SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

RESEARCH METHODS IN THE DIGITAL SOCIETY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

25-26 NOVEMBER 2020
UNIVERSITY OF SALERNO

ABSTRACT BOOK

EDIT BY GIUSEPPE MASULLO
SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR OF
INTERNATIONAL LAB FOR
INNOVATIVE SOCIAL RESEARCH (ILIS)

2nd International Conference

Research Methods
in the Digital Society
Challenges and opportunities

25-26 November 2020 - University of Salerno

Abstracts
Second International Conference
Research Methods in the Digital Society
Challenges and opportunities
25-26 November 2020,
University of Salerno

Edit by Giuseppe Masullo

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Innovation in social research and new methodological challenges: International Lab for innovative Social Research

ILIS, set up within the Department of Human Sciences, Philosophy and Education, is proposed as an interdisciplinary study and research laboratory on issues of social interest. The main objective is to stimulate theoretical and methodological reflection as well as the empirical study on the new scenarios of social research: from theoretical challenges facing new problems and dilemmas to new methodological horizons for understanding them.

The mission of ILIS is to promote theoretical, epistemological, and methodological advances in the field of social sciences through constant dialogue with expert scholars both nationally and internationally.

The field of action of ILIS focuses on social processes ranging from the analysis of educational, migratory, identity and cultural processes, to gender and generational perspectives, to health with attention to methodology and techniques for social research. The ultimate goal is to offer an integrated research and knowledge system capable of orienting scientific actions towards an innovative theoretical and empirical knowledge of the transformation processes of our societies through innovative research theories and practices.

From a scientific point of view, ILIS aims to combine the understanding of contemporary social processes with recent developments in the methodology and techniques of social research that have revolutionized some traditional approaches and introduced alternative practices of collecting, analysing and representing information (as in the case of online research approaches and big data analysis).

Among the main activities promoted by ILIS, a key role is played by the scientific dissemination of innovative social research theories and practices through the promotion of meeting and training opportunities such as *lectio magistralis*, seminars, workshops, visiting chances, conferences.

Of particular importance is the international symposium that ILIS promotes every year, to bring together researchers inside and outside the network to take stock of a new theoretical, methodological and epistemological trend that is becoming established in the contemporary social sciences, thus providing an opportunity to inaugurate a path of reflection that continues (in the form of seminars, workshops, lectures) throughout the academic year.

Since its inception in 2019, the ILIS network has launched several initiatives, including its first International Conference, which saw the participation of numerous Italian and foreign scholars on the theme of Ethnography and Netnography.

The conference, which took place at the University of Salerno on 26th and 27th November 2019, saw the participation of many researchers of the network on emerging issues of Ethnographic and Netnographic research: from the theoretical and epistemological approach of these studies to the methodological and technical aspects about the different techniques that can be used with these approaches to the discussion of ethical dilemmas and their application in the sociological and pedagogical field[1].

The results of this conference – and the other occasions promoted by ILIS throughout 2019 – have been included in a recent volume edited by Giuseppe Masullo, Felice Addeo, and Angela Delli Paoli entitled: *Ethnography and Netnography. Theoretical reflections, methodological challenges and research experiences*, Loffredo editore, Nuova serie[2].

The interest and stimuli that emerged during the previous Conference, in particular towards the Netnographic approach, together with the inclusion of new members to the network (such as the happy addition of Dr Gabriella Punziano) led me and my colleagues – Addeo and Delli Paoli – to insist on this path also for the second Conference, and to broaden our attention in focusing on the new methods of social research applied to the themes and areas proposed by the digital society.

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[1] For details of the initiative, please refer to the specific section on the ILIS website:
http://www.labh.it/ilis/conferenze-internazionali/1st-international-conference-ilis/
[2] To view the volume, and the topics covered, please refer to the specific section of the publications on the ILIS website: http://www.labh.it/ilis/pubblicazioni/

There is no way to object that the traditional social research methods that governed the study of rooted societies are losing ground in favour of innovative, sometimes extemporaneous, methodological proposals. On the one hand, scholars and professionals transposed the classical social research method to be implemented online; on the other hand, the growing pervasiveness of the digital in our lives required the development of methods more suitable to address the challenges of studying the digital society.

In this latter sense, digital methods imply embracing the natural logic of online communication affordances in gathering, ordering, and analysing data—as with tags, links, or hashtags. Methodological reflections about digital and digitized methods are impervious in our scientific community and applications to the most disparate objects are now the subject of numerous publications. We have witnessed the succession of web methods, virtual methods, digital methods, and many other definitions of what should be doing social research "with" and "on" the Web. However, there is still no agreement on a shared definition of what it means and how to implement the empirical study of the digital society; there are not paradigmatic definitions so solid as to redefine the field.

This apparent methodological Babylonia has found a possible solution in the application of the mixed methods approach. The hybridization of the methods ended up being reflected also in the desire to make the methods more and more disconnected from the disciplines and approaches. The search for integration, the mix that solves every cognitive and research problem, the all-embracing openness that challenges theories and broad visions within which social research fits today, are only a few of the elements that are pushing social research methods in unpredictable directions. But where will this ambition lead us? How much have we reflected on this fast spread? How much did we metabolize the change of a method or how only we simply idealized it in a different context? And how much all this becomes truly appropriate in the study of contemporary phenomena? These, as well as a flood of other questions, can arise if only we stop for a moment to reflect on what the social and human disciplines are called to do today.

In this second conference, to be held on November 25th and 26th, entitled: **Research Methods in the Digital Society: challenges and opportunities** (curated by Felice Addeo, Angela Delli Paoli, Gabriella

Punziano and myself), we would like to bring together researchers from different disciplines who engage in wide forms of reflection on the future of the research methods in the study of the digital society in its broadest sense. The overall aim is not only to start a debate on the different strands of methods most affected by change but above all to develop a broader theoretical reflection on the future of social research in its challenge to always be fitting, suitable, adaptable and pertinent to the society to be studied.

The present volume, introduced through this short foreword, contains the abstracts of the papers selected by the Scientific Committee [3] from among the many received following the Call for Paper. We did not expect such enthusiasm, and yet it confirms our first intuition – which led to the creation of ILIS – that is, to respond to the need (often unexpressed by the sociological scientific community) to expand the spaces for discussion on the new tools of social research, a need felt in particular by young researchers, who again stand out as the main interpreters and pioneers of these methodological horizons.

The contributions proposed here, without any restriction in terms of topics, subjects, objects, or methodological approaches, are in the following areas:

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[3] I would like to name them all here, (extending to the organizational secretariat, coordinated by Dr. Marianna Coppola) in thanking them for their valuable contribution to this initiative: Enrica Amaturo (University of Naples, Federico II); Alfonso Amendola (University of Salerno); Nick Boston (NYU New York University); Davide Bennato (University of Catania); Alessandro Caliandro (University of Bath); Costantino Cipolla (University of Bologna); Roberto Cipriani (University of Rome, Roma Tre); Fabio Corbisiero (University of Naples, Federico II); Francesca De Chiara (Bruno's Kessler Foundation); Maria Paola Faggiano (University of Rome, La Sapienza); Floriana Falcinelli (University of Perugia); Vulca Fidolini (University of Strasbourg); Mihaela Gavrila (University of Rome, La Sapienza); Brian Gilley (University of Bloomington-Indiana); Giuseppe Giordano (Univerisity of Salerno); Susanne Halford (University of Bristol); Francesca Romana Lenzi (University of Rome, Foro Italico); Giuseppe Maiello (University of Prague); Emiliana Mangone (University of Salerno); Paolo Montesperelli (University of Rome La Sapienza); Alessandro Porrovecchio (University of littoral Côte d'Opale); Massimo Ragnedda (Northumbria University of Newcastle); Cirus Rinaldi (University of Palermo); Jonah Steinberg (University of Vermont); Lucia Velotti (The City University of New York); Zuzana Virglerova (Bata University); Maria Prosperina Vitale (University of Salerno).

