly symbolic obligation: it emerges from a hierarchical society built on unequal divisions of power and privilege between groups of people. As a consequence, part of the speaker's ability in his communicative role is the facility to recognize linguistic forms as appropriate to certain circumstances. It is not a matter of content: the form of language (lexicon, pronunciation, etc.) identifies a kind of discourse and its context. So, *the forms of language encode a socially constructed representation of the world*.

The crucial point now is that the values are already in the language. Ideology is already fixed in the available discourse: we need to select a style of discourse which is appropriate in the particular communicative setting, and the related ideas follow automatically. Gunther Kress gives a *definition of discourse* that is perfect for my study: "Discourses are systematically-organized sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution. They define, describe and delimit what it is possible to say and not to say with respect to the area of concern of that institution. A discourse gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object, process is to be talked about" (Kress, 1985).

1.3 Genre, institutions and news discourse

This concept of discourse allows us to move toward journalistic discourse. In written news, the writer's identity and creative individuality are irrelevant to the communicative situation (especially in certain kinds of news, such as editorials). The article is constructed according to the ideological conventions of the newspaper it is part of. The voice of the reporter has certain economic and political functions which are related to the newspaper's place in the industrial and political arenas of contemporary world.

Of course journalists have personal writing styles but, in order to understand the text, a reader must recognize the style through knowledge of his/her own personal culture and be able to read into it the values it deeply embodies. We are here in the field of the reader's role in news discourse; it has to be supported by the writer himself/herself, who must select linguistic options which regularly satisfy the model expected by the reader. Otherwise, the communicative force of the article breaks down. There exist several linguistic strategies through which journalist can write in a comprehensible "familiar" way, easily "decoding" by newspapers readers. One of them is "public idiom", but I will examine this aspect in depth later.



The elections of George W. Bush in 2004 and Barack Obama in 2008 prompted quite different coverage from the *Daily Mirror*.

To understand better the idea of "satisfying expected models" the concept of *genre* could be suitable. It is one of many principles of classification. To make an example, maps are also forms of classification. Road maps always leave many features out to emphasise only some useful-for-drivers features of the landscape. Media texts (all of them, also written news of course) are categorized by genre in-

to groups with similar characteristics. We can recognize a media text and understand it if we know the genre which it belongs to. This process is ruled by a *system of expectations*, which is based on both repetition and difference. To recognize the genre of a text we need to decipher its peculiar iconography, which is specific for every genre.

The definition of genre is strictly related to the broader concept of *institution*. We all grow up within a range of different institutions, also formal such as legal system. The Government, a town council, as well as a university are all institutions. To be more correct, we are part of these institutions, we know how to behave within them and we share their values. We also belong to a variety of social institutions such as the family, but within this group too, our *behaviour is controlled*: we all act in institutionalised ways. So everyone working in a branch of the media industry will also be subject to “institutional restriction”.

Institutions are socially accepted because of several reasons. They are strong and resistant because they have a history behind, they are generally recognised as having been established for many time. Consequently they make rules and patterns specific ways of working, preserving the status quo. To do so they organise individual workers’ activity in order to achieve a common goal (chosen in most cases by one or few individuals constituting the top of the institution’s hierarchy). Working practices include a set of values associated with the purposes of the institution, which have to be shared by all the workers. The example of newspapers fits perfectly here. In the UK media stage, journalism has a history of clearly defined training itinerary for entry and progression through the profession. In the past, newspaper groups organised out-and-out training schemes which allowed journalists to learn their “trade on the job”. Today, most journalists receive an introduction to appropriate working practices and acceptable set of ideas to handle, with a strong institutional sense of what it means to write for a newspaper.

What I have argued is that newspapers consolidate a community: *newspapers are part of a sociolinguistic constructed group* whose purpose is creating *solidarity for commercial motives*. The readership will buy the paper and also the products advertised in it, and unconsciously will behave as to favour the interests

of the newspapers owner. If readers find news familiar and comfortable, they may also identify the ideology which it embodies as “common sense”.

The definition of “common sense” is strictly related to the general concept of *ideology*. Ideology refers to sets of ideas which give some account of the social world, usually a partial and selective one; it refers to the relationship of these ideas or values to the ways in which power is distributed; finally it refers to the way in which such values and meanings are



The *Sun* decided to remove its support for the Labour party in 2009 (left), some twelve years after it changed allegiance from the Conservatives to Labour (right).

usually posed as “natural” and “obvious” rather than socially aligned, working with or against particular sets of power.

Most discussion of ideology in cultural and media studies comes out of the work of Karl Marx. He analysed *capitalism* (the new profit-dominated system) and the power of two classes within it, the rising industrial manufacturers and the working class (the first called “capitalists”, the second “proletariat”). Marx argued that people’s relationship to the means of producing goods and wealth was key to the kinds of values and political ideas that they have: this caused *class difference*. The *dominant ideas* of any society are those which work in the interests of the ruling class, to secure its dominance: these ideas become the “common sense”. Related to this, Marx posits a *base-superstructure model* of the social role of institutions such as media. Such a model is also often called economic determinist since who owns the economic “base” is argued not just to influence, but to determine cultural and political activity. Finally, through these sets of power relationship, the dominant class is able to make workers believe that existing relations of exploitation and oppression are natural and inevitable (Marx, 1932).

Another theorist of the dominant value system was the Italian Marxist activist Antonio Gramsci. Instead of emphasising on the imposed dominance of a powerful economically ruling class, he argued that particular social groups in modern societies struggle for control of consensus. This consensus is called “*hegemony*”. Power is never secured once and for all but has to be constantly negotiated through these struggles. Also Gramsci then moved to the concept of “common sense”, arguing that it can be explored as a complex set of traces within “lived cultures” rather than a simple class-based ideology. This idea is strictly related to the modern construction of *nation identity*; it is a set of everyday lived practices obtained through a sense of belonging, a “banal nationalism”. National identity is very useful to those who wield political power to persuade men and women to fight and even die in wars of economic interest. The seize on national identity is also one of the most useful devices for news writers, in their practice of ideological discursive representation of reality.

1.4 Representation in the news: news values and stereotypes

Because the institutions of news reporting are socially, economically and politically situated, all events are always presented from some particular *angle*. A similar concept can be associated with every kind of media: although media images can seem realistic, they never simply present the world directly; they are always a construction rather than a transparent window onto the real. So anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position. Having said this, *I can define news as socially constructed*: the reported events are not on the paper because they are important, but because they satisfy the operation of a complex set of criteria for selection. The event selected is subject to processes of transformation which “encode” it for publication, according to numerous political, economic and social factors. From this point of view (the “encoding practice”), language can be seen as the medium, a mirror to the reality: linguistic structures (syntax, vocabulary, etc.) contribute to building a representation of world in news texts.

Sociologist Stuart Hall said that “events are not “naturally” newsworthy in themselves. News is the end-product of a complex process which begins with a systematic selecting of events according to a socially constructed set of categories”. So news is not “found”; it does not exist, free-floating, waiting to be discovered in the world outside; it could be defined as an artefact, a creation of a journalistic process. Events are selected through *newsworthiness criteria*, which are more or less unconscious in editorial practice. *The more of these an event satisfies, the more likely it is to be reported.* In news discourse studies, newsworthiness criteria are commonly referred to as “*news values*” (Hall, 1997).

A widely accepted analysis of news values is the list of critical factors formulated by sociologists Johann Galtung and Marie Ruge. I report and describe here several though not all of their key terms:

- Frequency (the time scale of events). Because newspapers are generally published once a day, a single event is more likely to be reported than a long process. For instance, the publication of unemployment figures on a certain day is more newsworthy than the long-term phenomenon of unemployment itself.
- Threshold (size). The bigger is the event, the higher is its news value. The dimension of a news is also related to the number of people involved. Unless they involve a celebrity, events happening to individuals will not usually count (except for local newspapers) in the same way as events covering a great number of people all together.
- Simplicity (unambiguity). The easier the event is to understand, the higher the news value. This is particularly important for popular newspapers which are not renowned for the com-



plexity of their news presentation; they are very adept at simplifying items which are too complex for their readership.

- Proximity. Geographical nearness accounts for some news value and places close to the source of the news tend to have higher value. However, proximity can also be cultural. Australia for example has no geographical proximity to the UK but events from there are likely to be in British news media, as Australia and the UK, possibly due to post-colonialism and the latent effect of the historic relations between the two countries, have a shared culture as exemplified by their common language, shared democratic ideology and cultural similarity.
- Reference to elite nations. Events which occur in certain countries are likely to have more value to news media than others. This (as well as the following “Reference to elite persons” and “negativity”) is a “culture-bound factor” influencing the transition from event to news; it encodes a “superpowers” ideology of dominating status of North America, Japan, Europe and Russia in world political and cultural affairs. Naturally for British news media, British news will always be important but are so also news from America and Europe, especially France and Germany with whom Britain share something of a history. For example, a natural catastrophe in Africa will be less important than a similar event happening in Italy.
- Reference to elite persons. Even news items of little real impact such as a new marriage or divorce, an illness or an accident which otherwise would not be deemed important enough for inclusion in the news media may become more newsworthy if it refers to certain ‘elite’ people, celebrities, politicians and royalty being the most notable.
- Negativity (reference to something negative). “If it’s news, it’s bad news”. Quite simply, bad news always sells.

The *Guardian* front page of April 30, 2011.

It shows what was the press coverage for the wedding of Prince William, Duke of Cambridge. All the articles in the page, even the advertisements above, are linked with the event.

- Continuity (something that can be proposed again). On the other hand, news which is expected as it is long and drawn out can have high news value such as a trial which can be presented with ‘cliff-hanger’ endings to each section, especially as the verdict approaches or in the case of a murder hunt as the police get closer to the suspect.

- Demand (predictability, desirability). Strictly related to “continuity”, it occurs when a long-life event gets to its end waited for some time. For example when the police capture a fugitive murderer who was hiding for many time. In a sense, it reflect the desire for something to happen.
- Composition or balance. Occasionally items which would perhaps otherwise be of less news value suddenly find themselves with higher value if they provide balance or contrast to the rest of the news content. For example, after the New York terrorist attacks of September 11 2001, the newspapers were full of articles about the event itself and those it affected, from the President of the USA to the father of a victim, to a fire-fighter to employees of the airline company whose airplanes were hijacked by the attackers, and so on. Shortly after however, certain news items of less news value based upon their size, negativity and unexpectedness appeared simply to provide a contrast to the news content of the previous editions and the horrors of the attack. Many of these news items provided contrast because they were either good news or simply not about the events of 9/11.



11 September 2001 attack to United States, remembered to be one of the worst day in the whole American history, was an event which fit almost all the newsworthiness criteria.

Given the age of Galtung and Ruge's work and the limited scope of the topics covered in their surveys, we might need to look at a more recent study such as that produced by Tony Harcup and Deirdre O'Neill in 2001. Their survey was more far reaching as it covered a thousand lead stories in three national newspa-

pers. It is clear that rather than abandoning or trying to replace Galtung and Ruge's theory, Harcup and O'Neill build upon it and update it by creating an alternative list of features which make a story newsworthy.

- The power elite. Stories involving powerful people or organisations.
- Celebrity. Famous people, for whatever reason.
- Entertainment. Stories which can be made entertaining by injecting humour or which involve human interest, relationships or show-business.
- Surprise. Stories which contain an element of unexpectedness or contrast to other stories which are currently in the public sphere.
- Bad news. Many people involved in the business of newspapers will argue that bad news sells.
- Good news. They will also argue that at times, so does good news. Heroic rescues or cures for illnesses are examples but often they are set against a context of bad news which led to the cure or the rescue.
- Magnitude. The more people involved or the potential for impact the higher the newsworthiness.
- Relevance. Anything which is seen to be relevant to the target audience.
- Follow-ups. Stories already in the news which the audience can follow as it unfolds.
- Newspaper agenda. Stories which fit in with the newspaper's own agenda on a range of issues, especially its stance on politics, social affairs and culture.

What is worth underlining now is that, in both Galtung/Ruge and Harcup/O'Neill lists of news values, *most of the factors are “cultural”*. Considering “negativity” for instance, there is no natural reason why disasters should be more newsworthy than triumphs. Better still, if we consider geographical and cultural “proximity”, they are founded on an ideology of *ethnocentrism*. As I briefly said before, news values are *culture-bound*. This concept takes us to fundamental elements in the field of news representation of reality: stereotypes.

Stereotypes are widely circulating ideas or assumptions about particular groups (they do not exist about all groups); the term is more derogatory than “type” or even “archetype”. Stereotypes involve both a categorization and an evaluation, often negative, of the group in question; they usually emphasize some easily grasped feature of the group and suggest that these are the cause of the group’s position; they often insist on absolute differences and boundaries between the group and all other external people.

Stereotyping is a process of categorization. This is necessary to make sense of the world, and the flow of information and ideas we receive every moment of our lives. We all have to be “prejudiced” in order to fit our place in any situation; we all belong to groups that can be typified and so stereotyped in this way: as students, as Christians, as Italians, etc. It is more or less the same process through which we often make sense of people we meet on the basis of gestures, dress, voice and so on.



From the 16th to the 19th centuries, an estimated 12 million Africans were shipped as slaves to the Americas. Blacks slavery is the historical base of the modern stereotype on black people conduct.

Stereotypes work by taking in consideration some easily recognizable features (physical for instance) presumed to belong to a group. They put these at the centre of the figure and then imply that all members of the group always have those features. They then take the last step of suggesting that these characteristics (often the result of historical process) are themselves the cause of the group’s position. One of the pretexts of stereotypes is that they can point to features that have a grain of truth, but they repeat that this characteristic has always been the central truth about that group. Two broadly well-known stereotypes are racism toward black people and sex gender difference between male and female, which have historically caused much suffering, isolation and death.

Stereotypes draw the basis of mental categories in readers' minds. News stories are constructed through these categories. So, in a sense, the product of news discourse in a commercial meaning is not news or newspapers, but rather "readers". Newspaper publication is an industry and a business, with a definite place in the nation's and the world's economic affairs. Then, the output of the Press will be determined by considerations related to: the need to make a profit; external relations with other industries, financial institutions and official agencies; relations with labour in general terms.

The Press is bound to be preoccupied with money, and this link it with interest in royalty and top-rank people, because emphasizing the "rightness" of hierarchy and privilege serves the interests of capitalism, in which the newspaper industry participates. It is not surprising that there is no successful socialist newspaper in Britain: the Press condemns socialism and trade unionism because their interests are antagonistic to the business of making money. Within the news, the views of the official, the powerful and the rich are constantly invoked to legitimate the "status quo". Also when it seems to run against established institutions, the newspaper, through the use of recurring language strategies, gives voice to authorities implying their ideology. This let me move to a related concept: "consensus".

1.5 Construction of consensus

The journalist has little control over the values and beliefs which are found in the language; he writes for an organization which is governed by the very same restrictions building the power élite ideology. Readers already know the meaning of the various newspapers codes, through living within the society which has shaped the institution of the Press. Ideas about sex, patriotism, class hierarchy, money, family life, etc. are values which exist in the society already; they have to be reproduced in the interaction between the newspaper text and the reader. A lively familiar approach and an individual original style are necessary linguistic virtuosities which we perceive when we read a paper. The fundamental aim for

the journalist is to word institutional ideology in a style appropriate to interpersonal communication: *institutional concepts have to be “translated” into personal thoughts*. The fundamental strategy in narrowing the gap between common people and authorities ideology within newspaper texts is the promotion of *oral models*, giving an illusion of conversation in which common sense is spoken about matters of consensus.

Each newspaper has a subjective and recurring organizational system in its approach to readership, defined as “*mode of address*”. This means that the same topic or event will be treated differently even in publications with a similar outlook, depending on the part of the readership they want to address. Using Hall’s words again, the language employed will be the “newspaper’s own version of the language of the public to whom it is principally addressed (and which constitutes the basis of the producer/reader reciprocity)”. Hall calls this form of address the “*public idiom*” of the media. The establishment of this “normal” style has ideological consequences: it is fundamental to the *construction of consensus* (Hall, 1997).

The idea of consensus grows out of the need of government and business to relate to a population which has to accept the rightness of the status quo and an amount of specific beliefs. For example, “family life”: since the interests of the Press coincide



The way different newspapers present the same news can vary enormously depending upon the newspaper in question, as shown in these two covers from 8 July 2005.

with those of government, newspapers have political motives for approving an idea of familiar stability.

Consensus supposes that for a given grouping of people the interests are held in common, subscribing to a certain set of beliefs. For my study the group

taken in consideration would be “the English population”, which forms the so-called “we grouping”. The pronoun “we” has a great implied significance in the field of English politics and, as a consequence, also in the field of journalism. It refers to a group of people in which moral values and social interests are shared. The content of consensual assumptions could be explained as a long series of propositions about contemporary Britain. Some examples should be useful (I put them within quotation marks because they sound as authority statements): “class differences are a thing of the past”, “workers and company-owners are equally benefited”, “there is no more real division between North and South”, “elected government effectively reflects the choices of the population”, “we have freedom of speech and press”. Several economic and demographic facts could prove the falseness of these propositions. It is here that language play is predominant role through news texts: it is well used by journalists to convince readers that the reality fits in with consensual assumptions, e.g. whether or not class differences do actually exist, consensus establish that they do not.

Starting from few well-planned assertions within a news text, writers create a pyramid of consequential related beliefs and values. Steve Chibnall published a list of, on the one hand, values which news texts have to reflect (“Positive legitimating values”) and, on the other hand, values which should be condemned by newspapers (“Negative, illegitimate values”). However, as I previously said, negative events are the main stuffs of newspapers report because they fit the broadest number of newsworthiness criteria. This raises a great *contradiction in news discourse*: news texts should take the side of positive values which consolidate the status quo (such as legality, order, co-operation, tolerance, peacefulness, constructiveness, industriousness, responsibility, honesty, equality, etc., according to Chibnall’s list), but they always narrate negative stories (murder, illicit practice, rape, corruption, and so on). The theory of consensus can be preserved notwithstanding this contradiction thanks to a strategy called “dichotomizing practice”: *the construction of “us” and “them”*. The “us” is constituted by the well-behaving authorities group whose power ideology is shared and protected by newspapers, the “them” is filled with bad-behaving people (Chibnall, 1977).

Newsworthy negative facts (those which mirror the “Negative, illegitimate values” of Chibnall’s lists) can be narrated in news texts because they are condemned as being outside the range of consensus. People who practice bad behaviours are branded as “dissidents” and “subversives” and subjected to marginalization and repression. Here a second contradiction arises, which in my opinion is the most awful practice (ideological of course) of the Press in general terms. In the “them” of the consensus dichotomy are not only included bad-behaving people, but also all the people, or groups of people, which do not have the same cultural and economic interests as the “we” group of consensus. They are defined and treated as antagonistic sectional groups: blacks, homosexuals, trade unionists, foreigners, northerners, and so on. *This is the basis of the creation of stereotypes and the match point between them and the power ideology of consensus.*

Negative events are newsworthy not only because they often reflect serious issues (such as the increasing number of rapes in recent years) or disasters (such as a devastating earthquake), but also because they gratify a prurient voyeurism in news readers, the so-called “desire for the negative”. Taking this into consideration, a solution for the second consensus contradiction is quite simple to find: newspapers fill their columns with murders, rapes, frauds (etc.) especially when these are committed by people belonging to the “them”. To do a clarifying example, a rape will be more newsworthy if it is committed by a black man rather than by a “common” man of the “we group”. On the other hand, if a rape has been committed by a powerful man, maybe belonging to a government rank, the Press will hide and underrate it as much as possible. This tendency helps newspapers very much in persuading public opinion that the negative features bestowed to “them” are realistic, and finally, supporting the power ideology.

1.6 Lexical system of categories and oral models in the Press

An immense amount of discursive work has to be done by the Press to the upkeep of the “consensus illusion”. The world daily experienced by humans is full of situations which language is able to encode. The lexicon stores ideas structured around logical relationships such as oppositeness, complementarity, inclusion, equivalence: “man – woman”, “tall – short”, “legality – illegality”, etc. The validity of the nomenclature system is constantly reaffirmed by daily usage.

This system is linked with the consensus strategy because the statements occurring in the newspapers texts are expressed through a vocabulary of categories. The Press and the Politics use the same recognizable vocabulary of key terms which are mentioned as basic-level terms, natural categories (easily understandable by everyone); these words fall into systems and become natural commonplaces. The sense of using a simple range of terms and, consequently, a conversational style is narrowing the “discursive gap” between the newspapers and their readers. The construction of an illusion of informality and familiarity is useful to naturalize the stereotyped way in which reality is represented within news texts.

Conversation between news writers and readers implies a commonly shared view of the world that is taken for granted and does not have to be proved. Nevertheless, the great part of everyday conversation maintains subjective reality, and the greater part of stereotyped-reality-preserving in conversation is implicit. So, *lexical categories are the “taken-for-granted” background in ongoing conversation.*

The news text is co-produced by writer and reader, agreeing on the significance of a language on the basis of their shared knowledge of the world. The general term “schema” is useful for the representation of background knowledge: schemas can be defined as unit of unspoken knowledge shared by people, which allow readers to perceive experiences as coherent and always understandable. For instance, readers of a certain newspaper learn what to expect in its news reports: what kind of lexicon, what sequence of exposition, and so on.

Coming back to the “illusion of oral conversation”, also called “*the oral model*”, this is obtained in newspaper writing by several linguistic devices. I will explain some of them:

- Fragmented structure. During the speech act, grammatical units such as clauses are fragmented, through intonation curves, into shorter sections which are more syntactically independent. This effect is achieved by short, incomplete sentences.
- Typographical devices. They include anything that can break the uniformity of conventional writing; an example could be the employment of different typefaces to suggest the switching of stress and tone.
- Spellings differentiation. Voluntary errors in spelling or simplifications of spellings do refer to pronunciation in oral speech; for instance “wot” for “what”.
- Vocabulary. Informal use of slang and idioms, proverbs and impressive assertions.
- Informal address. The employment of first names, nicknames and diminutives also to address celebrities or important people in general.
- Contractions. The use of writing auxiliaries and negatives in the contracted form.
- Marks of time, place and person. Devices which give to a text the indicators of time and places, and of the participants: “now”, “tomorrow”, “then”, etc. for time, “here” and “there” for space and “I”, “you” and the inclusive “we” for the participants.
- Personal interaction. The use of explicit interactional statements such as questions and orders.
- Modal expressions. The employment of expressions signifying judgments, desirability, obligation and permission.

All these strategies suggest the presence of an individual subjectivity behind the written text, an illusion of a person speaking and giving his ideas.

It seems now clear that the relationship between newspapers producers and readers can hardly be said to be an equal one; the communication is largely one-way. Nevertheless, audiences are, generally speaking, the essential part of the media communication process: no media could exist without audience. So it is worth giving a deeper description of audiences.

1.7 Audiences

A usual common way of thinking about audience is as the group of individuals addressed and often partly “constructed” by media industries. Several approaches there exist to the study of audiences. From the point of view of my research about newspapers devices, the approach called “the effects model” seems to be the most suitable.

The effects model emphasize what the media do to their audiences. The language used in this model implies that ideas and meanings are in a sense “injected” into the mass audience through powerful encoded messages. Several theorists have studied this kind of media approach during the last century. The Frankfurt school, for example, began its researches theorizing the possible effects of modern media in response to the German Nazi's use of newspapers, radio and film for political propaganda aims in the 1920s and 1930s. The school argued then, during the 1950s, the impact of advertising and entertainment forms of media in United States. They underlined the power of capitalistic corporations which owned and controlled new media, restricting cultural life and creating the so called “mass culture”. This kind of culture was dominated by conformity, with no space for innovation and originality.



So we obviously understand that the power of the media within the effects model is usually negative. This way of approaching media often fall into a contradictory position: on the one hand, media produce inactivity and mental flatness; on the other hand, media produce activity but of a bad kind, such as violent behaviour.

Of course media messages can have effects of quite an immediate kind, but a more ideological latent influence is being claimed for the media. “The mass audience” usually consist of the “weaker” members of society (children, old people and lower orders); these could be defined as being current objectives of media producers. As, for instance, novels in the nineteenth century were thought to be potentially harmful for working-class women, the same present media such as comics, internet sites or bad advertising, are accused to be dangerous for children.

2. The Ilva case

The topic I am going to deal with in this chapter through the analysis of some articles from English newspapers is the critical situation of Ilva, a huge



steelwork factory situated in the Southern part of Italy, a hair's breadth away from the town of Taranto. The emissions of the plant are the cause of illness and death for the citizens of Taranto. Today, after about fifty years of activity and after a private business Group led by the Riva family bought the factory from the Italian State in 1995, the situation is collapsing. Environmental damage and health problems for inhabitants are no more endurable, and if Ilva managers want to continue the

production they have to upgrade the plants and put the emissions level in accordance to the law.

To know a bit more about the history of Ilva plant and of the town surrounding it, I would propose some paragraphs of an article written by John Tagliabue for the *New York Times* on February 17, 1994. It is titled “Italy's South Needs Sinews (Steel's Not Enough)”:

Italy's unification in 1861 revived the south, with Taranto becoming headquarters for the new Italian fleet's southern command. In the 1930's, the Fascist Government's military build-up brought another spurt of prosperity. When the decline of the naval base at war's end revived unemployment, the idea for the steel mill was born. [...] The steel mill was flung up in the early 1960's on olive groves near the city, a crash project of Rome's plans to revive the south.

This article goes back to the period when Ilva was owned by the Italian State and Riva Group was not engaged in it yet. It seems clear how at that time there was less consciousness about the environmental impact of Ilva steelworks; or better, everyone was aware of the danger but no one was bothering about it.

The piece shows preoccupation only for the economy and for the topic of employment. It gives fundamental importance to the role of Ilva plant in the setting of Italian and European business, stressing more than once that it is the largest steel mill in Europe:

Built in the early 1960's as part of a drive to develop southern industry, the Ilva mill is still reckoned to be Western Europe's largest steel plant. But today the mill has become a symbol of southern Italy's crisis, and a challenge to the imagination of the nation as it moves toward electing a national Parliament whose task will be to revive the economy and quell separatist sentiment in the north.

That is not to suggest that the changes sweeping Italy have bypassed the people of Taranto.

The big steel plant is part of the Government's sweeping plan to privatize state industries. The war against corruption in the region is being won, and Taranto, population 240,000, has an elected Mayor for the first time since 1992, when the national Government threw out the old city government for corruption and installed an administrator. Uncertainty Over Future.

But so far the changes have only stirred uncertainty and bewilderment about the future here. The privatization of the mill is certain to raise the local unemployment rate, already 25 percent. And so far a much-vaunted Government program to create 4,000 alternative jobs has produced only 300 [...].

The writer defends the position of the European Union in the dispute born when Ilva was built, highlighting twice how Europe rightly suggested Italy not to construct factories as big as Ilva:

They built it big, in a prevailing spirit of gigantism that has more recently come into question. Today its output of roughly eight million metric tons of steel a year still makes it Europe's largest. [...] When the steel plant's first stage of construction was completed, and construction jobs evaporated, Rome ordered the mill's capacity doubled. From 1970 to 1980, the number of steel jobs rose from 9,800 to 21,700. Europe Says Don't Do It. But with all the major Western European economies stretched thin by recession, the 12-nation European Community, now known as the European Union, has long since ordered Italy to stop propping up industrial dinosaurs like Taranto [...].

Tagliabue also stresses the development gap between the North and the South of Italy, supporting that Ilva should have been the means to bridge this gap:

Day and night, the smokestacks at the big Ilva steel mill heave plumes of orange, black and white into the sky, a sight that once inspired Government leaders to praise it as a "cathedral in the desert" that would heal a schism between Italy's prosperous north and undeveloped south.

The journalist includes in his article the account of a personal experience in Taranto. He gives a really disgusting description of the town:

The walk begins in the old city, an island of boarded-up homes and gracefully decaying palazzi, then runs across an iron bridge into the New City, with its broken sewer drains, trash bins piled high with uncollected garbage, and shops struggling against recession with midwinter sales of 50 to 80 percent off...

No doubt the statistics about the city recession are valid, but I think the writer's words are too harsh and narrow to narrate the experience of a single day in Taranto. However, I will overlook this because it is not my concern; through the article by Tagliabue I have pointed out the past background of the Ilva case, which allows me to deal with the present situation.

An article published on Friday 17 August 2012 appeared on the daily *The Guardian*. Its headline was: "Italian town fighting for its life over polluting Ilva steelworks". The discontent that Taranto citizens had been harbouring for many years finally exploded. The article was written right after plants sequestration by the judiciary, following months of strikes by Ilva workers and protests by the population:

"[...] The Ilva steelworks, owned by Italy's Riva family, employs 12,000 and breathes life into the depressed local economy, but has long been accused of killing off local people by belching into the air a mix of minerals, metals and carcinogenic dioxins – 8.8% of the total dioxins emitted in Europe, according to a 2005 study. More recent government figures put the cancer death rate in the area at 15% above the national average and lung cancer deaths at 30% higher. Prosecutors say emissions have killed 400 people in 13 years.

So few were surprised when a magistrate this month ordered the shutdown of the most polluting furnaces, described Ilva as "an environmental disaster" and placed members of the Riva family under house arrest, claiming they were "perfectly aware" of what they were dumping on Taranto. A former

employee was also put under investigation for allegedly paying off a government inspector to tone down a report [...].

In a critical circumstance like that, I think the tone used by the writer of the article could not be other but this. All the accusations made against the Ilva management blew up in a moment. We can read very precise percentages about the steelworks emissions and their consequences on Taranto population, including an alarming cancer death rate. However, even if the accusations against Ilva have been so hard and its plants confiscated, in the aftermath the situation changed to the point that

the Italian

government

had to inter-

vene to solve

the question.

During the last

days of No-

vember, the

Cabinet pro-

moted the so-

called “saving

Ilva” decree: it



The Ilva steelworks in Taranto, where layers of the black and red dust cover every pavement and lung cancer mortality rates are 30% above the Italian average.

grants Ilva the possibility of continuing its working activities but it obliges Ilva owners to upgrade plants and cut emissions according to the law within 2016.

I have read several articles talking about these last events; I will do an analysis of some of them in a short time. I want to specify before that the Ilva case is a broadly debated topic in newspapers because it fits several of the newsworthiness criteria (news values):

- The Ilva case reflects “frequency” value because the issue has been marked during the last year by a series of outstanding events (such as the sudden burst of strikes in July or the sequestration of Ilva plants imposed by judiciary), each one having a broad sense of newsworthiness.

- The events characterizing the Ilva case are all of “big size”, of great importance (“threshold” value) and, above all, involve a high number of people (Ilva workers, all the people who have a job which is somehow related to Ilva activities and their families).
- Ilva events reflects also “cultural proximity” to all the member nations of the European Union (Britain included) because the Taranto steelworks is the continent’s biggest; the European economic balance could be somehow influenced by the fate of the southern Italian mill.
- The issue obviously embodies the “reference to elite nations” value because the steelworks is placed in Italy.
- The question may be also related to “elite persons”, being Ilva owned by a group of people (the Riva family) who perform an important economic role in Italy (e.g. we remember Riva’s involvement within the Alitalia’s takeover bid in 2010).
- Unfortunately, the Ilva case can also be defined as a “negative” one, concerning the risk for many workers to lose their job. Furthermore, as we know, Ilva has been accused of polluting the neighbouring environment and being the cause of illness and death for Taranto citizens.
- The Ilva case reflects “continuity” and “demand” values because readers expect to know news updates about the facts concerning the fate of the steelworks and of its workers.
- The Ilva case has gained newsworthiness also because it is linked with other events of broader range, about Italian (and European) economy and employment.

The first article in my analysis is: “Monti acts in bid to save Taranto plant”, taken from the Londoner daily *The Financial Times*, published on November 30, 2012. This article by Guy Dinmore has been written right after the Italian government deliberation about the decree which, after been signed by President Giorgio Napolitano, will allow Ilva to resume its steel production, in spite of magistracy prohibition.

Even at a first reading, a repeated reference to authorities of the Italian government is evident; the name of the Italian prime minister Mario Monti appears three times just in the first part of the piece and in the headline too. Then we find the name of Italian President Giorgio Napolitano and that of the Minister for Economic Development, Corrado Passera. The point of view of these institutional figures is clearly placed at the focus of attention all through the article, defining the position that Ilva steelwork cannot absolutely be closed. The reasons for this assertion are all of economic and political interest: it is a question of defending a “national strategic asset”, preserving the national worldwide reputation (“We cannot afford to give an image of Italy as a country where...”) and the national economic stability (“a closure of Taranto would cause an “emergency” that could cost the Italian economy some €8bn to €9bn a year”). The writer himself sustains this theory with his own words, saying that “long-term closure of the plant would have serious knock-on effects”.

Neglecting personal opinions about what would be right or wrong doing in this situation, I want to underline the fact that this article completely omits the description of what is the environmental impact of the plant. There are no references to what the continuation of Ilva working would cause to the neighbouring area. “A private company that has denied prosecutors’ accusations of causing deaths through pollution”: this is the only weak reference to what has been the accusation done to Ilva by the judiciary (“environmental disaster” would have been a more correct definition).

This means that the opinion of one of the two sides in the dispute (that of the magistracy and of the part of the population who wants Ilva to close) has been completely overlooked. A similar behaviour proves that the writer’s position is clearly biased, devoted to the interests of the powerful leading ideology which wants to preserve the status quo. The quoted statements by Mr. Mario Monti (and the other Ministers), above all the words meant for effect “This is a real test for Italy”, entails a unity of interests of steel workers in the plant, steelworks management, the town’s population, and state government. Going deeper could be

seen a set of general abstract values including co-operation, work for the same purpose and economic reward for it.

There is, in the article, a constant discursive attention to the same segment of the society, including political leading people and rich factory owners: not only Cabinet ministers, but also “Italian officials”, “chief executives”, Carmaker Fiat and the Government as a whole (“Government fears of...”). Who is “at the other side” (the “them” of news discourse dichotomy), who has been accusing Ilva for its polluting activity is indicated as “overzealous prosecutor” who “are undermining confidence among industry and investors”. Also the accusation itself is put aside, with Ilva’s vindication placed strategically in the last paragraph of the piece: “Ilva has denied causing deaths through pollution...”. The article also reports the company’s denial of allegations of corruption and its supposed investments to upgrade the plant, underlining a sense of benevolence from the part of the management in this awkward situation. I want to repeat that Ilva’s assertions are not casually reported in the last few lines: the article has the ideological “structuring” sense of leaving the readers with reassuring words of the plant owners, which aim is trying to smooth ruffled feathers in a situation that is going against the management interests.

There is also a constant discursive preoccupation for the economic topic (shown by the words of Mr. Monti and Mr. Passera which I have taken in consideration yet) linked with the use of a broad economic and business semantic field: “time of economic crisis”, “protection of employment”, “unemployment levels”, “knock-on effects”, “emergency that could cost the Italian economy...”. This type of vocabulary reflects an inclination for a capitalistic idea of society construction.

From the point of view of linguistic tools, there is in the article a clear case of interpersonal modality: “the Taranto court *will be obliged to* lift its sequestration orders on the plant”. It implies a sense of “obligation”: the writer stipulates that the participant in the preposition (the Taranto court) ought to perform the action specified in the preposition (lift the sequestration orders on the plant). This

tool of modality is chosen again in the sense of supporting Ilva and the state government in their struggle for the restart of plant production.

There is also a case of passivization of a clause: “Arrest warrants for five more people *were issued* last Monday”. This clause may seem the headline of another article; the attention is stressed on the object (arrest warrants) placed in the typical agent position, and the agent (police men surely) has been omitted. A similar kind of structure has been chosen to distract attention from the “five more people” arrested because their involvement in Ilva management negligence.

We can now get on to the analysis of the second article: “Grappling With Italian Steel Plant That Provides and Pollutes”, taken from the daily *International Herald Tribune* (the global edition of the *New York Times*), published on December 9, 2012. This article was written by Rachel Donadio into the same period as that written by Guy Dinmore, after the promotion by the Italian government of the “saving Ilva” emergency decree.

In general terms, the piece seems to be less biased than the previous. It gives words also to the part considered the “them” of the dichotomy, who wants Ilva to put its emissions in accordance with the law or to close. We can read the words of an Ilva worker talking about the judicial investigations: “They are the only way to stop Ilva from destroying the environment”. Also the words of Dr. Patrizio Mazza, director of the Taranto hospital’s haematology department, are strong in this way, highlighting the large detrimental effects of the Ilva emissions for Taranto citizens. Also through the headline Donadio seems to show a balanced point of view in the question, placed between the idea of Ilva as polluting factory and Ilva as a business providing jobs and wealth. The use of the verb *grapple* in the same title even lets foresee a position unfavourable to Ilva.

But, on the other hand, all the article seems impregnated with a lack of specific accusations; the words about Ilva current situation: “It is the product of decades of physical and political neglect” seem to be too mild and generalizing, leaving responsibilities unspecified so that accusations to Ilva managers can be moved to the background. It is common knowledge instead that the present state of affairs

is all because of Ilva's neglecting management, started in the moment of the purchase from the national State in 1995 (after the State's sell off of the huge plant which no doubt should have been more safeguarded).

The protection of the government's ideology is explicit right after. The writer does not need to quote the words of cabinet ministers or the President (as it was in the previous article) to say that: "For Italy the plant is too big to fail". Bruno Ferrante, the president of Ilva, is present in two consecutive paragraphs of the piece. His words are reported to let the voice of Ilva be heard, to strictly defend its interests (the Riva Group, the factory owner, should have upgraded the plant) and he even hazards to say that cancer rates have been falling due to Ilva plants refinement.

With regards to the side effects of Ilva emissions, no doubt the writer speaks about the cancer rates in Taranto but she does not take the responsibility



Ilva workers planning their protest against factory seizure imposed by the judiciary.

of her assertions. Even if the quotation of scientific sources in a newspaper article usually gives more reputation to what is being described, in this case the statements of the experts are placed in a position which tends to mitigate the accusations (to Ilva for causing cancer). The writer does not speak about the problem with her own words (which could have been followed and confirmed by the quotation of the experts). In a sense she seems to say that the problem of the high cancer rates in Taranto is taken in consideration only by the scientific experts. This is evident in sentences like: "Analysts say that...", "some studies have found

that cancer rates...”; even the words of Dr. Mazza are called into question with “Although there are no official statistics”.

Also here we found a constant discursive attention to the economic topic. The semantic field of job and money is flourishing: “time of crisis”, “heart of a clash over Italian industry”, “economic concerns”, “emblem of the Italian economy”, “would cost the Italian economy more than \$10 billion...”, “spending from \$325 million to \$400 million...”, “to invest \$3.8 billion...”, “pays \$2,400 a month...”, “crisis point”, “largest investors”. The words of an expert on the steel industry are quoted to underline the economic problem which Italy will have on a European level if Ilva closes: “If Ilva shut down, it would be a great favour to German and French steel producers in this time of crisis”.

The writer’s position on the dispute seeps out in the sentence: “in an economy that is almost entirely dependent on Ilva”, “condemning” Taranto not to have different possibilities but the plant (Ilva enduring is the desire of powerful social class, who wants to preserve the status quo for the defending of its economic interests). The clause is strategically followed by the quotation of an Ilva workman who sees the steelworks as the only occupational opportunity in the town (“There aren’t other job prospects here”).

Even when the writer gives words to a dissident worker, she closes his quotation with the statement that anyway “he wanted to keep his job at Ilva, which pays \$2,400 a month” that is “high for Italy”.

Talking about syntactical strategies, I have to highlight a recurring typographical and ideological device in the piece. The first two paragraphs tell the story of an old woman having missed recently her husband for a sudden lung cancer (he had worked for Ilva for 30 years). The writer talks about Graziella Lumino in an informal way, so as to break up the greyness of the topic which the article deals with (disease and unemployment). The name of Graziella Lumino and her words will be proposed twice again in the piece, with the ideological discursive intent of distracting attention from the Riva Group faults in the crisis of Ilva.

Another device which I have to mention in the general informality of the article is the use of contrastive stress, obtained underlying certain important sentences such as that referred to Mario Monti government (“...that the technocratic government of Prime Minister *Mario Monti* inherited last year and has been *trying to repair before elections expected early next year*”). It is useful to say at last that even this article ends with the quotation of a leading member in the society, Mr. Monti words defending the Italian government conduct: “the new decree should not be called “save Ilva” but rather “save the environment, health and work”.

The third article in my analysis is: “Italian steelworks accused over cancers wins reprieve”, taken from the British daily *The Guardian*, published on November 30, 2012. Starting from its title and subheading, this article by Tom Kington shows political biases. Still into the period after the promulgation of the decree saving the Taranto’s Plant, the writer narrates events from the point of view of the leading part of the society, supporting the words and the ideas of institutional figures. The use of the verb “wins” in the title is meaningful. It gives the sense of a battle between, on a side, the part who wants Ilva closed or its plants modernized (the magistracy and the citizens tired of living in a polluted area), and, on the other side, the part who wants Ilva to continue producing (the Italian government, the Riva group and all the Ilva workers). The writer could have used several verbs in this case, such as *obtain, get or acquire*; the use of *win* shows a kind of participation and also satisfaction for the proclamation of government’s decree (shared of course with Ilva leaders).

The subheading, which summarizes the facts happened, seems to make things easier than they are: government has allowed Ilva to continue its working activities through the decree, but the steelworks’ leaders have to settle a project for the clean-up which must respect several narrow deadlines.

The syntactical organization of the article has to be discussed: what the writer wants to give importance to is highlighted by a *privileged* position in the sentence. Readers can rapidly understand this strategy, even at a first view of the paper: the five first paragraphs of the piece all begin with the account of some-

thing done or said by members of the “part” who supports Ilva working activity (“The Italian government”, “Mario Monti’s cabinet”, “Ministers”, “Monti”, “ILVA management”), with the effect, in a rather short article like this, of being biased. The writer clearly sustains the establishment, the small leading part of the society which has several economic interests in range of the “Ilva case”. As Kington specify, Ilva is “Europe’s largest steelworks”, and this is enough to clarify how its output is important for the economic stability of Italian government. No doubt the country economic balance has to lie at the heart of every Italians, but polluting and causing illnesses through the production of industrial goods is wrong and unlawful.

The choice of certain terms in the first part of the piece is significant. The verb “saved” in the first paragraph lets the reader understand how Ilva would have probably closed without the government interested intervention. The verb “allowed” in the second paragraph is strictly opposing to the double use of the preposition “despite”. This sentence structure serve the purpose of highlighting the government’s action (promulgation of the “saving Ilva decree”) in range of Ilva case (placed in the first part of the clause) as well as moving to the background (second part of the clause) the previously decision of the judiciary about the case (to partly close the plant looking forward to the cleaning-up improvements) and the disciplinary action against some members of the Riva’s family, being arrested for poor behaviour (this is the prove of how negative was the management of the steel-works).

The topic of economy is a key one also in this article. The probable consequences of Ilva closing (endanger 12,000 jobs) are sturdily compared with a serious damage for Italian economy. This assertion is soon justified, clarifying that “ILVA produces more than 8m tonnes of steel a year, 30% of the country's output”.

The words of Italian prime minister Mario Monti are strategically placed in a central position and seem to have the function of a generic reassurance for all those who had doubts about the rightness of the decree saving Ilva plants. Right

after Monti's words we find the warning of the Ilva leaders about their way of dealing with the question: they stingily threaten to close all their other mills in Italy if the Taranto one would be closed.

Another proof of a biased article is the fact that the writer narrates only about protests from that part of the society who wants Ilva to continue its activity: staff's strikes within the mill in Taranto and demonstrations of Genoa's employees in Rome. Kington completely overlooked several marches (the latest on December 15, 2012) done in Taranto (and also in other cities) by the citizens who want to preserve their rights: the right to work and have economic stability and, above all, the right to have a good health, to breathe a clean air.

The lack of importance given to the side who has been accusing



Thousands of people demonstrating against Ilva in Taranto (December 15, 2012).

Ilva for causing illnesses, the same who wants the plant to close or to be improved, is clear in the latest part of the piece. The only one being quoted is the leader of the Italian Green party; his name, Angelo Bonelli, is not casually positioned in the second half of the sentence, after his quotation, to give him less importance (differently from government's or Ilva's institutional figures which names are always placed at the beginning of clauses, as we have seen previously). People who charged Ilva owners and the government of Silvio Berlusconi with

being in agreement to allow Ilva to pass environmental checks in 2010, are mentioned twice with a generic “Investigators”. The writer does not give them name and surname. The way he talks about them (“Investigators *suspect* that...”) makes us understand how he doesn’t want to take on the responsibility for what they said.

In the same way the writer avoid mentioning the name of an Ilva manager accused of having subdued a report on the critical health situation in Taranto. Referring to him Kington say: “A company official...”. Nevertheless his name was already well known at the time of the article. This lack of personal details prove that the journalist want to conceal in a sense the poor behaviour of Ilva management in general.