- Teorethical, epistemological and ontological reflections about the digital research methods;
- Innovative methods to collect, analyse and interpret data;
- Ethnography goes online: theory, methods and research;
- The rebirth of Content Analysis in the Digital Age;
- The contribution of the Mixed Methods to the Online Social Research;
- The new imprint of the Social Network Analysis in the Net Scenario.

The best contributions of the Conference will be the opportunity to realize two important editorial projects (of which we will give further news during the conference), which are a special issue of the Italian Sociological Review (edited by Felice Addeo and Giuseppe Masullo) and a collective volume for a prestigious Italian or foreign series (edited by Angela Delli Paoli and Gabriella Punziano).

We hope that the discussion engendered by this conference will contribute to animate a debate that on these issues is still in progress. The discussion will take place in streaming (because of the emergency that we are experiencing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic) but in the future it will hopefully occur face-to-face again, aware that an International Convention like the one we are proposing proves to be productive for scientific purposes not only through the formal sessions of the planned panels but also through all those occasions of informal meetings (coffee breaks, dinners, etc.) in which researchers often exchange ideas, proposals, for future scientific and research initiatives in a more free and relaxed way. This is perhaps the aspect that we miss the most as a young scientific community that loves to relate with other academic realities, promoting not only theoretical and methodological knowledge but also the formation of lasting and continuous human and academic ties with the partners of the ILIS network.

Prof. Giuseppe Masullo (Scientific Coordinator of the International Lab for Innovative Social Research)

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P L E N A R Y   S E S S I O N   2 5 / 1 1 / 2 0 2 0

| 10.30 AM – 1.00 PM

Institutional greetings:

Giuseppe Masullo – Head of the International Lab for Innovative Social Research (ILIS) – University of Salerno (Italy)
Maurizio Sibilio – Head of the Department of Humanities, Philosophy and Education (DISUFF) – University of Salerno (Italy)
Virgilio D'Antonio – Head of the Department of Political Sciences and Communication (DISPC) – University of Salerno (Italy)

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From the surplus of mixed methods to eclectic integration
Costantino Cipolla – University of Bologna (Italy)

Sociology for the Digital Age: directions for methods and practice
Susanne Halford – University of Bristol (UK)

Critical optimism: a methodological posture to shape the future of digital social research
Enrica Amaturo – University of Naples (Italy)

Methodological reflections on the concept and use of Big Data
Sonia Stefanizzi – University of Milan, Bicocca (Italy)

Telling online: the sociality that changes the research
Rita Bichi – University of Milan, Cattolica (Italy);

Digital society and research methods in a changing world
Giovanni Boccia Artieri – University of Urbino (Italy)

Why are digital methods still now where journalism studies are? An epistemology of journalism as a discorsive method
Sergio Splendore - University of Milan (Italy)

| 01:00 - 03:00 LUNCH BREAK

SECOND SESSION
| 3. 00 PM – 4. 30 PM

Theoretical, epistemological, and ontological reflections about the digital research methods
Chair: Giuseppe Masullo – Head of the International Lab for Innovative Social Research (ILIS) – University of Salerno (Italy)
Keynote speaker: Davide Bennato – University of Catania (Italy)
Discussant: Massimo Ragnedda – Northumbria University of Newcastle (UK)
Digital traces and social analysis. A way to put together quantitative approach, interpretive methods and computational tools

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The spatial dimension in social media analysis: theoretical and methodological characteristics
Noemi Crescentini, Ciro Clemente De Falco, Marco Farracci – University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)

Criticalities and advantages of the use of Artificial Intelligence in research
Jessica Camargo Molano – International Telematic University Uninettuno (Italy),
Jacopo Cavalaglio Camargo Molano – University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy)

Narrative and life stories: from the machine to the person
Edmondo Grassi – University of Rome, Roma Tre (Italy)

What happens when changes the way to "Follow the medium"? A reflection about the role of the researcher and emerging perspectives in the post-API era
Suania Acampa, Giuseppe Michele Padricelli, Rosa Sorrentino - University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)

Social Identity Seeking and Sharing as a Creative Activity of Art Consumers
Jitka Cirklová - University of Finance and Administration Estonskà (CZR)

THIRD SESSION
| 4. 30 PM – 6. 30 PM

Innovative methods and tools to collect, analyse and interpret data
Chair: Biagio Aragona – University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)
Discussant: Emiliana Mangone – University of Salerno (Italy)
Keynote speaker: Alessandro Caliandro – (UK)
Repruposing ditigal methods in a post – API environment

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Innovative digital methodologies for the historical research of the history of Europe: The Association of European Historians as a case study
Alessandro Laruffa – University of Rome, La Sapienza (Italy)

Dear (digital) diary…evaluating the audio-diary technique as a research method in the social sciences
Veronica Moretti – University of Bologna (Italy)

Innovative research methods for tacking the COVID-19 online disinformation: combing research and regulation in the platform society
Francesco Marrazzo – Authority for Communications Guarantees, AGCOM (Italy)

Fake news pandemic. Detecting bad information by supervised learning
Miriam Di Lisio, Domenico Trezza – University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)

Learning algorithms of sentiment analysis. A comparative approach to improve data goodness
Suania Acampa, Ciro Clemente De Falco, Domenico Trezza – University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)

The evolution of Online Survey: reflections on the cross-national probability-based online panels
Gianmaria Bottoni – City University of London (UK),
Felice Addeo – University of Salerno (Italy)

FOURTH SESSION 26/11/2020
| 9. 00 AM – 11. 00 AM

Ethnography goes online: theory, methods and research
Chair: Felice Addeo - University of Salerno (Italy)
Discussant: Alfonso Amendola – University of Salerno (Italy), **Giammaria Bottoni** – City University of London (Italy)
Keynote speaker: Brian Joseph Gilley - Indiana University Bloomington (Usa)
Ethnography in the New Era of Pandemics and Cultural Loos

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Subject expert in the COVID era
Martina Carleo - University of Salerno (Italy)

Back to practices. Auto-ethnography as a practice of access to data and algorithms
Elisabetta Risi – IULM University of Milan (Italy),
Tiziano Bonini – University of Siena (Italy), Riccardo Pronzato – IULM University of Milan (Italy)

To be #celts today: features of a neo-pagan cult in the social media
Francesco Amatruda – University of Salerno (Italy)

Digital dark tourism during COVID-19 pandemic: a digital ethnography of Italian red zones' Facebook pages
Felice Addeo – University of Salerno (Italy), Giuseppe Michele Padricelli, Gabriella Punziano – University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)

National differences and gender stereotypes in Days of Empire
Giuseppe Maiello – University of Finance and Administration, Prague (Czech Republic)

Gender models and sexual scripts of T people on online dating Apps: a netnographic study

Giuseppe Masullo, Marianna Coppola – University of Salerno (Italy)

The perception of the community and intimacy building in the art-fan relationship. A self-netnography on Instagram feeds, stories and direct in the Covid-19 lockdown period

Sonia Pozzi – Independent Researcher, Italy

Digital Ethnography. A systematic literature review

Angela Delli Paoli, Felice Addeo, Valentina D'Auria – University of Salerno (Italy)