The last sentence seems to be actually the most suitable end for a politically biased article talking about the Ilva case. Leaving readers with the mention of a lawyer for Ilva saying that Ilva does not pollute, the writer shows all his involvement in the battle against those who want the plant closed. Using the means at his disposal, the printed paper, he tries to persuade public opinion that Ilva is not a problem for Taranto’s environment and that it should continue smoothly its producing activities.

The fourth article I want to analyse is: “Court in dock over Italy steel plant closure”, taken from *The Financial Times*, published on August 15, 2012. This article written by Giulia Segreti goes back to the period when the Ilva case exploded and the judiciary had just sequestered Ilva’s plants. Its analysis is meaningful if contrasted with a whole reading of the article about Ilva published on *The Guardian* within the same days (Tom Kington, August 17, 2012. See references for the title), of which I have previously quoted a part (pages 29-30). It is clear how the two writers deal with the fact in two completely different ways.

The approach used by Kington is considerably less biased this time. He begins his article with a genuine concern about the bad life condition in Taranto. He seems to be really interested in the health problems caused by Ilva and he puts this issue into the foreground in the whole article. The writer quotes the sad and mel-

ancholy words of a Taranto's shopkeeper narrating the crushing consequences of Ilva's activity for the town and for its citizens' health. Furthermore, the writer mentions the name of the quarter nearby the plant, Taranto's most polluted overall (Tamburi), and he continues listing a whole series of percentages about the steel-work emissions and the cancer death rate it originates.

On the contrary, Segreti lets understand immediately that the field of her dissertation will be of another kind. Two terms in her first statement are essential in this sense: "political dispute" and "businesses". She clearly shows a certain rage against Taranto's court of justice (which has confiscated Ilva's plants), accusing it of being "contradictory" and having caused political and economic troubles. The writer therefore seems not to be interested in environmental problems at all; she rather attacks the magistracy as if it had done something wrong and unjustified. The term *in dock* used in the headline is the signal of what Segreti's attitude towards the Taranto court will be. The most suitable Italian translation for *in dock* is *sul banco degli imputati*, an expression which gives a strong sense of accusation. Segreti seems preoccupied only for the foreign investments that could be stifled by these juridical "contradictory rulings".

After the numerically detailed description of the critical situation in Taranto, Kington shows his approval for the decision of the magistracy. He hints to readers that in his opinion the arrest of plants has been the fairest measure to take in behalf of the town ("So few were surprised when..."). The writer's viewpoint about the question become even clearer when he narrates the marches of trade unions' members; he seems not to agree with them ("But what happened next was less expected...") and with the environment minister Corrado Clini who backed them. Kington sarcastically mentions Clini's statement ("losing your job was detrimental to your health.") defining it bizarre and he soon after quotes Angelo Bonelli, leader of the Italian Green party. Bonelli's words are not there casually, through them the journalist can belittle Clini's opinion according to which emissions would have been reduced recently ("Clini is lying about this...").

Segreti tells the reason which have caused the partial shutdown of the mill by the magistracy (“386 people have died of cancer over the past 13 years...”) and briefly makes reference to the polluted Tamburi area and to risen mortality rates. All this in only three lines. She hurriedly goes back to the economic consequences of Ilva closing through the use of a “but”, at the beginning of the sixth paragraph. Syntactically this “but” seems to mean that what it is going to be said (Ilva should not be closed to preserve work and Italian economy) is more important than what has been previously reported (Ilva causes illness and death). Segreti also quotes Clini’s words but she does not underestimate them; on the contrary, she uses them to confirm what she said before about percentages of unemployment rate. The concern about the deterring of foreign investors is followed soon after by the opinion of the former environment minister (under Berlusconi’s government) Stefania Prestigiacomo. Her clamorous statement against Taranto judiciary is shamelessly biased. Defining a “symbol” what has been causing several deaths (Ilva) really seems to be hazarded and to conceal a self-interest in the struggle for keeping the plant operant.

The Italian biggest consortium for methane distribution companies, the Cem, comprises among others the Coemi; this is Prestigiacomo’s family firm and it works at oil mining in the Mediterranean basin. The point is that the Coemi has got among its customers some Italian oil distributing companies like Esso, Erg and Eni (*Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 2011; see references for further information). In Taranto’s broad industrial district there is, apart from Riva’s plants, Eni’s Italian biggest oil refinery. In a zone where Ilva has monopolised all industrial businesses, also a giant like Eni in a sense has “to hinge” on the big steelworks. And of course on its fate. It is common knowledge in Taranto that if Ilva closes, Eni’s branch will probably close too. This is not an obvious consequence, but it is almost sure that if the steelworks closes, Eni will be the next factory indicted for polluting the town. Here it is why ex minister Prestigiacomo has sniped at Taranto’s magistrates and shown such a great interest in the Ilva case.

The example of Stefania Prestigiacomo can be very useful to understand why this has become so a wide-ranging case, hard to be solved. Behind a huge es-

tablishment like Ilva there are lots of financial interests; Ilva provides work for thousands of people around Italy. Ilva includes both inside and outside of its perimeter plenty of other small firm: there are companies working for providing Ilva with raw material lying around the whole Italian state territory. No doubt there are, in Italy and also abroad, many business men, factory owners, rich and powerful people and politicians like Prestigiacomo, whose business is more or less directly connected with Ilva activity. These are the most essential reasons why, in general, government and trade unions want Ilva not to shut down.

Going back to Segreti's article, I need to underline that the quotation of two environment ministers in quick succession, the current (Clini) and the former (Prestigiacomo), cannot be casual. The Ilva case has risen just from environmental



An Ilva steelworker demonstrates in Genoa to keep the factory open and prevent lost jobs.

problems caused by plant emissions during the last decades, but the two ministers' opinions are alike in supporting Ilva and its production. This is a stratagem used by the writer to persuade readers that Ilva is not a problem for Taranto's environment and that it should not be closed. All this confirms how biased this article is. Even when the writer

makes room for people closer to the population, like the Taranto's leader of a trade union (Fiom) who knows very well the critical town situation ("the town 'has been left to rot for too long'..."), the conclusion is always the same: Donato Stefanelli (Fiom's leader) "is opposed to closing the plant". His statements too run into economic concerns ("It would be a complete catastrophe to close Ilva....it would put the whole sector on its knees").

The piece includes mournful thoughts of an old man resident in Taranto who agrees with judiciary measures (“The ruling by the judge [to close the plant] is correct...”). He represents all the “several local citizens’ and environmental groups” who “support closing the plant” which Segreti has mentioned in the paragraph before. They are more than several, and more than all medias (also Italian) has been saying since the case had exploded. They were a lot also many time before August 2012. Notwithstanding, the writer mitigates man’s words with statements of Legambiente and Taranto Fim’s leader. They maintains that “the plant can be cleaned up without closing it”. Sentences like “Health, environment and work can live together” are recurrent in Taranto during this period, and they always come from the same part: politicians, business men or trade union leaders. I think they are over-recurrent, especially if they are intended for a population (or, better, a large part of it) who knows very well that they are not realistic. Health, environment and work will never live together in Taranto if Ilva continues its usual working activities; there is no cleaning up to stand on.

Kington gives a bad description of Taranto, also comparing it with other touristic places in Apulia. “Pollution is part of local life” are the gloomy but realistic words he uses. However, he clearly lets understand that town’s condition is caused in a large part from Ilva oppressive presence and from its polluting impact. Not casually he talks soon after about mussels, Taranto’s speciality (this is the only article, including Italian ones, in which I have read something about Taranto’s traditions), specifying how also mussel cultivation, together with agriculture and breeding, are struggling against problems caused by Ilva contamination (“3,000 livestock with excessive dioxin levels were slaughtered...”, “beds were moved away from the steelworks”).

The conclusion is what differentiates most the two articles. In Kington’s one, the assertion of a local activist, Rossella Balestra, has the value of final recap. It really explains what has provoked the Ilva case: politicians attacks judges because they fill overcome; politicians would have never taken on the responsibility for doing what magistracy has done (stopping Ilva plants and holding an inquiry into Riva group’s conduct). Balestra’s awareness campaign in Tamburi area re-

veals another lack in Taranto political administration: “the council had done little to publicise its ban on contact with the polluted soil”. This can be defined as being a big fault of the mayor and all town councillors, if we think that, especially in a suburban zone like Tamburi, squares are often crowded with children playing with ball or anything else. Balestra’s words are followed by the opinions of, in a sense, all the social categories who want Ilva’s upgrading or closing. We read: the idea of a doctor, Patrizio Mazza, about Ilva’s noxious emissions (he has no balanced view about the fact, as he strongly supports the factory’s closing); meaningful words of an Ilva workman who honestly admits having changed his mind about Ilva case (he now supports judiciary, having previously protested against judges’ rulings); statements of a politician, Bonelli, maintaining that Taranto’s economy will not suffer from Ilva closing if government grants town council considerable investments (as it has been in other cities where it was the same Taranto industrial situation); impressions of two common citizens, the first (Vincenzo Pignatelli, an ex Ilva workman survived to an acute disease) specifying that the current state of affairs has been caused by the workers’ lack of foresight (“Workers there just wanted to think about their work, not illness...”), the second (Francesco Mastrocinque) hinting on paltry useless pseudo-improvements Ilva has done in the surrounding area (“putting fountains in the cemetery...”) which contrast with powders and slag continuously polluting the town. It is no coincidence that this article begins and ends with remarks of the same person (Mastrocinque) talking about the fine black and red dust due to Ilva emissions. At the beginning he sadly remembers his friends died for respiratory illness; in the end he gloomily talks about the cemetery tombstones covered by the powder. It sounds like a macabre metaphor between “dust” and “death”.

Concluding her article, Segreti shows once more how biased she is. The writer reminds the government measures against magistracy’s rulings and she highlights (by a single-clause paragraph) the miserable elusive fund it approved for land reclamation works around the plant. Everyone who has a minimum competence about the subject and knows how wide Ilva is, can easily understand that 336m euro are not enough for the purpose. These can be considered as being small changes if compared with the amount of money suitable for removing the

slag emitted by a big steelworks like Ilva. The last two paragraphs constitute a clear defense of Ilva interests. The writer thoroughly specifies Ilva's high percentages of production and employment, as to imply that the plant cannot be shut down and to persuade us not to be in favour of the closure. Concluding the article with Riva group statements seems to mean that these mirror the actual truth about the case: what Ilva says is right, more than all has been said before. Reporting that Ilva would have respected environmental laws and emission limits really sounds like making a fool of readers.

3. Media and environmental legislation

I think it would be worthy clarifying in detail how all these political controversies have arisen. The last paragraph of Segreti's article can be the starting point of a digression about factories environmental impact and emissions in general, I will come to Ilva later.

Industrial activities play an important role in the economic well-being of Europe, contributing to sustainable growth. However, industrial activities also have a significant impact on the environment. The largest industrial installations account for a considerable share of total emissions of key atmospheric pollutants and also have other important environmental impacts, including emissions to water and soil, generation of waste and the use of energy. Emissions from industrial installations have therefore been subject to EU-wide legislation for some time. The EU has adopted in 1996 a set of common rules for permitting and controlling industrial installations in the [IPPC Directive \(Directive 96/61/EC\)](#), which has recently been integrated and re-codified with the Directive 2008/1/EC.

The IPPC Directive concerns integrated pollution prevention and control, which sets out the main principles for the permitting and control of installations based on an integrated approach and the application of best available techniques (BAT), included in the so called BRefs (BAT reference documents) which report a detailed description of the industrial processes employed in the sectors stated in the directive. BAT are the most effective techniques to achieve a high level of environmental protec-



A steelworks provided with modern plants, built in the countryside, far from residential zones.

tion, taking into account the costs and benefits. In essence, the IPPC Directive is about minimising pollution from various industrial sources throughout the European Union. Operators of industrial installations operating activities covered by Annex I of the IPPC Directive are required to obtain an environmental permit from the authorities in the EU countries. About 52.000 installations are covered by the IPPC Directive.

Other EU main pieces of legislation concerning this field are:

- Several sectoral directives, which lay down specific minimum requirements, including emission limit values for certain industrial activities (large combustion plants, waste incineration, activities using organic solvents and titanium dioxide production).
- The Regulation on the *European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register* (E-PRTR), which makes accessible to the public detailed information on the emissions and the off-site transfers of pollutants and waste from approx. 24 000 industrial facilities.

There are several Italian regulations on the subject of environment, taking in the obligations of European Union (IPPC Directive and the others). The most important among these regulations is the so defined *Single Environmental Text* (Legislative Decree 3/4/06 n.152), which includes general provisions about environmental issues.

The last acknowledgement of the IPPC Directive (2008/1/EC) in Italian legislation is the Legislative Decree 29/6/10 n.128, which has been essential for the development of Ilva case. Actually this decree partially modifies the Single Environmental Text, including in it the so called AIA (Autorizzazione Integrata Ambientale). The AIA is a specific focused measure which authorises a plant or part of it to work within particular conditions (added into the second part of the decree 152/06). And here is the point: an AIA has been released for Ilva on October 26 2012, which requires, in advance of the European deadlines, the use of best available techniques for the production of iron and steel, in order to protect the health and the environment. The problems occurred when the Italian government

had to convert the AIA into law. The Law 24/12/2012 n.231, so defined “saving Ilva”, essentially embodies the AIA adding that Ilva could continue its working activity in order to implement the requirements of the same AIA. This is what precisely caused a jurisdictional dispute between the power of government and the authority of magistracy, judges having imposed the seizure of the plant four months before (August 2012). In an interview the Italian environment minister Corrado Clini said: ”In order to implement the AIA is necessary continuity of production at the plant”. No doubt the AIA has to be applied somehow, I am sure it will be the salvation of Taranto in the long term. But now, in the short term, it would be appropriate focusing on the environmental surveys made in Taranto, which have defined Ilva emissions as being hazardous to the health of citizens and workers.

Now I want to go a little more deeply in the question of Ilva’s overabundant emissions. I will do so by reporting some translated paragraphs of an article (published on *Il Fatto Quotidiano*; see references for further information) written by a professor living in Taranto, Alessandro Marescotti. He is one of the most relevant activists within Taranto’s struggle against pollution, and he is the leader of Peacelink, an association for environmental rights which essentially started what I call the Ilva case through its notifications to Taranto judiciary in 2010 (the notification of high dioxin level in livestock milk bred nearby Ilva plants was one of them). The headline of the article makes readers understand what tone will be used: “Ilva, here is the data that the minister Clini does not mention”.

It is fair to state first that the two most dangerous carcinogens which characterise Taranto’s polluted environment are dioxin (a persistent organic pollutant, can poison also foods) and benzo(a)pyrene (a genotoxic element: can modify the DNA transmitted from parents to children). The values of these two carcinogenic elements recorded in Taranto in 2010 were much higher than the permissible limits:

- Dioxin was at 0.7 ng/m³, well beyond the limit of 0.4 imposed by the regional law.

- Benzo(a)pyrene was at 1.93 ng/m³. The limit of 1 ng/m³ should not be exceeded, instead, we were almost twice.

For the benzo(a)pyrene value I have not casually used the conditional. The legislative decree n.155 of August 2010 temporarily removes (until 2015), for no apparent reason, the pre-existent benzo(a)pyrene emission limit of 1 nanogram per cubic meter. Paradoxically, the European directive which imposed to EU member states the creation of a definitive law about noxious emissions was called “Directive on environment quality and for a cleaner air in Europe”. Strangely enough, the change in the Italian law came at a time when requirements were expected which would have forced Ilva to reduce its coke oven emissions. The wiretappings that incriminate Girolamo Archinà (Ilva public relation) date back right to the first months of 2010. No longer being the limit, Ilva continued its polluting activity without any restriction or limit.



A view of Tamburi area in Taranto, with Ilva plant in the background.

I also have to specify that the AIA of November 2012 (quickly turned into the “saving Ilva” decree) has not been the first AIA granted to Ilva. The Puglia region approved an AIA in 2011, when Ilva emissions were the same as now (as in 2010 too), if not worse. It is surprising that AIA Technical Commission and local authorities have allowed similar overruns, since the characteristics of the legitimised plant are in conflict with law. In fact, only the best available technologies can be authorized with AIA.

Professor Marescotti says in his article:

[...] even after the much-vaunted AIA of 2012, the plants of the coking area (identical to the coking area which Clini wanted to close in Genova) are characterized by these emissions:

Not channeled dust emissions in the coking process:

- Bref (performance with the best technology) minimum value is 1 g/t
- the value estimated by the operator after AIA surgery in 2011 is 69.6 g/t
- maximum pollution which Brefs allow is 17.2 g/t

This means that Ilva coke oven emissions, in spite of AIA, are about 70 times higher than what the best technology allows![...]

What is even more serious is that the new AIA (and the law 231 which allows Ilva to continue its production) does not undermine the basic dogma: the authorization for the coke oven to produce at a distance of 300 meters from a residential area.[...]

In fact, a coking plant – although equipped with recent BAT – is not able to drop its emission below 1 ng/m³ of benzo(a)pyrene (carcinogenic and genotoxic pollutant) within a radius of 1700 meters. That value is equivalent for a child to breathe a total amount of carcinogenic benzo(a)pyrene equal to 700 cigarettes smoked per year.[...]

The coke oven placed at 300 meters from houses - along with opencast mineral parks - are the real criticality of Ilva. Now in Europe coking plants are removed from the residential zones.[...]

In confirmation of the "distance" factor and of the Taranto coking plant criticality, there is also a scientific study.[...] In Genoa, the "radius of danger" under which the benzo(a)pyrene didn't drop below the concentration value of 1 nanogram per cubic meter was 1900 meters.

When they closed coke ovens in Genoa "benzo(a)pyrene decreased between 92 and 97%".[...] If this is true for Genoa, it can be true for Taranto too; indeed, it can be even more true for Taranto, since Genoa production amount has been moved to Taranto Ilva after the closure of Genoa coking area.

I think what it has been said until now could be enough for everyone to side with the judiciary in its decision of stopping Ilva's production. I totally agree with Marescotti when he says: "It seems quite clear that Taranto Judiciary has plentiful technical reasons and only a deaf, blind and incompetent governmental class can go on ignoring the weight of these data".

Reading Marescotti's article it seems that Ilva emissions data will never come to a end. Taranto environment situation (in Tamburi area especially) is heavier than it can be expressed through words:

Particularly serious is the status of the chimney E312 of Taranto Ilva agglomeration plant; although it has attracted attention for dioxin emissions, now it is out of the BREF (best technology) even for emissions of dust per hour:

- Bref minimum value is 3.4 kg/h
- Ilva value estimated by the operator is 85.5 kg/h
- Bref maximum allowable value is 51 kg/h

It is evident that dusts emissions from that chimney (known for emitting dioxin) are 25 times higher than the minimum allowable with the best technology.

Even the secondary dust-emitting system of chimneys E314 and E315 are outside the Brefs for powder emissions:

- Ilva value estimated by the operator is 55.57 kg/h
- Bref maximum allowable value is 17 kg/h

As regards the blast furnace, the professor says dusts emissions could be 14 times lower using the best technology, and in the process of casting iron emissions

would be 95 times less.

In a distance of 300 meters from a residential zone the use of the best technology should be taken for granted, and blast furnaces should be removed. I want to specify that the Tamburi area has been built up before the steelworks, not after



Tamburi area seen from the sea. The image clearly shows how the Ilva plant is unbelievably close to the houses.

it as minister Clinì stated in an interview. In the conclusions of his article Marescotti also includes a reference to Italian environmental minister:

I wonder if minister Clinì - since he is a "technician" - has ever kept an eye on the data about the real Ilva steel plant, the same plant which prosecutors have criticized for the following dusts emissions:

- Bref minimum value is 14 g/t of iron
- Bref maximum allowable value is 143 g/t

- the value estimated by the operator after AIA surgery in 2011 is 218.68 g/t

In other words the steel plant emissions value is at the present moment 15 times higher than what the best technology allows.

But the big problem is that of Ilva wide opencast mineral parks which should be covered "within 36 months" (it is imposed by 2012 AIA). Estimated cost: one billion euro. Too much. For economic reasons AIA experts have granted Ilva three years for doing it. And a child born today in Tamburi area should breathe these powders for his first three years?

If this is the case, what are we discussing for? What are Taranto prosecutors accused of?

It seems clear enough that Ilva – for reasons of distance (from residential areas), as well as for technical reasons (obsolete plants) – cannot obtain an AIA which allows the factory continuing its usual activity. The solutions to decrease emissions – removing the danger reported by the judiciary – are the closure of the coking plant or a total and deep renovation of all Ilva plants.

After this suitable parenthesis about Taranto's environment, I will come back to the text analysis, now dealing with two articles which are less biased than the ones analysed until now. The first is: "Italy's Jobs-and-Pollution Showdown", taken from the American economic weekly magazine *Businessweek*, published on December 13, 2012. This article by Stephan Faris was written when the Italian government measures against judiciary rulings were taken already and, in a sense, the main chaotic period in Taranto had passed. But the situation was not clarified yet, as it is not now (two months after) and as maybe it will not be for a long time. This is the aspect of the question which the writer stresses more, especially around the conclusion of his article, as we are going to see.

The term *showdown* in the headline is suitable to explain very well how delicate the situation is, not only for Taranto but for the whole of Italy. The showdown should be intended as pollution stopping, at the same time as employment protection. Faris begins with a sarcastic, almost poetical, description of Taranto, highlighting the beauties of the town (the picturesque coastline, the cathedral, the castle), at the same time as contrasting them with the unfortunately more distinc-

tive “heavy taste of metal in the air”. The writer soon puts forward the two faces of this city, the polluting industrial estate on a side, the well-finished districts on the other side. And he equally soon identifies the guilty of the heavy pollution: Ilva steelworks.

The impartial tone that characterises the whole article can be clearly seen in the second paragraph already. Here the journalist seems to give a brief summary of what had happened in Taranto and, above all, he stresses the distance between the two opposing parties struggling as regards the Ilva case: “those worried about their health” on the one hand, “those desperate to keep their jobs” on the other hand; Italian government on a side, Taranto’s judiciary on the opposite. This dichotomy will go on through the article, with several opinions mentioned from both factions, but Faris will never favour one of them: here is impartiality. We do not read just statements from ministers accusing the judiciary’s actions or Ilva managers defending their cause, as it was in the articles I previously analysed. No doubt we find a wide list of data about Taranto polluted environment, which seems to testify that the writer would support Ilva closing, but I think this is quite normal in a situation become nearly tragic.

The writer exposes all pollution factors which have risen during the last years: lots of sheep contaminated by dioxin, various carcinogenic elements like

Beryllium

Creates toxic dust

Dioxin

Can damage immune system,
cause cancer

Lead

Can be poisonous, damage nervous
system, cause brain disorders

Polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB)

Shown to cause cancer in animals
and possibly in humans

beryllium gathered onto Tamburi soil, dioxin and PCB found in oysters. The scientific semantic field is abundant, with the use of several specific terms for identifying polluting chemical elements (“dioxin”, “beryllium”, “lead”, “polychlorinated biphenyl”, “PCB”). The journalist is even more precise when he talks about human health: 30% higher risk of

cancer for Taranto’s citizens than for provincial inhabitants, risk doubled of lung cancer for men and stomach cancer for women, 20% higher death rate for children in their first year of life if compared with regional level. The seriousness of these data is maintained by the voice of two doctors living in Taranto. Grazia Parisi

adds another hard health problem (asthma attacks in high percentage of children) and reveals all her disappointment about the Italian government decision to keep Ilva opened, which she considers the same as giving a kick to a sick person asking for help. Patrizio Mazza also uses a metaphor to describe what has been happening in Taranto: Ilva case seen as an iceberg of which “we’re only seeing the tip”. This explains very well how wide and awkward the phenomenon is. Unlike the articles analysed before, doctors here are not simply giving pollution percentages; their statements are well combined with the other paragraphs and there is no one belittling them (as it was for example in Donadio’s article, where Dr. Mazza’s words about high cancer rate were preceded and followed by people giving justification to keep Ilva opened). On the contrary, in this article experts’ opinions are used to confirm the existence of serious health problems in Taranto (Mazza’s metaphor placed right after Italian National Health Service cancer percentages) and to bridge the gap with readers (Parisi’s words about government’s choices are really familiar). As we know, the use of the informal register and of rhetorical devices are *interpersonal elements*; the writer employs them to come in contact with readers through giving the illusion of an oral speech (*illusion of orality* or *oral model*).

In his article Faris also includes a paragraph dealing with the economical importance of Ilva business. He gives percentages of Ilva’s high level of production and employment, making reference also to the merchant port. The idea of “Ilva’s grip on the city” is supported by the opinion of a trade unionist implying that the steelworks is the only job opportunity available in Taranto, but Faris in a sense softens this concept. He does not say that Ilva actually provides 75% of the gross domestic product in the province of Taranto, but that the Riva Group *claims* to generate it.

Another feature emerging from the text is that Faris says things the way they really are. He narrates the facts chronologically, starting from July 2012, and he never explicitly explains his opinion about the case. He neither supports those who want Ilva closing nor rages against the factory owners. All he says is the reality: “the company disputes responsibility for health risks in the region”. He men-

tions both the prosecutors investigations on Ilva managers (the first in August, with the arrest of Emilio Riva among others, the second in November, linked with the well-known telephone tappings) but he also reports company threats of ceasing production as a protest. In talking about marches which have been characterising this period in Taranto, he says they have occurred both “by residents seeking to shut the plant and workers terrified of losing their jobs”.

Writing this way, Faris shows to be rather unbiased. Nevertheless, after having reported Monti’s government promulgation of the “saving Ilva” emergency decree and the public reactions to it (“for those seeking to shut down the plant, Monti’s move was a shock”), Faris makes a conclusion which seems to mirror his opinion about the case. This can be confirmed by the use of a bottom line, which generally helps the writer in giving a final opinion about what he has narrated. The writer’s fear for the unstable situation can be seen within the question of government “money for improvements”: he first says they “may come slowly”, shortly after he says they “may never come”. The hint at a Parliament which announced several measures (€3 billion for Ilva improvement among them) still not ratified, the two references to the weakness of Italian economy, and a striking sentence like “Taranto runs the risk of being forgotten once again” are all signs of the writer’s opinion. I have no doubt that Faris, if asked, would support the decision of temporarily stopping Ilva production. Seen the critical health situation in Taranto, I strongly maintain his idea: the seizure of the factory waiting for plants modernization would be the only right thing to do.

I now move to another article which has peculiar features similar to Faris one: “A Showdown In Italy Over A Polluting Steel Plant”, taken from the website of the American *National Public Radio*, published on December 24, 2012. This article by Sylvia Poggioli goes back to the same day when the Italian government “saving Ilva” decree was officially converted into law. At the same time judiciary was arranging yet its appeal at Corte Costituzionale against government decision, believed to violate 17 points of the Italian constitution.

First of all I have to underline that in the headline Poggioli uses the same term as Faris, *showdown*, to give readers the perception of a crucial moment for Italy. At a structural level, the first evident element is the partition of the text in three sections. This ploy helps the writer distinguishing between various aspects of the Ilva case, talking about them separately and more in detail. This structure makes pages more flowing to read and narrated facts easier to understand, giving to the text the appearance of being an essay more than a journalistic article.

The first section is a kind of short summary of the Ilva case until the promulgation of the government decree, including a description of Taranto's complex situation with references to employment condition and economical risks due to a possible closing of the plant. The second section is focused on health problems caused by Ilva's industrial fumes; as usual in these articles, we find accurate percentages of illnesses in Taranto residents. In the third section, through quoting people from different social classes, the writer stresses how entrenched is the presence of the factory in the citizens' life.



A banner held by a man during a protest against Ilva. It says: "Taranto: steel for you, cancers for us".

Before going deeper in the analysis I want to make an overall observation about Poggioli's article. The journalist avoided filling up the text with personal considerations about the question, with statements of politicians or powerful people, or with excessive number of data about Taranto pollution. She lets ordinary people who daily live the town reality talk: Ilva's workers and ex-workers, mums worried about their children's health, the farmer who saw his animals slaughtered, etc. She tries this way to show what the effective conditions of Taranto citizens

are, giving readers the possibility of judging better what the best solution to solve the Ilva case would be.

Through the words of a workers' representative (Antonello Piccolo, agreeing with Ilva non-closing) the writer makes three aspects of the case clear: trade unions have overlooked health problems, as they are just worried about preserving employment; most of Ilva's workers agree with trade unions, looking after their job; government and trade unions have the same only target: the protection of Italian economy ("...the government knows it would have grave consequences for the entire economy"). This means that government, which should take care of all Italian citizens' well-being, put in the background the obvious detriment caused by Ilva on Taranto residents. In the first part of the article Poggioli stresses twice that government have reversed magistracy ruling on Ilva seizure. With a sentence like "But the government reversed the shutdown order" she seems to say that, notwithstanding well-known pollution levels in Taranto and in spite of Ilva managers arresting, government has the nerve to reverse judges decisions.

The journalist takes into consideration an aspect which I think is one of the most relevant in the Ilva case: the little awareness of the damage caused by the big plant during the last decades. This is a recurrent idea among Taranto citizens, especially among adults. No doubt until recently nobody knew specific data about the levels and the kind of pollution, as we have today, but I know that it has always been well-known, since plants were built, that Ilva causes heavy pollution. I think this unawareness cannot be the excuse for many years of indifference from the side of inhabitants, workers and local politicians. If all had shown more interest for health condition instead of just staring at wealth and employment given by Ilva, the present critical situation would have never been reached.

We find the quotation of Dr. Patrizio Mazza in this article too, used as a kind of expert voice confirming the reliability of data on illnesses and cancer. The use of a scientific semantic field is notable ("cancer-producing dioxins", "PCBs", "carcinogenic particles", "leukemia"), although less than it was in Faris's article. In the second part of her article Poggioli quotes also two Ilva workers; their asser-

tions contain all Ilva workers' thought. We find two possible positions: a blind one, which does not at all consider health problems ("...everything's OK as long as we have jobs") and even makes of the Ilva case a "media hype", showing selfishness and ignorance; a more balanced one: "we're all afraid of losing jobs, but we're also afraid of living in an unhealthy city...". The latter is better than the former of course, but I think it is useless: if workers are really afraid, they would do something different from working as usual. Otherwise, Ilva's job blackmail will always function. If even only a part of Ilva employees decided not to go working as a protest, maybe Ilva owners would take measures to modernize plants as soon as possible. In my opinion, everyone in Taranto should have the same idea as Vincenzo Fornaro, the farmer who had his livestock slaughtered in 2008, mentioned in the last part of the article. He seems resigned for his condition and he admits implicitly the faults of his generation, the past indifference that I told before ("for my generation the damage has been done..."). But he also says that his generation can still do something: fighting for a better future in Taranto ("...our battle is to try to ensure a better future for the next generations").

Poggioli shows how terrible Taranto environment condition is by reporting the resigned words of a retired Ilva worker. He says he does not avoid eating mussels, a key element in Taranto's cooking tradition said to be poisoned, because after all everything we eat in Taranto is poisoned. He uses a really shocking expression, "The poison is everywhere", and what is even sadder is that he said the truth.

In the conclusion, the writer highlights another aspect of Ilva case, maybe the most alarming one: Taranto citizens are not able to think about their town without Ilva. The example of professor Alessandro Marescotti is suitable to better understand this concept: even his students, teenagers attending high school, are sure that Taranto cannot manage without the plant. Poggioli says: "This company has fostered total dependency; the population has no sense of possible alternatives". No other words could better explain the total resignation which has marked Taranto's people for many years. For a person who loves this town, who knows very well how beautiful it is, these words sound like a big failure. I am really hurt by them, because I know that things could change. Everyone who has stayed even

only one day in Taranto has surely understood that this town could have more than one alternative to Ilva steelworks, if only we want-



ed to find it. The fine weather, the sea and seafood, plenty of Magna Graecia remains, an archaeological museum unique of its kind, are just a part of Taranto resources. If we would invest more on these resources, we can create many jobs into the tourism industry. No doubt this would be an excellent employment alternative to Ilva. And I think this would also be the quickest way to encourage owners to modernize the factory: if there were concrete alternatives to Ilva employment, the well-known job blackmail would inevitably collapse. If owners wanted to keep their employees, they would be forced to improve working conditions, and the only way for this would be plants improvement and environmental reclamation. Otherwise, I am afraid, as well as judiciary is, that the company will never “comply with government demands for a \$4 billion environmental cleanup”. And Taranto runs the risk of being forgotten once again.

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI BARI ALDO MORO

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CORSO DI LAUREA DI I LIVELLO IN COMUNICAZIONE LINGUISTICA E INTERCULTURALE

TESI DI LAUREA IN

LINGUA E TRADUZIONE – LINGUA INGLESE

**I MASS MEDIA ANGLO-AMERICANI E IL CASO ILVA:
UNA PROSPETTIVA LINGUISTICA**

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Prefazione: i quotidiani nella Gran Bretagna contemporanea

Nella moderna realtà digitale i quotidiani, che riportano le notizie del giorno precedente, possono ormai essere definiti obsoleti. Attraverso internet, ora fruibile anche sui cellulari, le notizie si diffondono velocemente e sono aggiornate minuto per minuto. Quasi tutte le testate giornalistiche possiedono ora una versione online frequentemente aggiornata e accessibile ai lettori in qualsiasi momento. Le notizie sono facilmente reperibili anche attraverso la televisione: sono nati canali specializzati nella trasmissione di notiziari 24 ore su 24, e la radio, su cui si sentono le notizie aggiornate almeno una volta ogni ora.

A parte l'introduzione della stampa colorata e delle immagini, i quotidiani hanno mantenuto pressoché la stessa struttura da quando sono apparsi circa tre secoli fa. Per di più nei quotidiani odierni, considerando pubblicità, interviste, necrologi e altre pagine di intrattenimento, lo spazio effettivo dedicato alle notizie è rimasto davvero poco. Secondo uno studio specifico, nei quotidiani inglesi le notizie occupano costantemente meno del 50% dello spazio totale. Per questo, più che giornali di notizie dovrebbero essere definiti artefatti del mondo commerciale e politico, o anche ideologico e culturale a seconda dei pareri; costituiscono in pratica uno spaccato della realtà del momento in cui vengono stampati.

Tuttavia, in Gran Bretagna vengono venduti ancora milioni di quotidiani ogni giorno. La motivazione più plausibile è l'esistenza di abitudini strettamente legate alla lettura dei quotidiani, come la pausa caffè a lavoro o il tè e biscotti del pomeriggio. Eppure, secondo statistiche precise, negli ultimi anni tutti i quotidiani britannici stanno registrando cali di vendita annuali più o meno sensibili: in generale, quello dei quotidiani in Gran Bretagna si può definire come un mercato in declino. La motivazione di tale declino non può essere solo l'avvento di internet e della tecnologia moderna: i proprietari delle testate non hanno fatto nulla per cercare di rendere più appetibile il loro prodotto, aggiungendo magari delle novità nei contenuti o nella struttura. La crisi economica che ha colpito il mondo intero

ha reso i giornali quasi un bene di lusso e, con la conseguente chiusura di molti piccoli giornalai che prima costellavano le città, i quotidiani sono diventati più difficili da reperire. In più, la vita frenetica imposta dal mondo attuale ha sensibilmente diminuito il tempo che prima si poteva dedicare alla lettura dei giornali. Una cosa è certa: un'industria, qualsiasi essa sia, non può permettersi di sostenere per lungo tempo delle perdite di vendita come quelle fatte registrare dai quotidiani negli ultimi anni.

1. Il giornalismo in Gran Bretagna

Il mio scopo in questo capitolo è dimostrare che il contenuto dei quotidiani non è semplicemente l’insieme dei fatti che avvengono nel mondo: le notizie in un certo senso *rappresentano la realtà attraverso la lingua*. Ogni lingua comprende dei valori sociali ed economici che impone su ciò di cui si parla. Di conseguenza, le notizie condizionano i fatti di cui trattano e, come fossero una rappresentazione, *contribuiscono alla costruzione sociale della realtà in cui viviamo*.

Tutti i tipi di media, da quelli che trattano eventi reali come le notizie a quelli che trattano storie inventate come i romanzi, sono basati sulla *narrativa*. Essa costituisce il modo di organizzare la realtà spazio-temporale come una catena di fatti legati da un rapporto di causa ed effetto, con un inizio (anche definito *equilibrio*, il momento tipico del “c’era una volta”), uno svolgimento centrale (uno o più eventi che portano ad un *disequilibrio*) e una conclusione (*nuovo equilibrio*) che comprende un giudizio finale sui fatti narrati. Questa teoria può essere molto utile per interpretare le notizie perché ci induce a riflettere su qual’era la situazione prima degli eventi raccontati e su come potrà svilupparsi in seguito. Tuttavia, la struttura sopra descritta può risultare a volte poco concreta e gli eventi devono essere presentati in modo diverso, in maniera tale da rispettare le attese dei lettori. Ciò significa che esistono varie alternative strutturali possibili per raccontare un fatto, e ognuna di queste susciterà conclusioni diverse nel lettore. In altre parole, *la struttura narrativa influenza il giudizio dell’audience*: il modo in cui un evento viene esposto induce chi lo legge a prendere una posizione su di esso, positiva o negativa.

Tornando alla lingua, per capirne bene l’importanza bisogna parlare della semiotica; anche definita semiologia, essa è lo studio della nascita di idee e significati a livello sociale attraverso il sistema dei segni. Una lingua, orale o scritta, è solo uno dei tanti sistemi di significato esistenti (un altro esempio è il linguaggio dei gesti). La semiotica evidenzia come le parole che noi usiamo in vari contesti sociali danno forma alla nostra stessa percezione della realtà. Questa teoria deriva dallo studio di due linguisti famosi, Sapir and Whorf. Essi unirono la *relatività*

linguistica con il *determinismo linguistico*: secondo la prima, le lingue hanno strutture radicalmente diverse tra loro, mentre il secondo sostiene che le diverse strutture linguistiche portano gli interlocutori di lingue diverse ad avere percezioni diverse della realtà. La conclusione è che la concezione della realtà è peculiare ad ogni comunità parlante.

Il linguista britannico Halliday aggiunge un altro elemento alla relatività della lingua. Secondo Halliday, le forme prese da una lingua sono strettamente legate all'uso sociale e personale che la lingua stessa deve servire. Modernizzando il concetto possiamo dire che tutti gli elementi di un atto comunicativo, dalla pronuncia al lessico utilizzato, sono influenzate dalla cultura. Per esempio, alcuni studi hanno confermato che, nell'ambito di una determinata lingua, le differenze di pronuncia possono dipendere dall'età, dal sesso e dalla classe socioeconomica di chi parla. Ne deriva che la struttura fonetica complessiva di un discorso tra due persone riflette la loro posizione sociale e le circostanze contestuali in cui stanno parlando. Ma le cause delle variazioni linguistiche sono sostanzialmente fuori dal controllo di chi parla, basate sulle *differenze sociali, politiche ed economiche* imposte da una società gerarchica costruita sulla divisione impari del potere e dei privilegi tra gruppi di persone. Di conseguenza, la principale abilità comunicativa è saper individuare le forme linguistiche più adatte a seconda delle circostanze. Non è una questione di contenuto ma di forma della lingua: il lessico scelto, la pronuncia utilizzata, ecc. identificano il tipo di discorso e il contesto. In altre parole, *le forme della lingua codificano una rappresentazione della realtà socialmente costruita*.

Questa parentesi ci permette di descrivere più in profondità l'essenza dei quotidiani. Nelle notizie l'individualità creativa dello scrittore è irrilevante al fine ultimo della comunicazione. L'articolo è costruito, attraverso le parole del giornalista, seguendo determinate convenzioni ideologiche di cui il quotidiano fa parte e rispettando precise funzioni economiche e politiche legate al posto che il quotidiano occupa nel palcoscenico economico e politico del mondo contemporaneo. Il compito del giornalista è scegliere un'impostazione linguistica che soddisfi il modello che il lettore si aspetta, e il lettore deve essere a sua volta capace di carpire i

valori che il testo incorpora. In alternativa, la forza comunicativa dell'articolo decade.

Il concetto di *genere* è ciò che può spiegare cosa si intende per “modello che il lettore si aspetta”. Esso è un principio di classificazione che raggruppa i testi a seconda delle loro caratteristiche, basato su un sistema di ripetizioni e differenze. Per riconoscere il genere di un testo dobbiamo saper decifrare la sua peculiare iconografia. La definizione di genere è strettamente legata a quella di *istituzione*. Esempi di istituzioni sono il governo, l'università, la famiglia; tutti noi viviamo all'interno di queste istituzioni, ne condividiamo i valori fondamentali e sappiamo come comportarci al loro interno. Il nostro comportamento è come *controllato dalle istituzioni*, che sono *socialmente accettate* in quanto penetrate da tempo nella nostra struttura sociale. Di conseguenza, esse impongono regole e modi specifici di comportarsi, di lavorare, ecc. e qui l'esempio dei quotidiani calza perfettamente. I quotidiani inglesi sono istituzioni in cui, al giorno d'oggi, i nuovi giornalisti vengono avviati alla professione attraverso corsi che insegnano loro come scrivere e quali idee (politiche e commerciali) seguire e appoggiare nei loro articoli.

I quotidiani sono parte di un gruppo sociolinguistico costruito per condividere fini di profitto commerciale: i lettori compreranno i prodotti pubblicizzati nelle pagine del giornale e così facendo favoriranno inconsciamente gli interessi del direttore e delle aziende a lui legate (quelle della pubblicità stessa). Se i lettori acquisiscono familiarità con l'ideologia appoggiata dal quotidiano, iniziano ad identificarla come qualcosa di giusto e ordinario, come “idea comune”. Questo concetto è strettamente legato alla definizione di *ideologia*, derivante dagli studi di Karl Marx.

Nella sua teoria sul capitalismo, Marx spiega che il rapporto tra le persone e i mezzi di produzione di beni e ricchezza era fondamentale per capire i valori e le idee politiche che esse avevano; questo causava le *differenze tra le classi sociali*. Le *idee dominanti* erano quelle che lavoravano nell'interesse della classe sociale dominante, per cementare il suo dominio. Queste idee dominanti diventano l'*ideologia comune* perché, spiega Marx, chi possiede le basi economiche della

società influenza o addirittura determina l'attività culturale e il pensiero politico di tutti i cittadini. L'ideologia comune crea relazioni di potere standardizzate tra chi sta più in alto e chi sta più in basso. Queste relazioni permettono alla classe dominante di far credere ai lavoratori che, per esempio, lo sfruttamento e l'oppressione durante le ore di lavoro è una cosa normale e inevitabile. Quindi, i valori su cui si poggia la società sono connessi alla distribuzione del potere e sono imposti come "naturali" e "ovvi". In realtà sono socialmente schierati, ossia aiutano chi ha il potere a mantenerlo.

I quotidiani di oggi sono parte integrante dell'ideologia dominante, e sono quindi socialmente, economicamente e politicamente schierati. Ciò significa che le notizie sono sempre raccontate da una particolare *angolazione* o *posizione ideologica*: lontane dal presentare realisticamente e obiettivamente il mondo, senza filtri, *le notizie sono socialmente costruite*. Le notizie non vengono trovate e riportate ma create; gli eventi vengono raccontati non perché sono realmente i più importanti, ma perché soddisfano dei complessi criteri di selezione, anche definiti criteri di notiziabilità. Il termine "notiziabilità" è un neologismo utilizzato in ambito giornalistico per indicare il raggiungimento da parte di un evento dei criteri minimi necessari alla sua pubblicazione sotto forma di notizia. Quanti più criteri di selezione un evento soddisfa, tanto più è utile da inserire in un quotidiano: più un evento è grande, maggiore è la sua notiziabilità (la dimensione è anche relazionata al numero di persone coinvolte); più un avvenimento è semplice da comprendere, più è notiziabile; più un evento è vicino geograficamente (rispetto alla sede di un dato quotidiano) e culturalmente (rispetto all'ideologia di fondo e alle radici culturali di un dato quotidiano), maggiore è la sua notiziabilità. I fatti che avvengono in determinati stati (definiti nazioni elitarie) hanno più valore di fatti che avvengono in luoghi meno rilevanti nel panorama politico ed economico mondiale (le nazioni del terzo mondo, per esempio). Eventi comuni e ordinari riguardanti persone famose, per esempio un incidente automobilistico non grave oppure un matrimonio, hanno la stessa rilevanza, se non maggiore, rispetto ad un fatto grave che coinvolge molte persone comuni. Più un evento è negativo, strano, insolito o inaspettato, maggiore è il suo valore di notiziabilità. Quando un fatto può essere riproposto nel tempo, esso acquista valore: un omicidio è molto notiziabile non solo perché è un

evento negativo, ma anche perché se ne potrà parlare finché la polizia non trova l'assassino.