F I F T H   S E S S I O N
| 11. 00 AM – 1. 30 PM

The rebirth of Content Analysis in Digital Era
Chair: Angela Delli Paoli - University of Salerno (Italy)
Discussant: Francesca De Chiara – Bruno Kessler Foundation (Italy), **Roberto Cipriani** – University of Rome, Roma Tre (Italy)
Keynote speaker: Maria Paola Faggiano – University of Rome, La Sapienza (Italy)
Content Analysis and Digital Data: methodological solutions between tradition and innovation. The case of digital campaigns as meeting ground of expertises and research perspectives

*****

Social Research on Wattpad. An example of small data research
Claudia Cantale – University of Catania (Italy)

How startuppers capitalise financial, reseources through online and offline narratives
Vincenzo Luise, Patrizio Lodetti – University of Milan (Italy)

The political communication of Italia Viva on Instagram: from its formation to the COVID-19 emergency
Agostino Stravolo, Assunta Luongo – University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)

Being a pirate: how pastafarian activism is built on the social media
Jacopo Ranzato – University of Rome, La Sapienza (Italy)

Methodological directions for the study of memes
Giulia Giorgi - NASP (University of Milan / University of Turin)

Diaries from isolation

Federica Palmieri, Marco Sallusto Palmiero, Roberta Tofani, Jessica Parola
University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)

Italian twittephere in COVID-19 time: a topic analysis

Mara Maretti, Vanessa Russo, Lara Fontanella, Emiliano Del Gobbo –
University of Chieti-Pescara, Gabriele D'Annunzio (Italy)

| 1.00 PM – 2.30 PM LUNCH BREAK

SIXTH SESSION
|2. 30 PM – 4. 00 PM

The contribution of the Mixed Methods to the Online Social Research Chair:
Gabriella Punziano – University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)
Discussant: Lucia Velotti – The City University of New York (Usa)
Keynote Speaker: Floriana Falcinelli – University of Perugia (Italy)
Research culture and educational sciences: digital challenge

*****

Delphi mix methods for future scenarios during social distancing
Antonio Tintori - National Research Council (CNR), Giulia Ciancimino –
Institute for Research on Population and Social Policies (IRPPS)

Case studies and digital platforms: methodological directions from reddit
Ilir Rama - University of Milan (Italy)

Tricked into supporting: a case study on computational propaganda persuasion strategies
Valentina Nerino – University of Trento (Italy)

S E V E N T H S E S S I O N
| 4. 30 PM – 6. 00 PM

The new imprint of the Social Network Analysis in the next scenario Chair:
Fabio Corbisiero – University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)
Discussant: Giuseppe Giordano – University of Salerno (Italy)
Keynote speaker: Maria Prosperina Vitale – University of Salerno (Italy)
Unveilling network data patterns in social media

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An exploratory study on the spread of fake news on Twitter: protection vs. amplification
Alfonso Amendola, Simona Castellano, Giuseppe Giordano, Maria Prosperina Vitale – University of Salerno (Italy)

Culture and networks in online social fields. Studying the duality of culture and practice in social network sites through Bourdieu's theory and social network analysis
Marco Serino – University of Naples Federico II

@ConfesionesMachistas: social networks, participatory online research and new masculinities
Javier Garcia-Martinez – Independent Researcher, Spain

R E S E R V E D S E S S I O N
| 5: 30 PM - 6: 00 PM

Sessione S.F.OR.A. Sperimenta forma e orienta
Università degli studi di Napoli Federico II – Regione Campania
Chair: Amalia Caputo, presentazione piano operativo per il progetto S.F.O.R.A
nell'ambito del "Programma Scuola Viva – Azioni di accompagnamento",
University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)
Discussant: Gianluca Attedemo, Luca Bifulco, Cristiano Felaco,
Dario Minervini, Gabriella Punziano – University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)

F I N A L G R E E T I N G S
| 6: 00 PM

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Learning algorithms of sentiment analysis. A comparative approach to improve data goodness

Suania Acampa, Ciro Clemente De Falco and Domenico Trezza –
University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)

There are many methods to measure the sentiment of textual contents.

In addition to traditional hermeneutic approaches (which have limits with large datasets), the sentiment algorithms be divided in three great approaches: supervised and unsupervised machine learning (recen tly also models that mix the two approaches), lexicon based approach which uses predefined dictionaries and in the end an hybrid method that mix machine learning and lexicon based approach. We know that the uncritical application of automatic analysis techniques can be insidious (Amaturo, Aragona 2016; Kitchin 2014) for this reason, the scientific community is very interested in the supervised approach: it is based on probab ility that a content in a defined context expresses a specific sentiment. These algorithms learn from the researcher's knowledge background and it is a significant step to limit the risks of a data driven approach with big data (Aragona, 2017; Kitchin, 201 4). Can this be enough? There is still the problem of control and fidelity of the output returned by the 'instructe d'algorithm. This paper aims to these issues by comparing the three machine learning approaches to measuring the sentiments of a tweets cor pus. The case study is the analysis of the sentiment expressed by the Italians on Twitter during the first post Lock down day (May 4). Let's assume that on this day the post lockdown social narrative is characterized by conflicting perceptions and sentiment (for example, the contrast between the fear of new infections and the enthusiasm of the restart) and this allows us an excellent optimal test of the models. To start the supervised model, it is necessary to build a stratified sample of tweets by daily band and classify them manually. The model we want to test provides for further manual classification at the end of the process useful for comparing the three models: samples will be built from the tweets processed with the aim of detecting the goodness of the results produced. The comparison doesn't help us to understand which technique is better but tries to define a strategy for checking the goodness of the data obtained.

Keywords: Sentiment Analysis, Machine Learning, Supervisioned Approach, Natural Language Processing.

What happens when changes the way to "Follow the medium"? A reflection about the role of the researcher and emerging perspectives in the post-API era

Suania Acampa, Michele Padricelli and Rosa Sorrentino – University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)

The role assumed by digital technologies in the last 30 years droves the social science in a scenario where «Web-mediated research [...] is already transforming the way in which researchers practice traditional research methods transposed on the Web» (Amaturo, E., and Punziano, G., 2016:35-36). The new methods, emerged with the advent in 1990's of CMC (computer mediated communication), after the adaption to the traditional approaches to the cyberspace logic have revolutionized technics and research actions in order to a paradigmatic way that today permits to the researchers to «observe and study social phenomena in digital context, taking account of the web not only as object of study, but as well the role they play in relation with it» (Rogers, R., 2013:14). The prolific field of study of Digital methods, in fact, allows to social researchers and IT professionals to work together for the production of instruments useful to gather organized data that can give back the current description of a social phenomenon and, as well, its diachronic changes.

This field of study defines its instruments – apps as Netvizz (Rieder, B., 2013), T-CAT (Borra, E., and Rieder, B., 2014), ElFriendo (Rogers, R, 2009) – for the study of digital native data provided by digital platforms and concerns essential the API (Application programming interface) access. Starting from this background, what happens when changes the way to "Follow the medium"? (Rogers, R., 2009)

The closure of the APIs inevitably leads us to reflect on not anchoring research to a deterministic perspective with a technological inclination: this contribution aims to understand and describe the complementarity between the skills of the social researcher and the potential of new research methods in facing obstacles and limitations that could emerge during the research phases.

After a series of restrictions in the summer of 2019 Facebook declared definitively closed access to any data download tools; a critical decision for

digital research and its addiction to the study of social phenomena ranged from political mobilization to cultural consumption.

For example, the versatility offered by the Facebook API was precious because it helped researchers to constantly move between quantitative and qualitative moments of the analysis (Rogers, R., and Venturini, T., 2019).

Digital methods reduced the gap between rich but scarce qualitative data and large but raw quantitative data, making possible the study of collective dynamics not excluding individual interactions (Latour, B., Jensen, P., and Venturini T., 2015).

The actual restrictions have not only increased the gap between approaches, but between academy's and big multinational's researchers as well. The platforms setups make clear how privileged access to data can represents a true business source: tools and startups arose from the ashes of the API offers in fact subscription services for data access, promoting the contexts in which is much easier to earn.

This contribution intends to place itself in post-API's research horizon, pondering on these transformations for shed light on the effect on researcher's role, on the methodological alternatives in research activities and on the convergent or exclusive application of new and traditional methods after the API's lock.

Keywords: Digital methods; post-API era; data access; web scraping; data extraction tools.

Digital Dark Tourism during COVID-19 pandemic: a Digital Ethnography of Italian red zones' Facebook pages

Felice Addeo – University of Salerno (Italy), Giuseppe Michele Padricelli and Gabriella Punziano – University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)

On February 2020 the Sars Cov 2 reached Europe striking in Northern Italy. The first cases have been registered in Codogno, a city of 15000 residents close to Lodi, and Vo' Euganeo a city of 3 000 residents in the district of Padua.

In less than 24 hours more than 300 COVID 19 cases were recorded in Lombardy and Veneto, forcing the Italian Government to adopt security and isolation measures to protect the areas and to prevent the spread of the virus in the Country.

On February 21stthe police began to set manned checkpoints around quarantined towns: Codogno, Vo'Euganeo, and other 9 municipalities near Lodi district borders were renamed as "zone rosse"(red zones),and heavy mobility restrictions were applied: Italians began to be familiar with the English word "lockdown". From that moment, the national agenda setting focused mainly on the northern red zone topic, consequently shaping also the social media discourse: Facebook groups originally describing the peaceful daily life of the red zone, suddenly became privileged arenas to understand the lockdown experience. These social media spaces became also fields for Digital dark tourism activities. Dark Tourism is defined as tripping to «places that either witnessed or represent death, destruction, suffering, or calamity» […] «dark tourist sites include a wide variety of "attractions, some intentionally created, while others appear spontaneously» (Mc Daniel, K., 2018:2).

This paper aims at understanding if dark tourism activities took place on the Facebook pages of the red zone cities, by analyzing the online behaviors and the interactions of out-of-towner people who joined these group sat the beginning of the lockdown period. Research design adopts a Digital Ethnography approach, applied to the following Facebook groups "Quelli che a Vo'…"; "Sei di Vo' se…"; "Sei di Codogno se…", using unobtrusive techniques, i.e. non-participant observation.

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Testing the paradigmatic application of digital methods, the results of our research aim to recreate the history of the action practiced through the Social Networks and will shed light on the culture and social implications of behaving and interacting online during an unforeseen event, like the COVD-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Covid-19; Pandemic; Lockdown; Digital dark tourism; Digital ethnography.

To be #Celts today: features of a neo-pagan cult in the social media

Francesco Amatruda – University of Salerno (Italy)

The aim of this paper is to define the characters of the online neo-Celtic Italian society, especially their religious beliefs, through the observation of their activities on blogs and social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Social media became, in fact, the main diffusion channels for these religions, replacing forums and other kind of on-line communities as virtual places where people are allowed to interact with others who share their own spirituality.

Despite the limited diffusion of academic research on Celtic religion, and the word "Celtic" being often associated with fantasy books, films, music and videogames, neo-Celtic and neo-pagan religious groups are largely popular. Within neo-paganism, some groups belonging to this religion started, during the last decade, identifying themselves with a more specific name, that is neo-Celtic instead of neo-pagan, that clearly defines the group as a part of pre-Christian cultural heritage.

In this paper, I will attempt to define the characteristics of these neo-pagan groups focussing on their self-constructed identity and their relationship with the larger society.

To do so, I will try to understand the models on which they built their cult and discover the reason why those models were selected, and how deep their consciousness about Celtic religion is.

Looking at the models of inspiration will be useful to discover what elements the members of these communities consider crucial for their identity self-construction process, in order to have a clearer reading on the cultural roots and ramifications of their religious behaviors.

Keywords: Neo-paganis, Social Media, Celtic Religion.

An exploratory study on the spread of fake news on Twitter: protection vs. amplification

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Social media has democratized news production and information dissemination. The communication that develops within these platforms no longer follows a vertical logic but a horizontal logic, characterized by a strong disintermediation and the possibility of informing oneself independently through a multiplicity of actors, not necessarily institutional. While recognizing the centrality of algorithms in the distribution of news and information that audiences view and encounter every day, fake news manage to find fertile ground because at first glance they appear interesting and can be used as a relational currency.

The present work focuses on the usefulness of network analysis tools to measure the spread of fake news on social media. During the Covid-19 period we witnessed the birth, spread and virality of fake news about various topics, also due to an infodemic about the virus, in mainstream media but in particular on grassroots media and social media. A lot of disinformation and panic has been generated on social networks, within a particularly complex picture of informational disorientation determined by a profound approximation that has characterized the narrative about the virus since the dawn of its spread and later in the height of the pandemic.

Deepening this phenomenon allows to investigate particularly relevant issues within the public debate, reflecting on the disintermediation and so on the possibility of users to inform themselves independently, through a plurality of actors. The media system is thus fragmented not only with regard to the offer but above all as regards the networked publics, which are exposed to a variety of information sources which they can consult according to a high degree of customization. It is in this scenario that the concepts of disinformation, misinformation and fake news develop.

Within this contribution, the propagation and the consumption of fake news on Twitter by means of network analysis visualization tools and statistical measures is investigated in order to discover the presence of specific patterns in the derived network structures.

The choose of Twitter is motivated by the fact that it is configured as a microblogging platform and, consequently, as a macro container of contents, which takes the form of a flow and the information is aggregated through hashtags. It is possible to enter communication flows collected by a single hashtag that becomes the identifying label of a specific macro topic, that even common users contribute to nurturing, giving rise to participatory practices. Some of the functions present on this platform, such as "retweet" or "reply", open to exposure to multiple audiences, to an indefinite number of readers. Twitter highlights also a particular type of relationship between users. Each profile can be followed and can have "followers". Hence there are more influential profiles than others. Furthermore, it is particularly suitable for purely informative use, as evidenced by the large number of politicians or information professionals with a profile in this social network.

For these reasons, Twitter lends itself well to the widespread and viral dissemination of content and fake news also during the worldwide pandemic emergency. The network approach proposed to understand how this phenomenon develops, within specific topics, is based on a strategy of analysis within the following steps: i) establishing a socio-cultural and mediological theoretical framework to set the global scenario in which citizens "consume" news in net environments; ii) selecting fact checking platforms at national and international levels to identify true versus false news about coronavirus issue; iii) extracting data by Twitter around these news containing different levels of truth; iv) analyzing mentions and replying relationships to classify the derived network data structures. Some illustrative examples will be provided by putting evidence into the role of the social media as protection vs. amplification of conscious information consumption.

Keywords: Covid-19; Fake news; Infodemic; Social media; Social network analysis; Twitter.

The evolution of Online Surveys: reflections on the cross-national probability-based online panels

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Conducting a scientific survey is a complex, costly and time-consuming task. In fact, the history of the survey is sprinkled of efforts to reduce costs in terms of time and economic resources, trying to maintain high data quality. The development and wide spread of the Information and Communication Technology boosted those attempts. Web surveys, especially with regard to data collection, have several characteristics that make them an attractive alternative to classical modes of data collection. There are no costs for interviewers, mails and printing. Questionnaires can be delivered in a very short time and data are accessible almost in real time.