Bisogna precisare che i fattori che generano la notiziabilità di un evento sono decisamente *culturali*: per esempio, l'idea che un avvenimento sia importante perché avvenuto in uno stato rilevante a livello politico mondiale, denota un forte senso di etnocentrismo. La natura strettamente culturale delle notizie ci porta a considerare un concetto fondamentale nella loro rappresentazione della realtà: gli *stereotipi*. Essi possono essere definiti come idee o, meglio, congetture riguardanti particolari gruppi della società; causano la categorizzazione e la valutazione, spesso negativa, del gruppo in questione. Gli stereotipi prendono di mira alcune caratteristiche (spesso fisiche) facilmente individuabili del gruppo e le associano a fatti pseudo-negativi accaduti in passato. Per questo sono definiti come elementi storicamente radicati nella società e diventano la motivazione principale dello stato sociale del gruppo stesso, che spesso è quello di emarginazione. Il razzismo nei confronti delle persone di colore è l'esempio più comune di stereotipo; ancora oggi, essi sono visti con un occhio diverso. Se un ragazzo di colore stupra una donna o ruba in un negozio, il fatto viene considerato da tutti come un qualcosa che ci si doveva aspettare, e la notizia acquista maggiore notiziabilità rispetto ad un atto simile commesso da un ragazzo bianco. L'esempio ci fa capire che *stereotipare* gruppi o elementi della società è un *metodo di categorizzazione* nella pratica del giornalismo: gli stereotipi costituiscono la base delle categorie mentali presenti nei lettori, e le notizie vengono costruite proprio attraverso queste categorie.

Come abbiamo visto, i quotidiani hanno forti interessi economici. Appoggiano quindi l'ideologia dei più forti e la gerarchia sociale perché questi principi fanno gli interessi del capitalismo, di cui l'industria dei media fa parte. Una delle principali categorie mentali di cui ho parlato sopra è proprio quella che permette ai giornalisti di porre sempre in primo piano, nei loro articoli, il punto di vista delle istituzioni politiche, dei potenti e dei ricchi. Esattamente in questo modo l'ideologia dominante diventa ideologia comune o *status quo*. Per esempio, è interesse di ogni governo promuovere la stabilità della famiglia, unità basilare su cui la società si poggia; essendo gli interessi economici della stampa affini a quelli dei

governi al potere, i quotidiani hanno ragioni politiche per approvare il principio della stabilità familiare. Anche quando sembrano esprimere pareri opposti agli interessi dei potenti, i giornalisti danno voce implicitamente all'ideologia dominante servendosi di particolari strategie linguistiche.

Ogni quotidiano possiede un personale sistema organizzativo per l'approccio ai lettori, un particolare *modo di rivolgersi*. L'approccio cambia a seconda dell'orientamento politico e culturale di un quotidiano e fa sì che lo stesso evento venga trattato e raccontato diversamente da giornale a giornale, in base alla parte dei lettori (selezionata per rango sociale o categoria professionale) che l'articolo vuole raggiungere. Questo approccio mutevole venne definito dal socio-ologo Stuart Hall come *linguaggio pubblico dei media*, e la sua normalizzazione è il punto fondamentale del metodo di *costruzione del consenso*.

Per ottenere il consenso bisogna presupporre che tutti i componenti del determinato gruppo sociale al quale ci si rivolge abbiano interessi in comune. Questo si può ottenere solo iniettando concetti e convinzioni che, a lungo andare, vengono universalmente accettati. L'intera popolazione inglese può essere considerata come uno di questi gruppi; essa costituisce il cosiddetto gruppo "noi". In Inghilterra tale pronome ha una grande importanza in campo politico e, di conseguenza, anche in quello giornalistico. Il "noi" fa riferimento a cittadini che condividono valori morali e interessi sociali, e su questa condivisione generale si fondono le congetture che creano il consenso. Tali congetture, o "concetti iniettati" come li ho definiti prima, riguardano aspetti tipi della Gran Bretagna contemporanea. Alcuni esempi sono: "non esistono più le differenze di classe", "non esiste alcuna reale differenza di ricchezza tra nord e sud", "gli operai e i proprietari d'azienda hanno pari diritti e benefici", "il governo al potere riflette realmente le scelte della popolazione". Diversi dati economici e demografici dimostrano che queste affermazioni non rispecchiano la realtà. Proprio qui entra in gioco il ruolo fondamentale della lingua negli articoli di giornale: i giornalisti devono usare la lingua in modo da convincere i lettori che la realtà non è quella dei dati ma quella dei *concetti del consenso*.

Per non uscire mai fuori dai limiti del consenso, gli articoli devono riflettere una serie di valori e comportamenti positivi e rigettarne altri, condannandoli. Qui si potrebbe notare una contraddizione con quanto detto prima: le notizie devono supportare valori positivi che consolidino lo status quo, come la legalità, la tolleranza e la cooperazione, ma raccontano sempre eventi negativi come assassinii, stupri, corruzione, ecc. Tuttavia, la teoria del consenso viene comunque preservata grazie ad una strategia specifica, la dicotomia tra il “noi” e il “loro”. Nel “noi” sono comprese tutte le persone oneste, che agiscono sempre nel bene e condividono la stessa ideologia del potere protetta dai quotidiani; il “loro” include invece tutti quelli che sono esclusi dal “noi”. Gli eventi negativi possono quindi essere riportati nelle notizie (anzi, come abbiamo visto, sono ben accetti in quanto soddisfano vari criteri di notiziabilità) in quanto considerati esterni al campo del consenso, così come esterni sono gli individui che agiscono nel male: assassini, ladri, truffatori, sovversivi, condannati alla marginalizzazione e alla repressione. Esiste però un lato molto negativo in questa strategia: nel “loro” della dicotomia non sono incluse solo le persone cattive e spregevoli, ma anche quegli individui o gruppi di individui che non condividono gli stessi interessi culturali ed economici del gruppo “noi”. Neri, omosessuali, immigrati, ecc. sono tutti individui considerati come antagonisti. Questo è il punto di partenza da cui si creano gli stereotipi ed è ciò che li lega fortemente alla teoria del consenso. Infatti, se una notizia negativa come uno stupro o una rapina è già di per sé fortemente notiziabile, tanto più lo è se la persona accusata per aver commesso il fatto appartiene al “loro” della dicotomia. Al contrario, se un evento di questa gravità riguarda per esempio un politico o un uomo potente, i quotidiani fanno di tutto per sminuire l'accaduto e parlarne il meno possibile. Questa tendenza è ciò che aiuta concretamente i media a diffondere gli stereotipi e a convincere l'opinione pubblica che la dicotomia tra “noi” e “loro” si poggia su basi reali, favorendo così l'ideologia del potere dominante.

Lo scopo principale dei giornalisti è quello di presentare nei loro articoli l'ideologia dominante attraverso uno stile chiaro e facilmente comprensibile per tutti: *i concetti del consenso devono essere “tradotti” nel pensiero comune dei lettori*. Attraverso l'uso di un ristretto insieme di termini semplici e di un conseguente stile discorsivo, lo scrittore riduce il divario tra il “senso comune” del lettore e

l'ideologia delle autorità che il quotidiano appoggia. Creare un'illusione di informalità e familiarità serve a rendere naturale il fatto che nelle notizie venga descritta una realtà stereotipata. Ovviamente questo tipo di strategia funziona solo dando per scontato che scrittore e lettore si capiscano attraverso la lingua utilizzata e condividano lo stesso contesto culturale. Se, per esempio, un giornalista utilizza un termine tecnico specifico senza darne una minima spiegazione, significa che dà per scontato che il lettore lo capirà. Da ciò si capisce meglio come un quotidiano stabilisce a priori di indirizzare i suoi contenuti solo verso una determinata parte dei lettori: chi acquista abitudinariamente un quotidiano sa cosa deve aspettarsi di leggere nei suoi articoli.

Per ottenere l'*illusione di una conversazione orale* all'interno di un articolo, anche definita “*modello orale*”, il giornalista deve servirsi di vari espedienti linguistici e strutturali. Alcuni esempi sono l'uso di: frasi brevi e incomplete che richiamano la frammentazione della comunicazione orale; caratteri diversi a seconda dell'intonazione che si vuole dare al periodo; parole scritte non rispettando lo spelling corretto ma la loro pronuncia; linguaggi gergali, proverbi ed affermazioni dalla forte espressività; nomi propri, nomignoli e diminutivi anche per riferirsi a persone famose; forme contratte; indicatori del tempo, del luogo e dei partecipanti all'azione; domande ed esclamazioni esplicite, tipiche dell'interazione orale; espressioni di giudizio, desiderio, obbligazione e permesso. Tutti questi elementi danno al destinatario l'illusione di sentir parlare una persona più che di leggere le sue idee scritte sul foglio. Questa caratteristica fa capire come la relazione tra scrittore e lettore sia palesemente a senso unico: dallo scrittore dipende non solo ciò che il destinatario leggerà, ma anche il modo in cui lo interpreterà.

Eppure l'audience, di cui fanno parte i lettori dei quotidiani, è l'elemento essenziale per l'attività comunicativa dei media: i media in sé stessi non potrebbero esistere senza un loro pubblico. Andando più in profondità, bisogna specificare che esistono diversi approcci nello studio dell'audience. In base a quanto ho detto fin ora, l'approccio più utile da descrivere è quello chiamato “*modello degli effetti*”. Esso enfatizza le conseguenze che i media provocano nell'audience: le idee e i significati vengono in un certo senso “iniettati” nelle masse attraverso potenti

messaggi codificati e impliciti. Questo modello ha origine nel periodo della propaganda politica nazista e si sviluppa maggiormente nel dopoguerra. Le corporazioni capitalistiche che all'epoca possedevano i media iniziarono ad imporre una vita culturalmente ristretta, creando una situazione di conformità generale a quanto veniva proposto, senza spazio per l'innovazione e l'originalità personali. Il potere dei media è senza dubbio negativo in questo ambito e ha dato vita, nel corso della seconda metà del novecento, alla cosiddetta "cultura di massa". Imponendo questo tipo di cultura, i media producono nell'audience inattività e piattezza mentale da un lato, attività di tipo negativo dall'altro, come violenza ed aggressività. All'interno della società gli individui più colpiti da questi impulsi negativi dei media sono i "deboli": bambini, anziani, persone di basso livello, ecc. in quanto più soggetti a lasciarsi influenzare. Essi costituiscono "l'audience di massa", ossia la parte della popolazione maggiormente soggiogata dalla cultura di massa imposta dai media.

2. Il caso Ilva

L'argomento che tratterò in questo capitolo attraverso l'analisi di alcuni articoli estratti da quotidiani in lingua inglese è la situazione dell'Ilva, un'enorme acciaieria situata nel sud dell'Italia, ad un passo dalla città di Taranto. Le emissioni dello stabilimento sono la causa di malattie e morte per gli abitanti di Taranto. Oggi, dopo quasi cinquant'anni di attività e dopo che un gruppo di imprenditori privati capeggiato dalla famiglia Riva ha acquistato l'impianto dallo stato italiano nel 1995, la situazione è degenerata. Gli ingenti danni ambientali e i ricorrenti problemi di salute nella popolazione non sono più tollerabili. Se i proprietari dell'Ilva vogliono continuare a produrre devono obbligatoriamente modernizzare gli impianti e ridurre le emissioni al di sotto dei limiti massimi imposti dalla legge.

Per conoscere un po' più in dettaglio la storia dello stabilimento Ilva e della città ad esso adiacente, proporrò il commento di alcuni paragrafi di un articolo risalente al 17 febbraio del 1994, scritto da John Tagliabue per il *New York Times*. Il titolo può essere tradotto in italiano in questo modo: "Il Sud Italia ha bisogno di forza (l'acciaio non è abbastanza)".

L'articolo risale a quando l'Ilva era di proprietà dello stato italiano e il gruppo Riva non si era ancora impegnato nella sua acquisizione, avvenuta nel 1995. Tagliabue spiega abbastanza bene gli antefatti storici alla costruzione dell'Ilva, partendo da molto lontano. Dopo l'unità d'Italia, Taranto diventò il quartier generale di buona parte della flotta militare italiana e conobbe un periodo di rilevante sviluppo economico, che raggiunse l'apice col fascismo ed il suo grande impatto edilizio. Ma, dopo la guerra, iniziò il declino dell'arsenale militare e del cantiere navale: questo causò un forte aumento della disoccupazione. Così nacque l'idea di investire in uno stabilimento siderurgico. Esso fu costruito negli anni 60 nella zona degli uliveti che costeggiava la città, nell'ambito di un progetto lanciato dal governo di Roma per rilanciare l'economia del Sud attraverso una nuova industrializzazione.

Dopo questa premessa storica il giornalista considera quella che era la situazione corrente al momento in cui scrisse l'articolo. Si intuisce che l'Ilva aveva già un ruolo fondamentale nell'economia italiana, e anche in quella europea. Viene sottolineato il fatto che il siderurgico di Taranto fosse il più grande di tutta l'Europa occidentale. La sua presenza sul territorio poteva essere il punto di partenza per un riavvicinamento economico e culturale tra Nord e Sud Italia; invece, definito "cattedrale nel deserto", lo stabilimento era diventato il simbolo dell'arretratezza del Sud. Lo scrittore menziona persino l'ipotesi avanzata all'epoca dal governo italiano di creare una specie di parlamento straordinario che avesse come unico obiettivo il rilancio dell'economia del meridione. L'attenzione si sposta poi su Taranto, descritta come una città in forte crisi politica ed economica: nel '94 era stata eliminata da poco un'amministrazione comunale corrotta e la disoccupazione era arrivata al 25%. L'incertezza sul futuro era grande e in più il governo aveva inserito l'Ilva nel piano di privatizzazione di alcune industrie italiane. Questo avrebbe causato un ulteriore aumento della disoccupazione in città.

E' evidente che ai tempi non ci si preoccupava minimamente dell'impatto ambientale della fabbrica. Tutti già conoscevano i danni che l'impianto causava, ma nessuno se ne curava; la preoccupazione era rivolta solo all'arretratezza economica e alla disoccupazione. Tuttavia il giornalista puntualizza quanto sia stato scellerato il processo di costruzione dell'Ilva, definendo "spirito di gigantismo" la decisione del governo di Roma di raddoppiare la grandezza della fabbrica negli anni '70 con l'obiettivo di aumentare sensibilmente i posti di lavoro. L'Unione Europea più volte suggerì all'Italia di fermare l'allargamento dell'Ilva e di evitare, in generale, la costruzione di giganti industriali come quello di Taranto.

Attraverso l'articolo di Tagliabue ho descritto il contesto storico antecedente allo scoppio del caso Ilva, avvenuto nell'estate del 2012. Dopo anni e anni di repressione psicologica e silenzio forzato riguardo la grave situazione ambientale, la rabbia dei cittadini di Taranto è esplosa. Un articolo apparso venerdì 17 agosto sul quotidiano *The Guardian* può essere utile a capire qual era la situazione in quel momento. La magistratura aveva da poco sequestrato gli impianti dell'Ilva, dopo

mesi di proteste e manifestazioni da parte della popolazione e anche degli operai della fabbrica.

L'articolo puntuallizza i dati allarmanti, già noti da tempo in Italia, riguardanti l'impatto ambientale dello stabilimento controllato dalla famiglia Riva. Esso sprigiona nell'aria polveri di minerali, metalli ed elementi cancerogeni in quantità immense; l'8,8% del totale europeo delle emissioni di diossina prodotto annualmente è solo un esempio. Ovviamente vengono riportati anche i dati sui problemi fisici causati da queste emissioni nella popolazione: a Taranto il tasso di mortalità dovuto ai tumori è del 15% superiore alla media nazionale, e la mortalità dovuta al cancro del polmone è del 30% superiore. La procura, specifica il giornalista, ha incolpato l'Ilva di aver ucciso 400 persone negli ultimi 13 anni attraverso i suoi fumi. La conclusione dello scrittore è che, conoscendo questi dati, nessuno si è mostrato stupito quando la magistratura ha ordinato il sequestro degli impianti più inquinanti, accusato l'Ilva di "disastro ambientale" e messo alcuni suoi dirigenti agli arresti domiciliari, in quanto perfettamente coscienti del danno che l'industria creava.

Il tono di questo articolo è fortemente accusatorio e contrapposto agli interessi della grande industria. Del resto, non poteva essere altrimenti in un momento in cui le colpe accumulate dall'Ilva negli scorsi decenni sono esplose tutte insieme. Eppure nei mesi a seguire la situazione ha preso una direzione abbastanza diversa, fino all'intervento delle istituzioni politiche. Il governo italiano si è dimostrato favorevole alla riapertura degli impianti confiscati e, opponendosi alle decisioni della magistratura, ha varato un provvedimento straordinario negli ultimi giorni di novembre del 2012. Definito "decreto salva Ilva", tale provvedimento ha garantito allo stabilimento la possibilità di continuare la sua completa attività lavorativa, anche se con il vincolo di mettere gli impianti, e di conseguenza le emissioni, a norma di legge entro il 2016.

Prima di passare all'analisi di articoli riguardanti questi ultimi eventi, voglio specificare che il caso Ilva ha avuto ampio riscontro nei quotidiani di tutto il mondo perché soddisfa molti dei criteri di notiziabilità. Il caso Ilva si è sviluppato attraverso una serie di eventi anche molto lontani nel tempo; per questo era un ar-

gomento facilmente riproponibile dai giornali, sul quale i lettori si aspettavano di avere spesso aggiornamenti, incuriositi dai risvolti di una vicenda sempre più ingarbugliata. Il caso Ilva ha avuto sviluppi di vasta portata e tutti molto negativi, soprattutto in riferimento al gran numero di persone interessate più o meno da vicino: migliaia di operai a rischio disoccupazione (considerando un'eventuale chiusura), ma anche migliaia di abitanti costretti a vivere nell'inquinamento. Quello dell'Ilva è anche un caso di forte prossimità culturale per tutti gli stati membri dell'Unione Europea, trattandosi della più grande acciaieria d'Europa, la cui sorte potrebbe influenzare fortemente l'economia dell'intero continente. Bisogna ovviamente ricordare che il caso si è sviluppato in Italia, quindi le notizie ad esso correlate fanno riferimento ad uno stato d'elite nel panorama mondiale. E anche il riferimento a persone d'elite è da considerare, visto che agli sviluppi del caso hanno contribuito politici e imprenditori. Lo stesso gruppo Riva ha grande influenza a livello economico in Italia, basta ricordare la proposta di acquisizione di parte delle quote dell'Alitalia avanzata da Riva nel 2010.

Il primo articolo della mia analisi si intitola: "Monti agisce per salvare lo stabilimento di Taranto"; è stato pubblicato il 30 novembre del 2012 sul quotidiano londinese *The Financial Times*. L'articolo è stato scritto da Guy Dinmore subito dopo l'approvazione da parte del governo del decreto salva Ilva, per la cui effettiva promulgazione bisognava attendere la firma del Presidente della Repubblica Giorgio Napolitano. Il giornalista fa riferimento a diversi personaggi della politica italiana: il nome dell'allora Presidente del Governo Mario Monti viene riportato tre volte nella prima parte dell'articolo (e nel titolo), e dopo di lui il Presidente Napolitano e il Ministro dello Sviluppo Economico Corrado Passera. Il punto di vista di queste figure istituzionali viene messo in risalto lungo tutto l'articolo. La loro opinione riguardo il caso Ilva è che lo stabilimento di Taranto non può assolutamente essere chiuso. Le ragioni di questa posizione sono ovviamente d'interesse economico e politico: difendere la stabilità dell'assetto economico nazionale e la reputazione internazionale dell'Italia. Entrambi verrebbero macchiati dalla chiusura dell'Ilva stando alle dichiarazioni dei politici sopra citati. Ma, ugualmente alla loro sembra essere anche l'opinione di Dinmore.

In questo articolo viene totalmente omessa la descrizione di quello che è l'impatto ambientale dello stabilimento. Lo scrittore presenta il gruppo Riva come una compagnia che ha negato l'accusa della procura di causare morti attraverso l'inquinamento. Non ci sono riferimenti più chiari alle tante accuse mosse all'Ilva dalla magistratura, né tanto meno viene mostrata preoccupazione per quelli che sarebbero gli effetti negativi legati al normale proseguimento della produzione di acciaio. Il parere della parte contrapposta nella disputa del caso è stato del tutto trascurato, ossia quello della magistratura e dei cittadini che vorrebbero la chiusura dello stabilimento. Da questo si capisce quanto sia di parte la posizione del giornalista, impegnato unicamente a preservare gli interessi dell'ideologia dominante (la stessa dei politici a cui dà la parola).

Nell'articolo di Dinmore viene data rilevanza costantemente ad uno solo dei due segmenti in cui i media dividono la società. Il "noi" della dicotomia è sempre al centro: non solo politici, ma anche imprenditori e grandi industrie (Fiat). Chi accusa l'Ilva per la sua attività inquinante viene inserito nel "loro", nella parte che si oppone allo status quo, alla quale non deve esser data considerazione. Ampio spazio viene concesso invece alle dichiarazioni dei proprietari dell'Ilva, pronti a smentire le accuse della procura e a promettere investimenti per la modernizzazione della fabbrica. In questo modo il giornalista sembra voler disegnare i manager del gruppo Riva come benefattori che potrebbero aiutare Taranto ad uscire da una situazione grave, impossibile da risolvere diversamente. Non a caso le loro parole sono inserite nella parte finale dell'articolo: l'intento è quello di lasciare i lettori con delle frasi rassicuranti, che possano magari far cambiare idea a quanti, sostenendo la chiusura dell'Ilva, stanno marciando contro gli interessi dei Riva.

Dal punto di vista del lessico, bisogna mettere in evidenza nell'articolo l'uso di molti termini appartenenti al campo semantico dell'economia e del lavoro. Questa attenzione costante al tema dell'economia, dimostrata anche attraverso vocaboli specifici, riflette una forte inclinazione per l'idea della costruzione di una società capitalistica. Rimanendo nel merito delle scelte linguistiche, Dinmore dice che, con l'approvazione del decreto salva Ilva, la magistratura *sarà obbligata* a

revocare il sequestro degli impianti. In questo caso la scelta di un verbo forte come “essere obbligato” dimostra ulteriormente la netta opposizione del giornalista alle decisioni della magistratura.

Passiamo ora all’analisi di un altro articolo, intitolato: “Lotta contro acciaieria italiana che dà lavoro ma inquina”, pubblicato il 9 dicembre del 2012 sull’*International Herald Tribune* (versione internazionale del *New York Times*). L’articolo è stato scritto da Rachel Donadio nello stesso periodo di quello analizzato precedentemente, nei giorni in cui il governo italiano stava varando il decreto salva Ilva. In termini generali questo articolo sembra essere meno di parte rispetto a quello di Dinmore. La giornalista dà voce anche a persone che fanno parte del “loro” della dicotomia, contrarie all’Ilva e quindi contrapposte al potere dell’ideologia dominante: leggiamo le parole di un operaio Ilva e del dottor Patrizio Mazza, direttore del reparto di ematologia dell’ospedale di Taranto, i quali rispettivamente appoggiano l’inchiesta della magistratura e sottolineano la gravità dei danni che le emissioni dell’Ilva provocano alla salute dei cittadini. Anche leggendo il titolo si potrebbe pensare che Donadio abbia un punto di vista equilibrato nella questione Ilva, che non privilegi nessuna delle due parti: l’Ilva dà lavoro ma allo stesso tempo inquina.