In this contribution we are going to pinpoint the advantages related to web surveys compared to more traditional survey methods. Along with the pros, we will also highlight the main methodological issues concerning the online surveys. In particular, the main problem is related to the fact that many internet surveys do not follow the principles of sample survey theory. Thus, most of them, for example the so-called volunteer panels, are affected by self-selection bias and coverage error. The paper then moves on to discuss the world's first attempt to set up an academic driven cross-national probability-based online panel that aimed to mitigate the methodological limitations outlined above. Finally, we are going to empirically evaluate the success of the web panel and assess the quality of data in terms of representativeness compared to other established cross-national studies.

Keywords: online surveys, ICT, volunteer panels, online panels.

Criticalities and advantages of the use of Artificial Intelligence in research

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In recent years, artificial intelligence, through the rapid development of machine learning and deep learning, has started to be used in different sectors, even in academic research. In April 2019, the scientific publishing house Springer published the book "Lithium – Ion Batteries", the first scientific text written by an artificial intelligence. Actually it is a review of the state of research, where the artificial intelligence does not show any creative element, but its capacity to select and hierarchize information according to their importance. The aim of this study is to understand whether artificial intelligence can play a central role in the development of research and to highlight any advantages and critical issues. In particular, analyzing some case studies, this work takes into consideration the systematic errors determined by the polarization of the data with which the machine learning models are trained, the absence of feedback and the problem of the difficult representation of the minorities through the use of big data. From the cases analyzed, a reflection develops on the application of artificial intelligence in the field of research, especially in sociology, and on the development of a new figure of researcher, who is obliged to update his "toolbox" in such a way as to be able to "dialogue" with artificial intelligence.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Machine Learning

Social research on Wattpad. An example of small data research

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The main argument of the paper is the analysis of the reading and writing behavior on Wattpad during the phases of lockdown in Italy for Covid -19 pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic represents the first great event of 'data society' reactions making several authors reflect on various aspects and thoughts about social impact of tech ecosystems. Nowadays, it becomes essential to understand the role that digital technologies and media have had to soothe feelings related to social isolation and physical distancing measures (Bennato 2020), not disregarding the perspective on the production of misinformation, infodemic, moral panic and more in general information disorder (McRobbie, Thornton 1995; Quattrociocchi, Vicini 2016; Marres 2017; Paglieri 2020). Thus, as widely acknowledged, besides providing data for social research in many aspects of life (health, education, human relationship, etc) the digital context also suggests above all innovated methods enforced by the physical distancing (Lupton 2020). My research has explored about 600 stories edited on Wattpad and 450 profiles of users who are authors of these stories. The stories have been selected through the hashtag #Covid and later the stories data has been extracted from the pages using scraping techniques and, when necessary, manually. The qualitative approach is based on small data mapping the meanings that users have given to their content and practices (Caliandro, Gandini 2016): the social network platform allows the post-demographics analysis (Rogers 2013).

Wattpad is a digital platform to sharing stories with 80 million users where 90% of our users are either Generation Z or Millennials (https://company.wattpad.com/). For its architectural features, Wattpad performs the double function of social network and community, fostering participation in public life, and emphasising the socialization (boyd, Ellison 2007).

Wattpad offers many 'digital native' objects: users are wredear (Landow 1997) that produce many stories based on popular and mass culture (Fiske 1989; cfr. Pianzola, Rebora et al2020), where the meanings are decoded in light of the social experiences and shared cultural context, as in the case of

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teen fiction. Eventually, the aim of the analysis is to mapping collective imaginary of users about Covid-19 Pandemic within a digital medium for fanfiction, combining three fundamental approaches of digital methods: following the medium, following the thing, following the native (Caliandro, Gandini 2019).

Keywords: social reading; digital sociology; Wattpad.

Essere Cultrice nell'Era Covid: un'esperienza auto-etnografica

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L'articolo espone una ricerca auto-etnografica basata sull'esperienza personale come Cultrice della materia durante l'Era Covid. Partendo da uno specchietto introduttivo, che illustra la diffusione e l'applicazione dell'approccio metodologico di carattere auto-etnografico, si è deciso di raccontare l'esperienza personale, nello specifico nel ruolo di Cultrice della materia nell'ambiente universitario. L'analisi e la riflessione di tale vissuto sono state rivolte alle dinamiche relazionali tra studenti e insegnanti, i quali si sono ritrovati a sperimentare nuovi criteri di approccio allo studio della teoria e della ricerca.

Keywords: Covid, Università di Salerno, auto-etnografia.

Social Identity Seeking and Sharing as a Creative Activity of Art Consumers

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The interest of proposed paper is on the visual dimension of processes creating of individual identity in interaction with contemporary art galleries, art fairs or museums. All of the mentioned institutions are constantly changing, but permanent, structures of the visual arts and cultural industries of most countries. They are significant parts of international economy by being closely connected with culture industries such as fashion, mass cultural industries of tourism.

The aim of this text is to understand current trends of enhancing identity via creating and consuming images and portraits. It also aims to address the changing patterns and techniques of visual self-presentation, pointing out shared cultural values that are becoming certain global standards and institutionalized conventions of the personal snapshots shared on social media and professional commercial photography produced by museums.

After a picture is shared on social networks, there is something that can be called a commodification of an illusion. This illusion is shared and presented as a personal authentic proof of the visit to the location or experiencing of a unique moment. The illusion is massively reproduced and becomes a form of an ideal. The aim of this text is to understand current trends of enhancing identity via creating and consuming images. It also aims to address the changing patterns and techniques of visual self-presentation, pointing out shared cultural values that are becoming certain global standards and institutionalized conventions of the personal and professional commercial photography that take place inside cultural institutions and museums.

The construction of the ideal image of the self will be discussed within the theoretical framework of "Representation" as addressed by Hall (1997: 24). In Hall's definition, representation is how we "make sense of the world of people, object and events, and how someone is able to express a complex thought about those things to other people, or communicate about them through language in ways which other people are able to understand" (Hall, 1997: 16).

The work introduces the dynamic processes of social construction of reality, the creation of contemporary art as a visual manifestation of our time, a public space that represents the challenging complexities of our world. Drawing more on Hall's concept of representation I would like to concentrate on the practices of "stereotyping", drawing out the links between representation and stereotype that are closely connected with the production of mass culture, consumerism, institutions, and social media.

Photos from galleries and museums taken and shared on social media can be understood as a commodified presentation of the personal experience in order to narrate a desired social ideal. After a picture is shared on social networks, the process of the commodification of an illusion starts: an illusion that was shared and presented as a personal authentic proof of the visit to the location and experiencing of a unique moment. Often one particular image from a museum is massively reproduced and becomes a form of an ideal souvenir or a goal of travel. The connection of the centrality of the location captured in images, stereotyping, and identity is crucial in this research.

Keywords: social identity, art consuming, consuming images.

The spatial dimension in social media analysis: theoretical and methodological characteristics

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In the data revolution era (Kitchin, 2014), new data types and new data sources allow researchers to find new ways to study society and its dynamics. The availability of "voluntary" (Flanagin, A. J., & Metzger, M. J. (2008) and "derived from social media" (Campagna et. Al, 2015) geographic information allowed the spatial dimension, initially ignored in social media analysis, to be placed at the center of attention as a potentially relevant in digital and web studies. From this point of view, between the "virtual space" (i.e. opinions, events, comments and post, etc.) and the "real space" it would be possible to identify some type of connection. Twitter is one among the social platforms in which it is possible to integrate textual content with geo-localized data, and is often used as a data source (Weller, 2015) due to the amount of information contained is almost completely accessible to researchers (Kinder- Kurlanda et. Al, 2017. The purpose of this work is to recognize the impact of this growing research stream in relationship with some methodological and theoretical issues. The first is connected to "critical algorithm studies" (Seaver, 2016) and basically concerns the use of geolocation/geoparsing algorithms (Middleton et. Al, 2018). In order to understand what are the preferred algorithms for the utilization we will reconstruct the network that characterizes them, then we will investigate if there is a critical use of these tools. The second, connected to the tradition of ecological studies, concerns the way in which these works conceived the space. Is it a geographical space or a "sociological" one? How does content can relate to the space in which it is detected? In the end, the last two issues concern, on the one hand, the disciplinary areas in which these research takes place and, on the other hand, which are the ecological units taken into account.

We will try to answer these questions by analyzing the researches that have used Twitter as a data source. In particular, the analysis of the articles, extracted with the PRISMA methodology (Moher et. Al, 2018) for systematic reviews, it will be done through a third type content analysis

(Rositi, 1988). The application of this procedure will allow us to classify the analysis material, moving simultaneously on the four defined dimensions.

Keywords: Twitter; geo-localized data; spatial dimension; systematic reviews; algorithm studies.

Digital ethnography: a systematic literature review

Angela Delli Paoli, Felice Addeo and Valentina D'Auria – University of Salerno (Italy)

Online activities as well as online communications no longer belong to a world apart but are part of a continuum of a single and heterogeneous social reality. This condition has allowed the boundaries of incompatible social realities (online and offline) to fall due to recent technological developments which increase the scope and range of online communities and the forms and time of participation. First of all, web 2.0 and the spread of social media, blogs and forums have upset the boundaries between online and offline realities. These new social environments have widened the opportunities for user-generate content: users become hybrid entities, prosumers, independent generators of content (Castells, 2009: 80). Moreover, the emergence of an "internet of things" and of ubiquitous mobile devices make it possible to be always connected (Costello et al., 2017). Apart from being incorporated into the everyday practices of people, the internet has become more and more incorporated into those of social researchers (Hallet and Barber 2014; Caliandro 2018). Therefore, today it is impossible to aim at social research excluding digital environments. The most relevant issues offered by digital context, in addition to the network of relationships between users and between users and devices, are the different types of content, such as user-generated-content and automatically generated content (metadata). Also ethnography needs to be adapted to online environments and reshaped according to them (Pink et al. 2016; Caliandro 2018) since it is no longer possible to carry out ethnography without considering online social spaces. This modifies the concept of fieldwork introducing the need for multi-sited ethnographies (Marcus 1995) where online sites complement physical fieldworks. The fieldwork is no longer defined on the basis of geographical or ethnic criteria. Culture is no longer considered as strictly linked to physical places but as a flexible construct which can be understood in the different physical and online spaces where meanings are negotiated (Weißköppel, 2009).

In the last few years, various attempts of considering online spaces in ethnographic research have been made producing different styles of online etnography, each identified by a different label: Netnography (Kozinets,

2002, 2010, 2015); Cyber Ethnography (Morton, 2001; Escobar 1994), Ethnography of Virtual Spaces (Burrel, 2009), Ethnography of the virtual words (Boellstoorff et al., 2012), Virtual Ethnography (Hine 2000), Internet Ethnography (Boyd, 2008), Ethnography on the Internet (Beaulieu, 2004), Internet related ethnography (Postill and Pink, 2012); Digital Ethnography (Murthy, 2008), Webnography (Puri, 2007), Expanded ethnography (Beneito-Montagut 2011).

Starting from the works already existing in literature, this article aims to provide a systematic review of the topic mapping the practices of digital ethnography. The methodology started with the phase of planning to identify both the research topic and the research questions. Afterward, the research process followed four key steps such as search, selection, analysis and synthesis. In the search phase, we searched contributions iteratively in Web of Science and Scopus by using as keywords Connective Ethnography; Cyber Ethnography; Digital Ethnography; Ethnography of the Internet; Ethnography of the virtual words; Ethnography on the Internet; Ethnography through the Internet; Ethnography of Virtual Spaces; Expanded ethnography; Internet Ethnography; Internet related ethnography; Netnography; Networked Ethnography; Online ethnography; Virtual Ethnography; Webnography; Multisided ethnography. The unit of analysis consists of papers published in English in academic journals. The papers were collected between September and November 2020. In the selection phase, we adopted a selective stance that aims to provide a critical review of the existing research and practices in the context of digital ethnography. Thus, we confined our research to those studies with an empirical focus, which in other words adopts an empirical ethnographic research. In the analysis phase, we carried out a hybrid content analysis of the papers selected based on the sequential use of deductive and inductive coding approaches. In other words, papers were firstly coded deductively, on the basis of pre-defined categories and a priori classification created by the researchers (Swain, 2018). Subsequently, the coding scheme was inductively adapted in itinere and emergent codes were added when during coding unforeseen results (factors, topics and codes not previously considered and included into the pre-defined categories) emerged from the analysis. The synthesis phase involves a process of typology development to pragmatically reduce and systematize an extensive set of features and

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digital ethnography practices through a procedure of Multiple Correspondence Analysis in conjunction with Cluster Analysis.

Fake news pandemic. Detecting bad information by supervised learning

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The peculiarity of social media to convey the thoughts and interests of a huge number of users on a lot of different themes, has allowed a more massive realization and dissemination of information (Lampos and Cristianini, 2012). On one hand these processes have democratized communication, on the other they have made more difficult to identify the authoritativeness of the sources of a message. This has led to the explosion of the so-called 'fake news' phenomenon, that is, the massive diffusion of apparently unfounded content based on bad information. It is clear that the study on the phenomenon firstly requires the application of tools and techniques that could easily dialogue with a large amount of data, and secondly it needs a deep knowledge of elements and processes that convey suspicious content.

The social sciences with the content analysis often dealt with this subject of investigation, through exploratory analysis of the themes and the trends characterizing the phenomenon. Considering the relevance of the matter (for example, the Russia gate on the 2016 US Presidential) the descriptive analysis of the phenomenon appears, from this point of view, no longer sufficient. Nowadays a wide range of possibilities are offered by digital methods and automatic text classification procedures, hence, a predictive approach is needed that knows how to identify a priori all the elements that show a suspicious message (or the author).

The emergency of the coronavirus has been an event in which the spread of fake content was considerable, generating an 'Infodemia' (Orso et al., 2020; World Economic Forum, 2020). This reason led us to choose it as a case study. We have created a dataset of about 1 million tweets (including retweets) from the week 9 - 16 March on the Coronavirus emergency, which corresponds to the first week of the Italian lockdown.

The tweets were extracted from the R "rtweet" package. 3000 tweets were sampled (without retweets) stratified for daily and manually classified as content based on three features: user, source and thematic area. Regarding the author, chosen characteristics are about the type of account (verified or

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not), the number of followers and the screen name. The source is related to all the suspicious sources from which the tweet originates (comparing them with the lists of sites identified as a source of disinformation). Finally, the manual classification is based on the content of the message, based on the key issues for the false narration of the emergency, emerging from previous works (Ahmed et al., 2020; Brennen et al., 2020).

Once, the test set was classified, it was possible to observe the statistical learning model on the coded data, evaluating the goodness of the learning model through cross-validation. This allowed to train the model that identifies the messages, and their authors as suspects with sufficient predictive precision and to apply it to the entire extracted corpus. Once the complete classification was obtained, it was possible to map the Covid19-related disinformation network, also identifying the nodes of this network to better understand the mechanisms of fake-content dissemination.