Tuttavia, l’intero articolo è pervaso da una mancanza latente di accuse dirette e specifiche. Sembra come se la giornalista non voglia prendersi la responsabilità di scrivere ciò di cui è al corrente. Sostenere che la complicata situazione attuale a Taranto sia il prodotto di decenni di negligenza politica è abbastanza riduttivo e troppo generico considerando che le colpe dei dirigenti Ilva sono ben note a tutti. Senza dubbio lo stato Italiano e il comune di Taranto hanno fatto poco per salvaguardare le sorti dell’acciaieria, ma la famiglia Riva, sin dal momento dell’acquisizione, non si è mai minimamente curata della condizione degli impianti e del loro impatto ambientale.

Al contrario, Donadio si prende tutta la responsabilità di dire, con parole proprie, che per l’Italia lo stabilimento di Taranto è troppo importante per chiudere, sostenendo in pratica la posizione del governo contro la magistratura. La scrittrice infine dimostra chiaramente il suo essere di parte dando voce al presidente

dell’Ilva Bruno Ferrante. Ovviamente Ferrante difende la posizione dell’Ilva e si permette di affermare che, in seguito a dei presunti miglioramenti dell’impianto, il tasso di mortalità dovuta al cancro in città è diminuito.

Donadio non si assume la responsabilità di esprimere con parole proprie i dati sull’inquinamento causato dall’Ilva, descritti solo attraverso le dichiarazioni del dottor Mazza. In un certo senso, la giornalista sembra far capire che le malattie e le percentuali sul cancro siano problemi presi in considerazione solo dagli esperti. Puntualizzando che sui dati espressi da Mazza non ci siano statistiche ufficiali (è vero solo se “ufficiali” è riferito alle statistiche che l’Ilva mai confermerà), Donadio sembra sminuire la gravità della situazione, come se i dottori abbiano quasi pompato questi dati, e che in realtà non ci sia molto di cui preoccuparsi.

Anche in questo articolo c’è un’attenzione costante al tema dell’economia: il campo semantico del lavoro e dei soldi è molto ricco. Riportando il parere di un esperto nell’industria dell’acciaio, contrario alla chiusura dell’Ilva (perché sarebbe un grande favore alla concorrenza europea), la giornalista vuole avallare la tesi del governo italiano, secondo cui la mancanza dello stabilimento di Taranto causerebbe gravi scompensi all’economia nazionale. Troviamo poi le parole di un impiegato Ilva che, pur essendo favorevole all’inchiesta della magistratura, sostiene di essere comunque contento del suo lavoro perché viene pagato molto bene. Donadio afferma che l’economia tarantina è totalmente dipendente dall’Ilva e fa seguire strategicamente le sue parole a quelle di un altro operaio, anch’egli contrario alle decisioni dei giudici (perché non ci sono altre possibilità di lavoro a parte l’acciaieria). In questo modo la giornalista sembra condannare la città di Taranto a rimanere nella situazione in cui si trova adesso (uguale da anni, prevista dallo status quo), senza possibilità di trovare alternative di sviluppo all’Ilva.

Bisogna poi evidenziare una particolarità a livello strutturale. Nei primi due paragrafi dell’articolo viene raccontata la storia di una anziana donna che ha perso recentemente il marito, morto per un tumore al polmone dopo 30 anni di lavoro all’Ilva. Le parole della donna vengono riportate altre due volte dalla giornalista nel corso dell’articolo, attraverso l’uso di un linguaggio informale che smorza la pesantezza dell’argomento trattato. Questo stratagemma serve a distrarre il lettore

dal riflettere sulle colpe palesi del gruppo Riva in merito alla crisi dell’Ilva. Donadio conclude il suo articolo con le dichiarazioni del Premier italiano Mario Monti che difende la decisione del governo di varare il decreto salva Ilva. Si capisce come, anche qui, chi scrive vuole congedare i lettori tramite le parole di uno dei “potenti”, intento a salvaguardare l’ideologia dominante.

Il terzo articolo della mia analisi si intitola: “Acciaieria italiana accusata di causare tumori conquista una tregua”; è apparso il 30 novembre del 2012 sul quotidiano britannico *The Guardian*. Il periodo di pubblicazione è lo stesso dei due articoli fin ora analizzati. L’autore, Tom Kington, dimostra subito di essere politicamente schierato. Il titolo sembra dare il senso di una battaglia tra chi vuole un’Ilva rimodernata oppure chiusa (il “loro”) e chi sostiene la continuazione dell’attività produttiva (appartenente al “noi”, la cui volontà ha prevalso grazie al decreto). L’uso di un verbo come, per esempio, *ottenere* sarebbe stato più neutrale. Il termine “*conquista*” invece lascia trapelare l’interesse del giornalista nella questione e persino una certa soddisfazione per il provvedimento del governo.

L’organizzazione sintattica dei periodi è fondamentale in questo articolo. Le persone o i concetti ai quali Kington vuole dare maggiore rilievo sono posti sempre all’inizio della frase. Per esempio, i primi cinque paragrafi iniziano con il racconto di qualcosa che è stata detta o fatta da membri della “parte” che sostiene l’attività dell’Ilva. Questo espediente strutturale dimostra nuovamente che il giornalista sostiene “i potenti”: gli interessi economici di queste persone girano intorno all’Ilva e, più genericamente, dipendono dalla stabilità economica dell’Italia (alla quale lo stabilimento di Taranto contribuisce). Anche la struttura sintattica del secondo paragrafo ha un intento fortemente ideologico: viene messa in evidenza, all’inizio del periodo, il provvedimento del governo che ha varato il decreto salva Ilva; al contrario, le precedenti decisioni della magistratura di sequestrare l’impianto ed arrestare alcuni suoi dirigenti vengono poste in secondo piano nell’impianto della frase (attraverso il termine *nonostante*, usato due volte e contrapposto al verbo iniziale *concedere*). Le dichiarazioni di Mario Monti sono strategicamente inserite in posizione centrale nell’articolo, in una frase concisa e distaccata dal resto del testo, come a voler rassicurare tutti i lettori che avessero

dubbi riguardo la giustezza del decreto. Non a caso, alle parole del Premier seguono le minacce della famiglia Riva che, in caso di chiusura forzata a Taranto, chiuderebbe tutti i suoi stabilimenti in Italia.

Un'altra prova della partigianeria dell'articolo è la scarsa rilevanza data alla parte della cittadinanza che si batte per la chiusura. Kington racconta di proteste avvenute in giro per l'Italia, ma solo di quelle mosse dai gruppi pro Ilva. Nessun riferimento alle tante manifestazioni contro l'Ilva tenutesi a Taranto da parte di chi lotta per i propri diritti: lavorare ma soprattutto avere una buona salute. Nell'ambito della politica, l'unico ad essere citato tra i politici contrari all'Ilva è Angelo Bonelli, leader dei Verdi, di cui viene riportata solo una breve dichiarazione. Per di più, mancano i nomi e cognomi degli investigatori che hanno accusato ministri del passato governo Berlusconi e dirigenti dell'Ilva di essere d'accordo tra loro per far superare all'Ilva i controlli ambientali nel 2010.

Kington fa di tutto per evitare di specificare le colpe dell'Ilva nella situazione attuale. Anzi, conclude dicendo che un avvocato dell'Ilva ha negato il legame tra le emissioni e le alte percentuali di tumori. In tal modo sembra voler convincere l'opinione pubblica del fatto che l'Ilva non sia un grande problema per Taranto, dimostrando ancora di essere politicamente schierato.

Il quarto articolo in analisi si intitola: "La procura sul banco degli imputati per la chiusura di un'acciaieria in Italia", pubblicato il 15 agosto del 2012 sul *Financial Times*. Il testo, scritto da Giulia Segreti, risale al periodo in cui scoppì il caso Ilva, la magistratura aveva da pochi giorni ordinato il sequestro degli impianti. La sua analisi acquista maggiore valenza se paragonata alla lettura completa di un altro articolo di Tom Kington (apparso sul *Guardian* il 17 agosto 2012), cui ho accennato brevemente all'inizio del capitolo. I due giornalisti affrontano la questione Ilva attraverso prospettive totalmente opposte.

L'approccio di Kington questa volta è molto meno di parte. L'articolo inizia con una descrizione generale delle cattive condizioni di vita a Taranto, confermata dalle tristi parole di un commerciante cittadino. Il giornalista dimostra reale interesse per i problemi di salute causati dall'attività dell'Ilva e li mette in primo pia-

no in tutto l'articolo, elencando una serie di percentuali sulle emissioni e sulle malattie ad esse dovute. Al contrario, sin dalle prime frasi del suo articolo, Segreti lascia intendere che si occuperà essenzialmente dell'aspetto economico e della disputa politica attorno al caso Ilva. La scrittrice incolperà la magistratura (definita contraddittoria) di aver causato tale disputa, attaccandola con veemenza e quasi sdegno. Anche nel titolo, l'uso di un'espressione come "sul banco degli imputati" rende il senso di un'accusa molto diretta. Segreti mostra reale preoccupazione solo per gli investimenti esteri che potrebbero essere scoraggiati dalle decisioni della magistratura.

Sottolineando che in pochi sono rimasti sorpresi da tali decisioni, Kington dimostra invece il suo appoggio ai giudici. Ciò che stupisce il giornalista sono piuttosto le proteste dei sindacalisti contro la chiusura e le parole del Ministro dell'Ambiente Corrado Clini (che ha sostenuto le proteste), definite bizzarre. Le seguenti dichiarazioni di Angelo Bonelli servono a screditare l'opinione del ministro, secondo il quale le emissioni dell'Ilva sono state recentemente ridotte. Segreti descrive in soli tre righi le gravi condizioni sanitarie in cui versa la città e quali sono le ragioni che avrebbero spinto la magistratura a bloccare l'Ilva (tasso di mortalità elevato e in aumento). La giornalista torna subito a parlare delle conseguenze economiche di un'eventuale chiusura dell'impianto, utilizzando un "ma" che serve a dare sintatticamente maggiore importanza a ciò che sta per scrivere rispetto al precedente. Qui le parole di Clini hanno una ben diversa importanza, servendo da conferma ai problemi economici e di disoccupazione che si creerebbero senza l'Ilva, appena sottolineati dalla Segreti.

Il problema degli investimenti esteri è supportato da una dichiarazione a dir poco clamorosa di Stefani Prestigiacomo, Ministro dell'Ambiente del precedente governo Berlusconi. Definire un "simbolo" l'Ilva che è la causa di malattie e morte da decenni a Taranto sembra essere un'affermazione molto azzardata, che nasconde un interesse personale nella lotta a favore della riapertura dello stabilimento. Effettivamente, la famiglia Prestigiacomo è proprietaria della Coemi, un'azienda che si occupa dell'estrazione di petrolio nel Mar Mediterraneo. Tale azienda ha tra i suoi clienti alcune industrie italiane di distribuzione di carburanti,

tra cui l'Eni. Oltre l'Ilva, nella zona industriale di Taranto è presente la più grande raffineria Eni d'Italia la quale, in caso di chiusura del siderurgico, passerebbe al primo posto nella lista degli stabilimenti imputati per l'inquinamento cittadino. Anche l'Eni, di conseguenza, rischierebbe di chiudere: ecco spiegato perché la Prestigiacomo si sta battendo tanto a favore dell'Ilva.

L'esempio dell'ex ministro può aiutare a capire perché quello dell'Ilva è diventato un caso di così ampio raggio. La famiglia Riva dà lavoro a migliaia di persone in Italia e all'estero, e collabora con tante aziende che le forniscono le materie prime utili alla produzione dell'acciaio. Ci sono quindi in giro per l'Europa diversi imprenditori i cui profitti sono connessi più o meno direttamente all'attività del grande siderurgico. Questa è la ragione principale per la quale il governo italiano e le istituzioni in generale non vogliono che l'Ilva chiuda.

Tornando all'articolo di Segreti, bisogna sottolineare che la scelta di citare le dichiarazioni di Clini e Prestigiacomo in rapida successione non è affatto casuale. L'Ilva viene accusata da anni di essere la causa principale di gravi problemi ambientali, eppure due ministri dell'ambiente (quello attuale e il precedente) sono concordi nel supportare l'Ilva e la sua produzione. Attraverso questa struttura sintattica la giornalista tenta di persuadere i lettori che lo stabilimento non sia la causa delle cattive condizioni ambientali della città.

Segreti dà voce alle riflessioni malinconiche di un anziano abitante di Taranto, il quale appoggia le misure della magistratura; sembra quasi fare da portavoce a tutti quei cittadini e gruppi ambientalisti che lottano per la chiusura dello stabilimento. E sono davvero tanti, più di quanto la giornalista in questione e tutti i media non dicano; ed erano tanti già molto tempo prima del sequestro degli impianti Ilva da parte dei giudici. Eppure Segreti smorza le parole dell'anziano attraverso dichiarazioni di due sindacalisti, i leader di Legambiente e Fim. Essi sostengono che non è necessario chiudere l'Ilva perché la salute, l'ambiente e il lavoro posso coesistere. Queste affermazioni sono molto in voga a Taranto in questo periodo e penso siano tanto ricorrenti quanto poco realistiche: se la portata della produzione e le sue caratteristiche rimarranno le stesse, gli impianti dell'Ilva non

potranno mai essere modernizzati. Di conseguenza, l'eventuale bonifica dei territori adiacenti non avrebbe alcun senso.

Kington fa una descrizione non bella di Taranto, come rassegnata al destino di rimanere per sempre una città industriale e nulla più, paragonata ad altre località pugliesi moderne e turistiche. Ma lo scrittore sottolinea che tale situazione è dovuta alla presenza oppressiva dell'Ilva sulla città. Kington ricorda che, come il bestiame e l'agricoltura, anche le cozze, alimento tipico tarantino, sono a forte rischio contaminazione e gli allevatori stanno lottando contro l'attività inquinante dell'Ilva.

La conclusione è ciò che differenzia maggiormente in due articoli in analisi. In quello di Kington, le parole di un'attivista (Rossella Balestra) suonano come un riassunto finale. Lei dice che i politici attaccano i giudici perché sentono la loro autorità scavalcata; in realtà, sanno bene che il governo non si sarebbe mai preso la responsabilità di fare ciò che ha fatto la magistratura. Il parere della Balestra è seguito da quello di personaggi di varie categorie della società, tutti contrari all'azione dell'Ilva. Leggiamo: i dati sulle emissioni nocive dello stabilimento espresse dal dottor Mazza, che supporta fortemente la chiusura; le parole significative di un operaio Ilva che ammette di aver cambiato idea sulla questione, stando ora dalla parte della magistratura; le dichiarazioni di Bonelli, politico che specifica come la chiusura del siderurgico non sarebbe un problema se lo Stato garantisse sostanziosi investimenti per la città; le ammissioni di un ex dipendente Ilva riguardo le colpe dei vecchi operai che, ai tempi in cui lo stabilimento stava per essere ingigantito, pensarono solo al loro stipendio, non curandosi minimamente delle conseguenze che un impianto tanto grande avrebbe potuto avere sull'ambiente circostante. Non a caso, l'articolo comincia e si chiude con la citazione della stessa persona, Francesco Mastrocinque, un cittadino comune. All'inizio egli ricorda alcuni suoi amici morti a causa di malattie respiratorie, dovute alle polveri emesse dall'Ilva; in chiusura, parla malinconicamente delle tombe del cimitero ricoperte dalla stessa polvere che ha ucciso le persone che giacciono in quel luogo. Questa struttura semantica sembra creare una metafora tra "polvere" e "morte".

Attraverso la conclusione del suo articolo, Segreti dimostra ancora una volta di essere schierata politicamente. Ricorda le misure del governo contro quelle della magistratura e mette in evidenza i fondi (miseri) stanziati per la bonifica dei territori intorno all'Ilva. Chiunque può facilmente capire che 336 mila euro sono spiccioli se paragonati alla somma di denaro idonea ad eliminare le scorie lasciate da un'industria grande come l'Ilva durante 50 anni di attività produttiva. I due paragrafi finali sono una esplicita difesa degli interessi dell'Ilva. Segreti specifica le percentuali di produzione e di impiego assicurate dallo stabilimento, come se volesse convincere i lettori che chiudere l'Ilva sia impossibile. Secondo i manager Ilva le emissioni dello stabilimento sarebbero ben al di sotto dei limiti consentiti dalla legge: riportare una tale dichiarazione equivale a prendere per stupido chi leggerà l'articolo.

3. I media e le leggi sull'ambiente

Chiariamo ora in dettaglio come si sono generate le controversie politiche attorno al caso Ilva. Per farlo mi sembra utile fare una digressione sulle emissioni e sull'impatto ambientale dell'attività industriale in generale, tornerò a parlare dell'Ilva in seguito.

I grandi stabilimenti industriali, come scarto della loro produzione, emettono una serie di agenti inquinanti e cancerogeni che inquinano l'atmosfera ma anche l'acqua e i terreni; in più rilasciano scorie e rifiuti che devono essere smaltiti, e consumano energia. Per questo le leggi sulle emissioni industriali sono state per lungo tempo un argomento di dibattito politico a livello europeo. Allo scopo di prevenire e ridurre le emissioni di inquinanti nell'ambiente da parte di varie attività industriali, la Comunità Europea ha adottato nel 1996 delle disposizioni comuni con la pubblicazione della *direttiva IPPC* (Prevenzione e Riduzione Integrate dell'Inquinamento). Questa è stata successivamente ripresa e completata dal Parlamento europeo e dal Consiglio attraverso la direttiva 2008/1/CE. L'ultimo aggiornamento a livello europeo in materia di emissioni risale al 2010, con la direttiva 2010/75/UE, che precisa e aggiunge imposizioni a quelle già presenti nelle due direttive precedenti, completandole ulteriormente. La direttiva IPPC fornisce delle disposizioni alle autorità competenti degli Stati membri in merito al rilascio di autorizzazioni sul funzionamento degli impianti industriali elencati nell'Allegato I della stessa. Tali autorizzazioni si basano sull'utilizzo delle migliori tecniche disponibili, dette anche BAT, riportate nei cosiddetti BRefs, ossia rapporti che rappresentano un quadro dettagliato dei processi industriali impiegati nei settori indicati dalla direttiva. L'uso delle BAT serve ad evitare o a ridurre le emissioni inquinanti e l'impatto sull'ambiente, riducendo nel contempo i consumi energetici e migliorando la produttività e/o la qualità della produzione.

Le leggi italiane in ambito di emissioni inquinanti nell'ambiente sono svariate, tra cui molte includono gli obblighi imposti dall'Unione Europea tramite la direttiva IPPC. Tra queste leggi la più importante e ad ampio raggio è il cosiddetto

Testo Unico Ambientale (decreto legislativo 3/4/06 n.152), che comprende impostazioni generali in materia di ambiente. L'ultimo recepimento della direttiva IPPC nella legislazione italiana è il decreto legislativo 29/6/10 n.128, che è stato essenziale per gli sviluppi del caso Ilva. Infatti questo decreto modifica parzialmente il Testo Unico Ambientale, introducendovi l'AIA (Autorizzazione Integrata Ambientale). L'AIA è un provvedimento specifico e mirato che autorizza uno stabilimento o parte di esso a produrre attraverso particolari condizioni di utilizzo degli impianti. Da qui ci ricollegiamo al problema Ilva: un'AIA è stata rilasciata al siderurgico di Taranto il 26 ottobre 2012, la quale richiede, in anticipo rispetto alle scadenze imposte dall'UE, l'uso delle migliori tecnologie disponibili per la produzione di acciaio, in modo da proteggere la salute e l'ambiente. Le incomprensioni sono sorte nel momento in cui il governo italiano ha dovuto convertire l'AIA in legge. La legge 24/12/2012 n.231, definita "salva Ilva", essenzialmente incorpora l'AIA per intero, aggiungendo però che l'Ilva avrebbe potuto continuare la sua attività produttiva per eseguire le richieste dell'AIA stessa. Questo è precisamente ciò che ha causato un conflitto di potere tra il governo e la magistratura che, quattro mesi prima (agosto 2012) aveva imposto il sequestro di buona parte dello stabilimento, provvedimento che prevedeva il blocco della produzione. Il Ministro dell'Ambiente Corrado Clini ha dichiarato che per attuare le disposizioni dell'AIA è necessario che l'Ilva continui la sua attività. Considerando che le perizie ambientali a Taranto continuano a dare dati allarmanti sulla concentrazione di polveri nell'aria, nocive per la salute, credo che quello spiegato dal ministro Clini non sia il metodo giusto per applicare l'AIA.

Mi sembra utile ora descrivere in maniera dettagliata le abbondanti emissioni prodotte dall'Ilva. Lo farò attraverso il commento di alcuni paragrafi di un articolo (apparso su *Il Fatto Quotidiano*) scritto da Alessandro Marescotti, professore di un liceo tarantino e residente a Taranto. Marescotti è uno dei maggiori attivisti nella lotta cittadina contro l'inquinamento ed è anche il leader di Peacelink, l'associazione ambientalista che essenzialmente ha dato inizio a quello che io chiamo "caso Ilva" con le sue denunce alla procura nel 2010 (tra cui la notifica degli alti livelli di diossina nei capi di bestiame della provincia). Il titolo lascia in-

tendere quale sarà il tono usato nell'articolo: "Ilva, ecco i dati che il ministro Clinì non cita mai".

Bisogna premettere che i due più pericolosi elementi cancerogeni tra i tanti presenti nell'aria a Taranto sono la diossina (un inquinante molto persistente che si innesta anche nei cibi) e il benzo(a)pirene (un inquinante genotossico, ossia capace di alterare il DNA trasmesso dai genitori ai figli). Dai rilievi fatti nel 2010 i valori di entrambi questi elementi risultavano più alti del limite massimo consentito dalla legge: la diossina era a 0,7 ng/m³, il limite è 0,4; il benzo(a)pirene era a 1,93 ng/m³, il limite di 1 non dovrebbe essere superato. Il condizionale non è casuale, infatti il decreto legislativo n.155 dell'agosto 2010 rimuove temporaneamente (fino al 2015) il limite preesistente di un nanogrammo di benzo(a)pirene per metro cubo. Stranamente, la modifica di tale legge è avvenuta proprio nel momento in cui si attendevano dei provvedimenti che avrebbero obbligato l'Ilva a ridurre le emissioni e, ancor più stranamente, le intercettazioni che riguardano Girolamo Archinà (pubblico relatore dei Riva) risalgono proprio ai primi mesi del 2010. Non essendoci più il limite, l'Ilva poté continuare la sua attività lavorativa senza problemi. Bisogna anche precisare che l'AIA del novembre 2012 non è stata l'unica ad essere concessa all'Ilva. La regione Puglia approvò un AIA per lo stabilimento di Taranto nel 2011, quando le emissioni erano uguali a quelle rilevate nel 2010 e uguali a quelle odierne. Sembra abbastanza strano che la Commissione Tecnica dell'AIA abbia accettato simili sforamenti e soprattutto abbia consentito all'Ilva di continuare a produrre tramite impianti non a norma di legge. Infatti, l'AIA dovrebbe essere concessa solo agli impianti che usano le migliori tecnologie disponibili (BAT).

Nel suo articolo il professor Marescotti riporta i dati precisi delle emissioni provenienti da varie parti dell'industria, confrontandoli con i limiti massimi imposti dalla legge. La cokeria dell'Ilva di Taranto, specifica Marescotti, è identica a quella che il ministro Clinì ordinò di chiudere a Genova, e produce emissioni 70 volte superiori ai livelli raggiungibili con le migliori tecnologie. Vengono poi rimarcati i problemi basilari del siderurgico: i parchi minerari a cielo aperto e, soprattutto, l'estrema vicinanza al centro abitato (300 metri dalle case). Il professore

precisa che, anche con le migliori tecnologie, le emissioni di una cokeria non possono rientrare nei limiti di legge se non oltre un raggio di 1700 metri. Le emissioni spropositate aggiunte alla forte vicinanza equivalgono per un bambino del quartiere Tamburi a 700 sigarette fumate all'anno. Tutto questo, sottolinea impietoso Marescotti, è autorizzato dall'AIA. Quanto detto fin ora penso sia già ampiamente sufficiente per capire che il blocco della produzione imposto dalla magistratura era sicuramente la scelta giusta da prendere. Ma i dati sconcertanti non sono finiti. Marescotti riporta i numeri delle emissioni orarie del camino E312, uno dei più grandi dell'Ilva, dimostrando che sono 25 volte più alti di come potrebbero essere se si usassero le BAT. Riguardo l'altoforno e la fase di colaggio ghisa e loppa il professore specifica che le emissioni orarie potrebbero essere rispettivamente 14 e 95 volte inferiori usando le BAT. E io credo che, a maggior ragione se ci si trova a 300 metri da un centro abitato, l'uso delle migliori tecnologie dovrebbe essere scontato e gli altiforni rimossi. Voglio sottolineare che il quartiere Tamburi (il più vicino alla fabbrica) è stato costruito molto prima dell'Ilva, al contrario di quanto affermò Clini in un'intervista. L'articolo di Marescotti si conclude proprio con un riferimento al ministro dell'ambiente. Il professore si chiede se Clini abbia mai letto il dato sulle emissioni della vera e propria acciaieria dell'Ilva, che sono 15 volte maggiori di quello che consentirebbero le BAT. L'ultimo paragrafo fa riferimento ai parchi minerari che, per essere coperti necessitano di un miliardo di euro d'investimento. Per provvedere a tale spesa sono stati concessi 36 mesi di tempo all'Ilva. Allora Marescotti chiede sarcasticamente al lettore di cosa venga accusata la magistratura, dato che un bambino nato oggi al quartiere Tamburi sarà costretto a respirare le polveri per i primi tre anni della sua vita.

Sembra abbastanza chiaro che, per ragioni di posizione (vicinanza estrema con il centro abitato) e di qualità tecnica degli impianti (vecchi e obsoleti), all'Ilva non avrebbe dovuto essere concessa un'AIA che le consentisse di continuare a produrre. Di conseguenza, le uniche soluzioni possibili per ridurre le emissioni ed eliminare il danno ambientale sono la chiusura della cokeria oppure una totale ricostruzione di tutti gli impianti dello stabilimento attraverso processi tecnologicamente avanzati.

Dopo questa parentesi riguardante la situazione ambientale a Taranto, possiamo tornare all’analisi dei testi, occupandoci di due articoli che sono molto meno schierati politicamente rispetto a quelli che abbiamo incontrato fin ora. Il primo si intitola: “Lavoro e inquinamento: resa dei conti per l’Italia”, pubblicato il 13 dicembre del 2012 sul settimanale americano di economia *Businessweek*. Quest’articolo è stato scritto da Stephan Faris qualche tempo dopo la promulgazione della legge salva Ilva da parte del governo. Dopo le tante proteste e gli scontri istituzionali si era raggiunta in quel periodo una situazione di calma, ma solo apparente. Il caso Ilva in realtà era ben lontano dall’essere risolto, e probabilmente lo sarà ancora per lungo tempo. Questo è un aspetto che il giornalista mette in risalto, specialmente in chiusura dell’articolo come vedremo. Il termine “resa dei conti” usato nel titolo rende bene l’idea di quanto il caso Ilva sia importante per l’Italia intera, a livello lavorativo e ambientale in ugual misura. Faris mette subito a contrasto le due facce di Taranto: la vasta zona industriale da una parte, i raffinati quartieri cittadini dall’altra. Le bellezze della città (le lunghe coste paesaggistiche, il castello, ecc.) contrapposte al forte odore di metallo che si sente nell’aria, causato dalle grandi fabbriche inquinanti. Il tono imparziale dell’articolo si nota chiaramente nel secondo paragrafo, il quale sembra essere una specie di breve riassunto dei fatti accaduti fino al momento in cui si scrive. Qui il giornalista contrappone quelle che sono le due fazioni in lotta nel caso Ilva: le persone preoccupate per la loro salute da un lato, i lavoratori che vogliono mantenere il loro posto dall’altro. Questa dicotomia è presente in tutto il testo, con opinioni e pensieri provenienti da una parte e dall’altra: ciò è sinonimo di imparzialità.

Faris elenca dettagliatamente tutti i casi allarmanti di inquinamento rilevati a Taranto negli ultimi anni: migliaia di pecore contaminate dalla diossina, vari cancerogeni come il berillio trovati sul suolo del quartiere Tamburi, PCB trovati nelle ostriche. Il campo semantico della scienza è quindi ampio, con l’uso di vari termini tecnici per identificare determinati elementi chimici inquinanti. Il giornalista è molto preciso anche sui dati riguardanti i problemi di salute causati dall’Ilva: il rischio di prendere il cancro per gli abitanti di Taranto è del 30% più alto rispetto agli abitanti della provincia, il tasso di mortalità nel primo anno di vita è del 20% maggiore rispetto alla media regionale, ecc. L’effettività di queste percentua-

li è confermata dalle voci di due dottori tarantini: Grazia Parisi e Patrizio Mazza. A differenza di quanto visto negli articoli precedenti, in questo articolo Faris non si limita ad esprimere dati tramite le dichiarazioni dei medici che poi vengono puntualmente screditate dalle istituzioni. I pareri degli esperti in materia di salute sono ben inserite nella struttura sintattica dei paragrafi e fanno da controprova ai dati espressi dallo scrittore con parole proprie. La Parisi afferma sconcertata che la decisione del governo equivale a tirare un calcio ad una persona che chiede aiuto, Mazza sostiene invece che il caso Ilva è un iceberg di cui noi stiamo vedendo solo la punta. Il loro linguaggio è molto semplice ed informale, utile allo scrittore per ridurre il gap linguistico tra il suo testo e i lettori, dando l'illusione di una conversazione orale (*modello orale*).

Faris include nel suo articolo un paragrafo riguardante l'importanza economica dell'Ilva, in cui descrive le alte percentuali di produttività ed impiego garantite dal siderurgico. Allo stesso tempo però sembra far capire che, a prescindere da tali dati, la sua idea è contraria a quella di molte persone a Taranto (come il sindacalista che intervista): l'importanza dell'Ilva non è imprescindibile e il siderurgico non può essere l'unica possibilità lavorativa per la città. Una caratteristica importante dello stile di Faris è quella di dire le cose come sono realmente: racconta i risvolti del caso Ilva cronologicamente e senza mai esprimere esplicitamente pareri personali. Non appoggia chi vorrebbe la chiusura ma neanche si scaglia contro i dirigenti dell'Ilva; racconta delle investigazioni della procura sulla condotta dei Riva ma anche delle loro minacce di cessare la produzione per protesta. Il giornalista scrive in maniera equilibrata anche riguardo le manifestazioni cittadine, evidenziando che sono state indette da entrambe le parti: proteste degli operaio contrari alla chiusura, proteste degli ambientalisti favorevoli al blocco della produzione.

Così facendo, Faris ha dimostrato di essere abbastanza imparziale nel descrivere il caso Ilva. Eppure, dopo aver raccontato la proclamazione del decreto salva Ilva da parte del governo, il giornalista fa una conclusione che lascia traspare in qualche modo il suo parere sulla questione. A conferma di questo c'è la presenza di una morale finale separata dal resto del testo e messa in evidenza, e-

lemento che solitamente serve all'autore per esprimere un giudizio conclusivo su quanto detto. Faris si mostra dubbioso riguardo l'effettività degli investimenti che dovrebbero arrivare dallo Stato per la bonifica degli impianti: prima dice che i fondi potrebbero arrivare lentamente, subito dopo dice di temere che i fondi possano non arrivare mai. Se si aggiunge questo al doppio riferimento fatto alla debolezza dell'economia italiana e al timore che Taranto possa essere dimenticata nuovamente, si capisce chiaramente che, se gli venisse chiesto un parere, il giornalista appoggerebbe il blocco quantomeno temporaneo dell'attività dell'Ilva. E io lo appoggio fortemente: fermare la produzione in attesa della modernizzazione degli impianti mi sembra l'unica cosa giusta da fare vista la criticità della situazione ambientale.

Mi sposto adesso sul commento di un altro articolo che ha caratteristiche simili a quello di Faris, il cui titolo è: "Resa dei conti su una inquinante acciaieria in Italia". È stato pubblicato il 24 dicembre del 2012 sul sito web dell'emittente radiofonica americana *National Public Radio*. Scritto da Sylvia Poggioli, l'articolo risale ai giorni in cui, in seguito alla promulgazione della legge salva Ilva, la magistratura stava preparando un ricorso alla Corte Costituzionale, denunciando l'incostituzionalità del decreto del governo, accusato dai giudici di violare ben 17 punti della Costituzione italiana.

Innanzitutto sottolineiamo la presenza nel titolo dello stesso termine usato da Faris, "resa dei conti", per rendere l'idea di un momento cruciale per la politica italiana. In secondo luogo, è evidente a livello strutturale la divisione del testo in tre sezioni. Tale espediente permette alla scrittrice di distinguere i vari aspetti del caso Ilva e parlarne più in dettaglio, rendendo allo stesso tempo i concetti più facili da capire e la lettura più scorrevole. La prima sezione sembra essere un breve riassunto del caso Ilva, inclusa una descrizione della cattiva situazione economica e lavorativa a Taranto, che peggiorerebbe se il siderurgico chiudesse. La seconda sezione si focalizza sui problemi di salute causati dai fumi dell'industria, con dati precisi sulle malattie nei residenti. Riportando le interviste fatte a persone di varie classi sociali, nella terza parte Poggioli vuole mettere in luce quanto sia radicata la presenza dell'Ilva nella vita degli abitanti di Taranto. La giornalista ha evitato di

riempire il testo con considerazioni personali sulla questione, o con un eccessivo numero di dati sull'inquinamento, o con le dichiarazioni di politici o persone potenti. Lascia parlare piuttosto le persone comuni che vivono quotidianamente la realtà cittadina, cercando, attraverso le loro parole, di mostrare ai lettori quelle che sono le effettive condizioni di chi vive a Taranto. In questo modo chi legge può giudicare meglio quale potrebbe essere la soluzione più giusta per il caso Ilva.

Leggendo la prima parte dell'articolo, dove troviamo le dichiarazioni di un rappresentante dei lavoratori Ilva ovviamente sfavorevole alla chiusura, si capiscono tre sfaccettature chiave del caso: i sindacati si preoccupano solo di preservare l'occupazione dei lavoratori, e non la loro salute; la gran parte dei lavoratori è d'accordo con i sindacati; il governo e i sindacati hanno lo stesso obiettivo: preservare l'economia italiana. Questo significa che anche lo Stato, il quale dovrebbe badare al benessere (non solo economico) di tutti i suoi cittadini, mette in secondo piano gli effetti dannosi che l'Ilva provoca sulla popolazione tarantina. Poggiali ripete due volte che il governo ha deciso per sua unica volontà di ribaltare l'ordinanza di sequestro indetta dalla magistratura, come a voler sottolineare che tale decisione sia stata presa nonostante i ben noti livelli di inquinamento a Taranto.

Poggiali prende in considerazione un aspetto fondamentale della questione inquinamento: la scarsa consapevolezza dei danni creati dal siderurgico che c'era nei decenni passati. Senza dubbio fino a pochi anni fa nessuno conosceva i dati specifici sulle emissioni che oggi noi possediamo, ma che l'Ilva inquinò è risaputo sin da quando gli impianti furono costruiti. L'inconsapevolezza è diventata una scusa per giustificare decenni di indifferenza da parte di cittadini, lavoratori e politici. Se tutti fossero stati più interessati a preservare la propria salute anziché pensare unicamente al profitto e al lavoro che l'Ilva garantiva, oggi sicuramente la situazione non sarebbe così critica.

Anche in questo articolo il campo semantico della scienza è fiorente riguardo gli agenti inquinanti presenti nelle emissioni dell'Ilva. Sono riportate alcune percentuali sulle malattie e sui tumori, anche qui confermate dalla voce esperta del dottor Mazza. Poggiali cita poi due operai dell'Ilva, le cui opinioni racchiudono in

un certo senso il pensiero di tutti i lavoratori dello stabilimento. Le posizioni riscontrabili tra i dipendenti sono due: una egoista e ignorante, che non considera minimamente i problemi di salute e, addirittura, fa del caso Ilva un mero montaggio mediatico; un'altra più equilibrata, preoccupata per l'occupazione ma anche per la salute. La seconda è molto più accettabile ma comunque inutile. Infatti, se gli operai sono davvero preoccupati per la loro salute (e quella dei loro familiari) dovrebbero provare a reagire in qualche modo anziché continuare a lavorare come sempre. Altrimenti, il ricatto lavorativo dell'Ilva funzionerà sempre. Se anche solo una parte dei dipendenti per protesta si astenesse dall'andare a lavorare, magari i dirigenti dell'Ilva prenderebbero provvedimenti per velocizzare sensibilmente la modernizzazione degli impianti. Poggioli dà spazio anche alle parole dell'allevatore, Vincenzo Fornaro, che vide i suoi capi di bestiame abbattuti nel 2008 a causa della contaminazione da diossina. Egli è rassegnato alla sua condizione attuale e sembra ammettere in un certo senso le colpe della sua generazione (la finta inconsapevolezza di cui ho parlato prima), ma allo stesso tempo è convinto del fatto che lui e i suoi coetanei possano ancora fare qualcosa di utile: lottare per un futuro migliore a Taranto. Io penso che tutti a Taranto, compresi gli operai dell'Ilva, dovrebbero avere lo stesso proposito di questo allevatore.

Poggioli fa capire quanto sia grave la situazione ambientale a Taranto riportando una breve intervista fatta ad un ex dipendente Ilva. Egli ammette di non escludere nessun cibo dalla sua dieta giornaliera, neanche le cozze, elemento tipico della tradizione culinaria tarantina, definite contaminate dalle analisi degli ultimi anni. L'uomo spiega malinconicamente che a Taranto qualsiasi cibo è inquinato, perché l'inquinamento è dappertutto. La cosa più scioccante è che queste parole rispecchiano la realtà.

Nella conclusione la giornalista mette in evidenza quello che, probabilmente, è l'aspetto più grave e triste di tutta la vicenda Ilva: i cittadini di Taranto non sono capaci di immaginare la loro città senza l'Ilva. Poggioli prende in considerazione l'esempio del professor Marescotti. I suoi studenti al liceo, poco più che ragazzini, sono convinti che la loro città non potrebbe andare avanti senza il siderurgico. Poggioli sostiene che questa industria ha creato una dipendenza totale, e

che la popolazione non avverte minimamente la possibilità di trovare alternative all'Ilva. Purtroppo, penso che non ci sia nulla di più veritiero. Per una persona che ama questa città e sa bene quanto essa possa offrire, le parole della giornalista americana suonano come un grande fallimento. Chiunque abbia visitato Taranto anche per un solo giorno, ha capito che questa città potrebbe avere più di una alternativa alla grande industria, se solo la si volesse davvero trovare. Il clima mite, il sole, il mare e i suoi frutti, i numerosi resti della Magna Grecia, un museo archeologico unico nel suo genere, sono solo alcune delle risorse su cui questa città potrebbe contare. Se si investisse di più su queste risorse, si potrebbe rilanciare il turismo e creare tanti nuovi posti di lavoro. In questo modo magari i proprietari dell'Ilva sarebbero anche più incoraggiati a modernizzare gli impianti. Infatti, se ci fossero concrete alternative al lavoro in fabbrica, come il turismo, il famoso ricatto lavorativo su cui si fonda la negligenza dei Riva, decadrebbe inevitabilmente. Di conseguenza, se volessero mantenere i loro dipendenti, dovrebbero migliorarne le condizioni lavorative, e l'unico modo per farlo sarebbe il risanamento dello stabilimento e dell'ambiente circostante. Altrimenti temo, come fanno anche i giudici, che l'Ilva non si atterrà mai alla richiesta del governo di investire 4 miliardi di euro per la bonifica. E Taranto rischia di essere dimenticata di nuovo.

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Monti acts in bid to save Taranto plant

by Guy Dinmore in Rome, November 30, 2012 6:55 pm

The future of Europe's largest steel plant hung in the balance on Friday as Italy's technocrat government intervened to counteract court orders that have stopped production in the southern port of Taranto and put thousands of jobs under threat.

Mario Monti, prime minister, said after a lengthy cabinet meeting on Friday that the government had been forced to intervene to defend a "national strategic asset". Once the government decree is signed by President Giorgio Napolitano, the Taranto court will be obliged to lift its sequestration orders on the plant.

The long-running controversy over the plant – owned by Ilva, a private company that has denied prosecutors' accusations of causing deaths through pollution – has led to a clash of constitutional powers between the government and the judiciary.

Italian officials and chief executives fear that overzealous public prosecutors are undermining confidence among industry and investors at a time of economic crisis. However, magistrates not involved in the dispute warned the decree could lead to a challenge in Italy's constitutional court by a judiciary fearing its independence was under threat.

Mr Monti appeared at pains to avoid a head-on confrontation with the judiciary on Friday. Cabinet ministers agreed to impose a clean-up plan and environmental targets for the Taranto plant with oversight by an independent authority.

Corrado Passera, minister for economic development, said the decree included possible sanctions for Ilva if it did not comply with the government's clean-up directives, which could even lead to its losing control over the plant.

"This is a real test for Italy," Mr Monti said on Thursday in a meeting with employers and unions. "We cannot afford to give an image of Italy as a country where it is not possible to reconcile respect for the judiciary, protection of employment, health and the environment, with maintaining a strategic sector such as steel."

Government fears of further labour unrest and possible social unrest in Taranto were highlighted by statistics showing a leap in national unemployment levels to 11.1 per cent in October, with the jobless rate in the south close to 17 per cent.

The Taranto plant, which employs 11,000 workers, is the largest by capacity in Europe and accounted for about 30 per cent of Italy's steel output last year. Italy is Europe's second-largest steel producer after Germany.

Long-term closure of the plant would have serious knock-on effects. Employers say a total of 20,000 jobs in Taranto alone are at risk, with other plants owned by Ilva in Italy threatened by closure. Mr Passera said a closure of Taranto would

cause an “emergency” that could cost the Italian economy some €8bn to €9bn a year.

Carmaker Fiat said it had sourced up to 23 per cent of its steel needs from the Ilva group but that it had already made alternative arrangements with other providers and would not be affected by Taranto’s closure.

The environmental dispute came to a head on July 26 when a court in Taranto ordered the closure of the plant’s steel furnaces and issued arrest warrants for several people, including Emilio Riva, the 86-year-old founder of the family business that bought the Taranto plant from the state in 1995.

Arrest warrants for five more people were issued last Monday. They included Fabio Riva, son of the founder, and a local government official accused of abuse of office. The court also seized stockpiles of finished steel and products, forcing the company to shut down its cold-rolling production and put 5,000 workers on leave.

Ilva has denied causing deaths through pollution and says it has backing for its position from experts collaborating with Exponent, a US scientific and engineering consultancy. The company also denies allegations by prosecutors of corruption and says it has invested €3bn to upgrade the plant.

Separately on Friday, the Taranto court rejected requests by Ilva to reverse the closure in July of its furnaces and the seizure on Monday of its products.

Grappling With Italian Steel Plant That Provides and Pollutes

by Rachel Donadio, December 9, 2012

TARANTO, Italy — Every morning, Graziella Lumino cleans the black soot from her kitchen window, which looks out on the hulking Ilva steel plant where her husband, Giuseppe Corisi, worked for 30 years.

After he died this year at the age of 64 from violent, sudden-onset lung cancer, his friends put a plaque on the wall of their apartment building: “Here lived the umpteenth death from lung cancer. Taranto, March 8, 2012.”

Today, Ilva, which is among the largest plants in Europe and produces more than 30 percent of Italy’s raw steel, is at the heart of a clash over the future of Italian industry, one that pits economic concerns against environmental ones and the power of the government against the judiciary amid Italy’s struggle to compete in a global economy.

After a court ordered sections of the plant closed and steel from it impounded last month, arguing that it had violated environmental laws and was raising serious health concerns in the area, the government passed an emergency decree that would allow it to continue operating while cleaning up its act, saving 20,000 jobs nationwide. Magistrates said that the new law, which must be approved by Parliament, violated the Constitution by allowing the executive branch to circumvent the judiciary.

In many ways, the Ilva plant is an emblem of the Italian economy that the technocratic government of Prime Minister Mario Monti inherited last year and has been trying to repair before elections expected early next year. It is the product of decades of physical and political neglect, an aging industrial giant that came of age in the economic boom of the late 20th century and is struggling to keep pace in the 21st.

For Italy, though, the plant is too big to fail. It produces about 8 percent of European steel — and the government estimates that stopping production would cost the Italian economy more than \$10 billion a year.

But the environmental concerns are real. Dark plumes of smoke billow from stacks dominating the landscape, while dust from the plant stains the white tombstones in the local cemetery a rusty pink. An ordinance forbids children from playing in unpaved lots. In 2008, a local farmer was forced to slaughter 2,000 sheep after they were deemed contaminated with dioxin.