Keywords: fake news, text mining, supervised classification, Covid-19.

Methodological directions for the study of memes

Giulia Giorgi – NASP (University of Milan / University of Turin)

The present contribution proposes a methodological toolkit to study memes, addressing the challenges posed by their multimodal and the heterogeneous realizations. In a society where "what we see is often more important than what we hear or read" (Rose 2016, p. 2), multimodal user-generated contents have carved out an increasingly relevant role in online interactions. In this scenario, Internet memes have gained foot as an engaging tool for users to express political and social comments in an ironic format, often combining visual and textual material (Milner, 2016; Shifman, 2014).

To date, research on memes has been concerned with their contribution to the expression of political ideas and of subcultural identity (Ross and Rivers, 2019; Denisova, 2019; Gal et al., 2016). However, those analysis are mostly based on cherry-picked samples, which hardly account for the wide range of possible meme layouts and patterns. Limiting the investigation to well-known and recognized memes (i.e. the so-called "macros"), scholars have avoided the tricky question of reconsidering the memetic canon, defining the boundaries of this complex and multifaceted phenomenon. In fact, despite the several and partly overlapping theoretical definitions (Knobel and Lankshear, 2007; Davison, 2012), there is little or no indications on how to empirically approach the study of memes.

To address this issue, I undertake an empirical analysis which combines digital and qualitative methods, investigating how memes are employed by Italian Instagram users to express generational identity. With a user base mostly composed by people from 18 to 35 years old (Instagram, 2020), Instagram has a strong influence on youth culture, identity, and perceptions of the world. Memes, which cover a considerable percentage of the visual formats of the platform (Hu et al., 2014), are considered not only an entertainment but also an identity building device (DeCook, 2018).

The initial dataset, gathered with digital methods (Rogers, 2013) following the general hashtag #memeita, features both static image and video memes. A qualitative co-hashtag analysis (Caliandro and Gandini, 2016) is aimed at detecting memes related to generations - i.e. featuring hashtags like #millennials, #okboomer, and #machenesannoi2000. A

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randomly selected sample of 1000 memes is manually tagged according to relevant formal and content features, derived both from existing literature (Chagas et al., 2019) and the data itself: e.g. presence of text, of music, presence of real-life images or drawings, photo/video editing. Afterwards, a subset of 50 memes (both videos and images) is qualitatively examined using the Discourse Analysis approach (Fairclough, 2013; Norris, 2014), to derive the ways through which generational identity is expressed. The results show that a key role is played by intertextuality: generational allegiance is conveyed by means of pop-cultural references (e.g. to music, movies, cartoons, events, or other memes), which are presented and recognized as a fundamental part of the cultural imaginary of specific generational segments. In conclusion, the article not only provides with some methodological directions to systematize the study of memes on social media, but also identifies a set of core properties, which can prompt a reconsideration of the meme theory with an eye on empirical applications.

Keywords: Meme; Digital Methods; Instagram; Content Analysis.

Narrazioni e storie di vita: dalla macchina alla persona

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La società contemporanea non è più ambiente sociale antropocentrico, ma deve essere sempre più concepita come spazio in cui gli algoritmi intelligenti, presenti in ogni dispositivo digitale, stanno acquisendo, sempre più, uno status di soggetto e meno di oggetto. La creatura sta cercando di acquisire una parvenza di indipendenza dal creatore grazie al machine learning, ai big data, al machine to machine e alle molteplici modalità attraverso le quali l'essere umano non è posto più al centro del mondo? L'intelligenza artificiale rappresenta l'ennesima rivoluzione che scardina il domino dell'essere umano da settori di enorme rilevanza come l'informazione, la diffusione del sapere, la costruzione identitaria del soggetto sociale? Le pratiche esistenziali mutano ad ogni istante, ad ogni accesso a questi agenti intelligenti che, oltre a sostenere le richieste dell'utente, ne divengono anticipatrici e preveggenti, dimostrando come sia imprescindibile, oggi, analizzare sociologicamente la società e la realtà attraverso l'immagine che ne dona la macchina. Il loro contributo deve essere percepito come una collaborazione che possa permettere all'umanità di progredire e di conoscere nuove prospettive e orizzonti. Secondo questa prospettiva, l'ausilio degli STS diviene fondamentale per la disamina di un'ontologia delle macchine in cui si disvela un attore non umano che contribuisce alla costruzione socio-tecnologica della società e dei mutamenti culturali che queste agiscono e retroagiscono sulla persona. L'intento del contributo, di natura principalmente teorica, sarà di dialogare in merito alla centralità dell'intelligenza artificiale quale attrice protagonista delle molteplici manifestazioni delle culture e delle pratiche digitali, avendo lo scopo di rinnovare il dibattito sulla riflessione sulla complessità contemporanea partendo dalla manifestazione delle potenzialità dell'algoritmo, passando per il suo rapporto con l'essere e, infine, stabilire un approccio metodologico simile alla narrazione di delle storie di vita che non apparterrebbero più solo all'umano, ma si avvicinerebbe sempre più all'agente intelligente artificiale che le assorbe, elabora e rende proprie.

Parole chiave: storie di vita, intelligenza artificiale, machine learning.

Innovative digital methodologies for the historical research on the history of Europe: the Association of European Historians as a case study

Alessandro Laruffa – University of Rome, La Sapienza (Italy)

Within the historiographical studies on the history of Europe in the 20th century, we can observe methodologies mostly structured on archival research and comparative methods. Currently, the digital revolution has enabled the availability of great amounts of data, information and statistics.

The traditional research methodologies seem not sufficient to fully exploit the potential of the new elements. The new historiography should take into account the innovative methodologies of historical research, such as the network analysis and the Digital Humanities.

The new methodologies cannot operate in place of the more established research methodologies, but rather they could contribute to increasing their management and analytical potential. Through digital infrastructures and network analysis the researcher can organize and visualize otherwise invisible elements, thus he is able to build a wider and more complete image of the shapes and structures analysed. The management of huge masses of information has a direct impact on the quality of research. Digital humanists are aware of the urgency of conducting historical research through the construction of databases according to international standards, which can be consulted, updated and used even on software platforms designed to change over time. The adoption of open code programs (open source) and with free use license is a decisive step to limit as much as possible the negative impact of the obsolescence of digital media and therefore the risk of losing the results of historical research.

The proposed paper aims to analyze the application of Omeka-S, an open source Content Management System (CMS) specifically designed for humanities studies, to the historical research, with focus on the history of Europe. The objective will be achieved using the network analysis and Omeka-S with functions of digitization, metadatation, geolocation in accordance with international standards. The case study will be the Association of European Historians (AsE). In 1983, several historians

from different European countries gave rise to a network named "Association of European Historians" (AsE). The Association aimed to define a functional methodology to narrate a collective European history and no longer a sum of individual national histories, even amending the role of the historian. The heart of the AsE was the Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea (ISTSTOR) in Rome, official seat of the Association network and place of marked European vocation. Currently, the use of digital technologies, in combination with traditional methodologies and network analysis, allows a more in-depth analysis of the AsE's network and its historiographical paradigm.

Keywords: history of Europe; digital humanities; Association of European Historians.