Some studies have found that cancer rates in Taranto, an ancient harbor in the heel of Italy’s boot, are over 30 percent higher than the national average, and far higher for certain cancers, particularly of the lungs, kidneys and liver, as well as melanomas.

Bruno Ferrante, the president of Ilva, said that the Riva Group, which owns the plant, has been spending from \$325 million to \$400 million a year to upgrade the plant since it bought it in 1995.

Mr. Ferrante added that cancer rates had been falling recently — government-approved studies bear that out — but acknowledged that there was more to be done. “The pink dust is certainly a problem, and we are aware of it,” he said.

Arguments about the plant’s economic importance fall on deaf ears here. “Health comes first,” Ms. Lumino said, sitting in her apartment with photos of her husband, including one on a chain that hung from her neck. He was one of many Ilva workers sent into early retirement in 1998 after the plant found evidence of asbestos contamination. “If you have money but not your health, what good is it?” she asked.

Ms. Lumino remembered a time before the plant was built. “There were farms, clean air, olive and almond trees,” she said. “We would picnic by the coast every Easter Monday.”

Even with the new decree, the conflict is far from over. The decree orders the Riva Group to invest \$3.8 billion to reduce its emissions and bring the plant up to code before 2016, the deadline for other European countries to modernize.

If Riva fails to do so, the new law would give the government more powers to intervene. If Riva is unable to raise enough money to modernize, it could ask for European Union subsidies or sell the plant, which could jeopardize Italy’s European standing.

Brazilian companies are already eying Ilva, according to Italian news media reports. Mr. Ferrante said that Riva had no intention of selling and had a “pretty significant” ability to borrow more money and also draw on European Union cofinancing.

“If Ilva shut down, it would be a great favor to German and French steel producers in this time of crisis,” said Carlo Mapelli, an expert on the steel industry at the Polytechnic University of Milan. “Our international competitors simply have a vested interest in the plant to close.”

This year, a study confirmed by the Italian Health Ministry reported that rates of certain cancers in Taranto were as much as 190 percent higher than the national average.

Dr. Patrizio Mazza, director of the Taranto hospital’s hematology department since 1994 and a member of the Puglia regional assembly, says the health problems could get worse. “I think this is only a small part of what may emerge in the coming years,” he said, “because toxic substances accumulate, they have a cumulative effect over time.”

Although there are no official statistics, Dr. Mazza said, “I personally follow many Ilva workers with cancer and blood diseases, and I assure you that there is a much higher rate, maybe twice or three times the average rate.”

Yet, in an economy that is almost entirely dependent on Ilva, many workers say the magistrates have put their jobs at risk. “There aren’t other job prospects here,” said one worker, Ivano Galasso, 26. “You’re waging war against yourself” by supporting the magistrates, he added.

But even workers who want the plant to continue production are increasingly adamant that Riva improve conditions.

As he walked through the piazza in front of the church of Jesus the Divine Worker — which is decorated with a large mosaic featuring Jesus and the red-and-white-striped smokestacks of the Ilva plant in the backdrop — Luigi Bernardi, 30, said he wanted to keep his job at Ilva, which pays \$2,400 a month, high for Italy.

But he supports the judicial investigations. “They are the only way to stop Ilva from destroying the environment,” Mr. Bernardi said, adding: “Every one of us has a sick person or a family member who has died. My 2-year-old daughter has atypical skin allergies.”

Analysts say that the Ilva situation reached a crisis point after a series of public institutions with overlapping jurisdictions failed to act decisively. The government of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi relied on the Riva Group as one of the largest investors in a deal to buy Italy’s ailing flagship airline, Alitalia, and passed a law that gave the plant more time to meet environmental norms.

Others say that Riva has managed a plant of national strategic importance like a family business. “You can’t manage a big plant with a small mind-set,” said Ruggero Ranieri, a professor of economic history at the University of Padua. “This provincialism is ruining us.”

Mr. Monti has said that the new decree should not be called “save Ilva” but rather “save the environment, health and work.”

Residents do not believe it. In her mother’s living room, among the photos of her father, Sabrina Corisi was not impressed. “The decree is to save Ilva,” she said, “not the population.”

Italian steelworks accused over cancers wins reprieve

Government allows ILVA steelworks to continue to operate while it undertakes clean-up

by Tom Kington, Friday 30 November 2012 20.14

The Italian government has saved a polluting steelworks in southern Italy blamed for raising rates of some cancers among locals by more than 50%.

Mario Monti's cabinet allowed owners at the ILVA plant in Taranto – Europe's largest steelworks – six years to carry out a clean-up, despite a magistrate's order to partly shut down the plant while improvements were made, and despite the arrest of seven managers over claims they covered up evidence of emissions blamed for hundreds of deaths.

Ministers feared a shutdown would endanger 12,000 jobs at the plant and seriously damage the Italian economy since ILVA produces more than 8m tonnes of steel a year, 30% of the country's output.

Monti said the decree saving the plant would protect "the environment, health and jobs".

ILVA management had warned that if the Taranto plant was closed, then its other Italian plants would shut. Staff in Taranto occupied the plant this week to protest against magistrates' efforts to reduce production, while ILVA employees from Genoa marched in Rome.

The decree requires the firm to spend around €3bn (£2.4bn) on cleaning up emissions, a health ministry spokesman said, but it allows the plant to continue operating while doing so.

"It is a licence to continue pumping out pollution which is provoking deaths," said Angelo Bonelli, leader of the Italian Green party.

Investigators launched an inquiry into the site after a 30% overall spike in local cancer rates, with liver cancer up by 75% and upper uterine cancer up by 80%.

Investigators suspect that officials at the environment ministry under the government of Silvio Berlusconi colluded with ILVA in 2010 to allow it to pass environmental checks.

A company official is also accused of bribing a local expert to tone down a critical report on pollution.

A lawyer for ILVA has denied the plant is linked to the cancer rates.

Court in dock over Italy steel plant closure

by Giulia Segreti in Rome, August 15, 2012 7:07 pm

A court in southern Italy has triggered a political dispute and infuriated businesses by threatening to close one of Europe's biggest steel plants on environmental grounds.

Critics say the decision, which puts thousands of jobs at risk and has sparked angry local clashes, highlights the confused legal environment that is stifling investment.

The court in Taranto, a port on the heel of Italy, has issued three contradictory rulings in less than a month on the fate of the Ilva steel plant, prompting impassioned pleas from government, the EU, trade unions and the business's owners to spare the factory and save jobs.

The dispute hinges on studies suggesting that up to 386 people have died of cancer over the past 13 years, that mortality rates have risen, and that people living downwind of fumes from the plant have suffered adverse health effects.

Last month, the court ordered the arrest of eight of Ilva's senior managers, including Emilio Riva, founder of the Riva Group which controls the plant. They remain under house arrest on suspicion of complicity in an "environmental disaster".

But politicians and unions are desperate to avoid adding to Italy's 10.8 per cent unemployment rate – 15.6 per cent in the southern region of Puglia, where the plant is based – and deterring investors in a nation that the World Bank ranks lower than Mongolia and Albania in terms of ease of doing business.

"The situation risks creating uncertainty regarding the entire Italian industrial system and the reliability [of the country] for foreign investors," Corrado Clini, the environment minister, told parliament this week.

Stefania Prestigiacomo, who was environment minister under the former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, declared: "It seems that in Taranto there is a sort of Taliban judiciary who want to tear down a symbol."

Following last month's arrests, technicians began closing parts of the plant in accordance with the court's wishes. But last week a fresh decision by the Taranto court said the plant could continue to operate while it cleaned up its production processes. Within days, however, the same court overturned the ruling – bringing fresh criticism of the judiciary.

Donato Stefanelli, leader of the Fiom trade union federation in Taranto, said the town "has been left to rot for too long", and the controversy was drawing much-needed attention to environmental problems.

He blames the plant's management and the government for long-term neglect, but is opposed to closing the plant.

"It would be a complete catastrophe to close Ilva. It would be dramatic for workers and the whole territory and it would put the whole sector on its knees," he said.

"Why can't Riva do what they do in their plants in Germany, where they are awarded prizes for respect of the environment?"

Mimmo Panarelli, leader of the Fim union in Taranto, said: "There is anger among workers – the atmosphere is unbearable. We are talking about families with only one income, who have mortgages to pay... Health, environment and work can live together, I am certain of this."

However, several local citizens' and environmental groups support closing the plant, and have clashed with workers demonstrating to keep it open.

Italian media interviewed an elderly Taranto resident who said: "Look how beautiful Taranto is. Why ruin it? They polluted the sea... I have met many people who have died of illnesses. The ruling by the judge [to close the plant] is correct. Sooner or later the bomb had to explode."

Legambiente, one of Italy's biggest environmental groups, has adopted a more balanced view, saying that "a different Ilva is possible" and the plant can be cleaned up without closing it and losing jobs.

The government in Rome has said it is ready to appeal to the constitutional court against the latest ruling in Taranto. Corrado Passera, the economic development minister, will travel to the region on Friday in search of a solution.

The government has already approved a €336m plan to clean up polluted areas around the plant.

Antonio Tajani, EU industry commissioner, called last month for the European Investment Bank to step in, and says EU funds earmarked for the Puglia region should be used to rescue the plant.

With a production of 8.4m tonnes last year, about 30 per cent of Italy's steel output, the plant in Taranto employs more than 12,000 people directly and a further 8,000 indirectly.

In statements on its website, Riva Group says it respects all environmental regulations and that emissions from the plant are well within legal limits.

Italian town fighting for its life over polluting Ilva steel-works

Owners under house arrest, shutdowns ordered – but plant has defenders despite soil contamination and sky-high cancer rates

by Tom Kington in Taranto, Friday 17 August 2012 14.16

In the neighbourhood over the fence from Italy's – and Europe's – biggest steel-works, Francesco Mastrocinque is poking his toe into the layer of black and red powder that covers every pavement and counting his friends who have died of cancer and respiratory illnesses.

"It's about one a month, but people round here try not to think about it," said the shopkeeper, as he looked up at the chimney towering over Taranto's Tamburi quarter – a dark, dusty corner of Puglia where residents are now forbidden by law from touching the soil.

The Ilva steelworks, owned by Italy's Riva family, employs 12,000 and breathes life into the depressed local economy, but has long been accused of killing off local people by belching into the air a mix of minerals, metals and carcinogenic dioxins – 8.8% of the total dioxins emitted in Europe, according to a 2005 study. More recent government figures put the cancer death rate in the area at 15% above the national average and lung cancer deaths at 30% higher. Prosecutors say emissions have killed 400 people in 13 years.

So few were surprised when a magistrate this month ordered the shutdown of the most polluting furnaces, described Ilva as "an environmental disaster" and placed members of the Riva family under house arrest, claiming they were "perfectly aware" of what they were dumping on Taranto. A former employee was also put under investigation for allegedly paying off a government inspector to tone down a report.

But what happened next was less expected. Unions went on strike to protest against the magistrate's decision, blocking roads with banners. "Dioxin levels have been reduced and emissions can be cut further with new technology, without stopping production," said Rocco Palombella, secretary general of the UILM union. He has worked alongside the 1,300C furnaces at Ilva for 36 years without, he says, falling ill.

The government then backed the unions, with the environment minister, Corrado Clini, saying it would take eight months for the furnaces to cool down, during which time Chinese competition would reap rewards. Bizarrely, Italy's health minister warned that losing your job was detrimental to your health.

Clini, who met local leaders in Taranto on Friday, promised cash to clean up Ilva. He also said health studies do not reflect emission cuts already made. "Clini is lying about this since the magistrate's report is based on studies concluded this

year," said Angelo Bonelli, leader of the Green party in Italy. "We know that mothers in Taranto today have three times the allowed level of dioxins in their milk."

In a region known for baroque towns like Lecce and traditional Trullo cottages tucked into olive groves, Taranto is the exception. Its skyline is dominated by smoking chimneys and its old town is a half abandoned collection of bricked up and crumbling palazzi.

Farmers were put out of business when grazing was banned within 20km (12.4 miles) of Ilva and almost 3,000 livestock with excessive dioxin levels were slaughtered. Mussel cultivation, for which Taranto is renowned, is struggling after beds were moved away from the steelworks.

"There isn't a family in Tamburi without a sick or dead member thanks to Ilva," said Rosella Balestra, a local activist. "People ignored it for a long time but now, when I talk to them, tears often come. Slowly, a wall of self denial is coming down."

Despite initial suspicion among mothers, Balestra began warning children playing in the piazzas not to touch flower beds after she discovered the council had done little to publicise its ban on contact with the polluted soil.

Pollution is part of local life. Every day residents sweep their balconies clean of the red mineral dust blowing in from Ilva's mountainous deposits and the black soot from its chimneys, which regularly clog storm drains.

"The magistrates launched their inquiry here when politicians failed to do their duty, and now the politicians are attacking the magistrates for doing theirs," said Balestra.

According to Patrizio Mazza, a doctor, the dust is killing young and old. "I first noticed the increase when I treated a 10-year-old boy five years ago with throat cancer," he said. "It is no good reducing emissions now because any new emissions at all simply top up the saturated earth and water. The furnaces must be shut down."

A growing protest movement, which mounted a 2,000-strong march in Taranto on Friday, has found a champion in Cataldo Ranieri, a 42-year-old Ilva employee who initially backed management against the magistrates, blocking a road in protest in July. "A man came up to me that day and said, 'My wife needs to get through to do her chemotherapy.' That changed my life."

Mazza said rates of tumours among Ilva staff who were campaigning to keep the plant open was 10 times higher than the national average. "Workers there just wanted to think about their work, not illness," said Vincenzo Pignatelli, 60, who worked near the furnaces for 29 years and survived leukaemia after retiring in 2002. "Four colleagues in my group of about 100 died of leukaemia and I would

see so many former colleagues during my trips to hospital it was like a works reunion."

Bonelli shrugged off the government's view that the local – and national – economy would suffer if Ilva closed its most polluting furnaces, saying: "Bilbao and Pittsburgh managed it thanks to investment, why not Taranto?"

In Tamburi, Francesco Mastrocinque watched as children kicked a football around on a dusty patch of earth, flouting the ban.

"The red mineral powder glitters in the gutters, but the black soot feels like fine sand when it gets into your mouth," he said. "Ilva have paid for improvements in the neighbourhood, like putting fountains in the cemetery, but they didn't clean the tombstones, which are slowly turning black and red."

Italy's Jobs-and-Pollution Showdown

by Stephan Faris on December 13, 2012

The southern Italian city of Taranto's most distinctive feature isn't its picturesque coastline, its cathedral, or its castle. It's the heavy taste of metal in the air—a tang that leaves the unaccustomed visitor with a tingle in the back of the throat, the product of the [Ilva steelworks](#). On one side of the bay stretch manicured sidewalks and coffee shops. On the other loom giant cranes and a forest of chimneys pumping smoke.

Ilva, the largest steel plant in Europe, has set off a conflict in the city of 190,000 between those worried about their health and those desperate to keep their jobs. It's also put Italy's government on a collision course with its judiciary, which wants the plant closed.

Over the past decade, environmentalists have exposed alarming levels of pollutants in the area around the plant. In 2008 roughly 2,000 sheep were slaughtered after their milk and meat were found to contain dangerous levels of dioxin. In the blue-collar neighborhood of [Tamburi](#), on the same side of the bay as the plant, homes are infiltrated by a black powder that blows from slag heaps and drifts from smokestacks. Grazia Parisi, a pediatrician who once worked in the area, recalls finding the powder on her desk and examination bed every morning. "I was always washing my hands, washing my hands," she says. "I left because I was also getting sick."

Parisi says some 90 percent of the babies in the area suffer asthma attacks in their first year. Tests in 2010 revealed that the soil in Tamburi contained high levels of beryllium, lead, and polychlorinated biphenyl. The mayor issued an order forbidding children from playing on unpaved lots. In February 2011, another dioxin and PCB scare prompted a ban on oyster farming near the plant.

Ilva accounts for 30 percent of Italy's steel production and some 12,000 jobs in a city where unemployment has reached 33 percent. A division of the privately held Gruppo Riva, Ilva claims to generate 75 percent of the province of Taranto's gross domestic product. The port is almost completely dedicated to shipping Ilva's steel. "If it were so easy to find opportunities elsewhere, do you think we'd still be here?" asks Vito Bilotta, an official at UILM, a union fighting to keep the plant open. The extent of Ilva's grip on the city can be seen at the main church in Tamburi, where a mosaic shows a blond Jesus with smokestacks and cranes in the background.

The conflict came to a head in July, when a magistrate ordered the seizure of parts of the plant. Eight managers and ex-managers, including owner Emilio Riva, were placed under precautionary house arrest while being investigated on suspicions of knowingly and negligently causing an environmental disaster. The company disputes responsibility for health risks in the region.

Since then, protests have occurred—by residents seeking to shut the plant and workers terrified of losing their jobs. According to Bilotta, the standoff is undermining the confidence of Ilva's customers. Some 800 workers have been put on temporary leave due to market conditions, and banks have started refusing loans to Ilva workers.

In October, the Italian National Health Service reported that residents of Taranto are 30 percent more likely to develop tumors than neighbors in the surrounding province. In the case of lung cancer for men and stomach cancer for women, the risk is doubled. A child in Taranto is 20 percent more likely to die in the first year of life than one in the rest of the region. “It’s like an iceberg,” says Patrizio Mazza, a doctor who has long been raising the alarm. “We’re only seeing the tip.”

On Nov. 26 prosecutors ordered another investigation, this time into allegations that Gruppo Riva managers bribed local officials so the plant could keep polluting. They also seized steel products from a ship in port. In protest, the company announced it would cease production. Thousands of workers rushed the gates, demanding to return to work.

Prime Minister Mario Monti’s government put through an emergency decree on Nov. 30, reversing the closure of part of the plant that was ordered earlier by the court. The decree also said Ilva could keep operating while Rome oversaw a €3 billion (\$3.9 billion) overhaul to make it compliant with European Union standards. For those seeking to shut down the plant, Monti’s move was a shock. Says Parisi: “It’s as if you had a sick person in front of you, and instead of curing him, you give him a kick.”

With European steel suffering and Italy’s economy weak, money for improvements may come slowly. Politics could get in the way, too. On Dec. 8, Monti announced he would step down to make way for early elections. The measure regarding the plant is one of many announced but not yet ratified by Parliament. Taranto runs the risk of being forgotten once again.

The bottom line: *The Ilva steelworks needs a \$3.9 billion overhaul. Given the recession and Italy’s political turmoil, the money may never come.*

A Showdown In Italy Over A Polluting Steel Plant

by Sylvia Poggioli, December 24, 2012 12:06 PM

In an effort to safeguard some 20,000 jobs at a time of rising unemployment, the Italian government has taken an unprecedented step. It has reversed a court order that called for the partial shutdown of Europe's biggest steel plant because it spews cancer-producing dioxins.

The ILVA steel factory in the southern port city of Taranto pits the government versus the judiciary in a battle over health issues and the need for economic revitalization.

Taranto's skyline is dotted with giant cranes and the red-and-white striped smokestacks of the plant, which belches dark clouds of polluting smoke for miles around.

Outside the port, some 30 cargo ships have been at anchor for weeks, waiting to load ILVA's court-impounded products.

Workers' representative Antonello Piccolo says trade unions have above all defended job security. He's worried about the court ruling's possible repercussions. "The court's insistence on a shutdown could leave 20,000 people jobless," he says. "And the government knows it would have grave consequences for the entire economy."

In July, a court ordered the plant's partial shutdown and the arrests of seven managers, including owner Emilio Riva, on charges they are causing an environmental disaster. An international arrest warrant was also issued for his son Fabio, who is believed to be in London.

But the government reversed the shutdown order, saying that ILVA is of strategic importance and that its closure would have a ripple effect on other steel plants and drain more than \$10 billion annually nationwide.

While the judicial showdown continues, Taranto's air is heavy with the smell and taste of metal.

Tests Reveal Dangerous Particles

But until recently, there was little awareness of the acute health hazards caused by the plant, which is the main employer in a region with 14 percent unemployment.

Court-ordered medical tests revealed high levels of carcinogenic particles — including dioxins and PCBs in the air and soil. A municipal ordinance bans children from playing on dirt lots.

Dr. Patrizio Mazza, head of the hematology department at Taranto Hospital, has long been raising the alarm about the city's high cancer rates.

"Data has shown that the increase in men is about 40 percent. The increase in women is about 20 percent, the same in the children. We have a double incidence of leukemia in children," he says.

When the 3 p.m. shift ends, workers pour out of the plant gates. One worker says, "it's all media hype, everything's OK as long as we have jobs."

But another worker who gives just his first name, Oronzo, is not so sure.

"We're all afraid of losing jobs, but we're also afraid of living in an unhealthy city," he says. "I have one son, and I'm scared at the idea of having any more

Buildings in the nearby Tamburi neighborhood are covered with brown mineral dust blown from nearby slag heaps and smokestacks.

On very windy days, women say, their children's faces seem to sparkle with the particles that come from the plant and attach themselves to the kids.

A Dilemma For Residents

People here say nearly everyone has at least one relative who died of cancer in recent years.

Retired ILVA worker Francesco Magni has just come from the fish market with a plastic bag filled with mussels, the local staple.

"I know I'm putting dioxin on our dinner table, but this is our dilemma. They've poisoned our air, our land and our sea," Magni says. "If I start throwing out mussels, I have to throw out milk, cheese and lettuce. The poison is everywhere."

One mile from the smokestacks, the Zitarella organic sheep farm is all but abandoned. Even the sheepdogs don't have much to do anymore.

Farmer Vincenzo Fornaro was convinced he was raising healthy animals until tests taken in 2008 showed his sheep had dioxin levels 30 times above the legal limit.

His herd of more than 1,000 sheep was slaughtered, and livestock is now banned from grazing for a radius of 12 miles. At least 1,000 farm workers in the area have lost their jobs.

The silence at the farm is broken by the constant hum of ILVA's blasting furnaces. Fornaro, 42, has had a kidney removed because it had a tumor, and his mother died of cancer.

"I was convinced I lived in paradise," he says. "Now I know it isn't so. For my generation the damage has been done; our battle is to try to ensure a better future for the next generations."

But high school teacher Alessandro Marescotti says it won't be easy to wean the population away from Taranto's long-dominant employer.

"When I tell my students that Taranto was a flourishing city in the third century B.C., they ask, 'How could it survive without the ILVA steel plant?' " Marescotti says.

This company has fostered total dependency; the population has no sense of possible alternatives.

Taranto judges will challenge the government's decision to keep ILVA operational. They say openly that management is using job blackmail to avoid a shutdown and they don't believe the company will comply with government demands for a \$4 billion environmental cleanup.