How startuppers capitalize financial resources through online and offline narratives

Vincenzo Luise and Patrizio Lodetti – University of Milan (Italy)

The startups develop their innovative technologies in an extremely uncertain environment where customers, markets and profits can be completely unknown (Ries, 2011). Startup economy takes place in the present but it is directed towards the future (Mische, 2009). As Beckert (2013) argues, these economic actors are motivated by fictional expectations which permit to direct the innovative businesses toward potential future scenarios. This allows startuppers to generate casual links that bridge the gap between the present and possible future economic developments. Moreover, the impossibility of an exhaustive calculation and the complexity of the decision process also affect the market exchange and its institutionalization in normative frameworks. According to Jessop and Oosterlynck (2008), there is a continuous interaction between the semiotic and extra-semiotic dimensions in a complex co-evolutionary process. The imagined economies are discursively constituted and materially reproduced: there is no economic imaginary without materiality. The aim of this work is to understand and assess to what extent startuppers produce and articulate discourses about future economies in the online and offline domain. How startuppers and other actors in the startup economy are motivated in their actions by fictional expectations and organize their economic activities according to these mental representations. According to the nature of this research, an exploratory strategy within a mixed-methods approach is adopted. This allowed us to explore how on-line and off-line dimensions are intertwined. We conducted 42 semistructured interviews with different economic actors of the Italian startup scene and eight months of ethnography following the startuppers in different incubators and events such as the Start-up Grind, the Start-up Crush Test and the FuckUp Nights. Moreover, according to the digital methods paradigm (Rogers, 2013), we analysed the twitter narrative production of Seeds&Chips2017, the most important Italian event on food, digital technologies and startups. The data analysis is based on a dataset of 28.428 tweets. We conducted two types of analysis: quantitative and qualitative. Moreover, we combined these analyses with the ethnographic data in order to understand how the narratives about the innovative technologies were

structured. This work concludes that the capacity to control the narratives about the potential scenarios of future technologies enables the startuppers and other actors to direct the financial resources. They can be conceptualized as frame makers (Beunza & Garud 2007). The opportunity to combine digital data, ethnography and qualitative interviews allowed us to recognize how these economic actors are aware of this mechanism and how they try to capitalize on their capacity of managing the production of narratives about innovative technologies.

Keywords: Startup economy; fictional expectations; mixed methods.

National differences and gender stereotypes in Days of Empire

Giuseppe Maiello – University of Finance and Administration, Prague (Czech Republic)

Days of Empire is a freemium mobile strategy video game developed and published by the company OMET, having actually its headquarter in Fuzhou Fujian, China. The company is specialized in fantasy video games mostly settled in the Middle-East, which are full of references to the history and mythology of the Arab and Turkish peoples. Our aim is to provide a description of the game and to carry out a qualitative analysis of the attitude of chosen players towards the game, their emotional thrusts, and the financial commitment to which many of them undergo to achieve greater success in the game. As in the game many discussions take place in the chat of the game itself, we are interested in the stereotypes referring to the nationality of origin of the players, to gender stereotypes, and even the sexual harassment to which female players are subjected. The first part of the netnographic study has already been carried out in a covered way, at a later time we would ask semi-structured and free questions to the players in a covered way. Using the emic approach, it will be shown the insider's perspective of the ways in which the players of Days of Empire relate themself to the problematics of nationalism and gender stereotypes, and the emotional connection between single individuals and such kind of freemium game.

Keywords: Netnography, stereotypes, freemium games, Days of Empire, Ottoman Empire.

The Italian twittersphere in COVID-19 Time: a topic analysis

Mara Maretti, Lara Fontanella, Vanessa Russo and Emiliano Del Gobbo – University of Chieti-Pescara, Gabriele D'Annunzio (Italy)

The SARS-Cov-2 virus is a new generation virus initially identified in the market in the city of Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province in China. Immediately after the declaration by the World Health Organization (WHO) of a COVID-19 health emergency, a real tsunami of information broke out, the main features of which can be summarised as: 1) high volume of information; 2) variety of sources of information (official and non-official); 3) multitude of information formats (infographics, videos, textual data, audio files); and 4) high viral potential.

In this regard, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus at the Munich Security Conference on 15 February 2020 said, 'We are not just fighting an epidemic; we are fighting an infodemic' (Zarocostas, 2020).

On 21 February, two outbreaks of infections were reported in Italy, one in Lombardy and another in Veneto, with an initial number of 17 cases. The time span between 22 February 2020 and 8 June 2020 can be considered as one of the most crucial in Italian history. The critical issues not only concerned the spread of coronavirus and the management of the health emergency but above all the side effects of the pandemic: limitation of personal and religious freedoms, economic recession, crisis in international relations between EU countries and Infodemic (Lazzerini and Putoto, 2020).

This contribution aims at analysing the information in the Twittersphere during the COVID-19 health emergency in Italy. In particular, the research aims at analysing the main conversational themes using probabilistic topic models. Focusing on misinformation topics, and understanding in deep the characteristics of the conspiracy and junk information networks, the research aims at investigating the characteristics of conspiracy networks and contents and the virality of these tweets (comparing with the institutional information).

We collected the most popular hashtags on the COVID-19 theme (#coronavirus, #covid-19, #coronavirusitalia, #covid19italia). After the start of the lockdown across the country (dpcm of 8 March 2020), #iorestoacasa was added. In the third and final phase corresponding to the beginning of phase 2 (dpcm 26 April 2020) a further hashtag #Fase2 (#phase2) was added.

We collected 7,306,469 Tweets and Retweets. The Tweets dataset was collected using Socialgrabber, an online service platform, that provides a user-friendly GUI to use the publicly available Twitter Streaming API (Access Programming Interface).

First results seem to confirm what emerges from other research on different national contexts that have dealt with infodemics in the twittersphere. Some of them point out that, although the twittersphere is populated by disinformation and myths about COVID-19, they are not predominant compared to those with official information content from accredited press agencies and institutions (Singh et al., 2020).

Keywords: Topic Analysis, Infodemic, Twitter, Covid-19.

Innovative research methods for tackling the COVID-19 online disinformation: combining research and regulation in the platform society

Francesco Marrazzo – Authority for Communications Guarantees, AGCOM (Italy)

The Code of Practice on Disinformation approved on September 2018 by European Commission, and signed by relevant online platforms such as Facebook, Google, Twitter, Microsoft and, since June 2020, TikTok, has acknowledged the importance to "take the necessary measures to enable privacy compliant access to data for fact-checking and research activities". At the end of the annual monitoring of the commitments made by the signatories carried out by the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) Task Force Disinformation, coordinated by Italian NRA AGCOM, the Final Report has underlined that the platforms have provided very little (if any) access to data for independent investigations, and has provided for some sets of guidelines to be drafted with the aim to improve the relationships between online platforms and researchers at the same time. During the 2020, part of the ERGA SubGroup Plurality/Disinformation activities have been dedicated to the preparatory work and the drafting of these guidelines. In particular, in the light of European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs Joint Communication "Tackling COVID-19 disinformation – Getting the facts right", the ERGA focus group on relationships between online platforms and scholars/researchers is deeply analyzing how the most relevant research activities conducted by scholars and NGOs on COVID-19 online disinformation could help regulators in assessing the platforms self-regulation. After a brief analysis of the regulatory scope here described, the paper shall propose a review of the main research activities and projects on COVID-19 disinformation (e.g. Boberg et al., 2020; Punziano, De Falco, & Trezza, 2020; Brennen et al., 2020; Krause et al., 2020; Pennycook et al., 2020), in order to individuate the emerging approaches and the most relevant methods and tools to collect, analyse and interpret data that are demonstrating effective in studying online disinformation and useful in orienting possible regulatory and co-regulatory initiatives. The paper shall mainly discuss studies coming from the digital methods approach, i.e. considering the digital environments and platforms not as object of study,

but rather as methodological resource (Rogers, 2009). In particular, this paper shall highlight which are (i) the emerging methods and tools to collect data from online platforms (mostly social media) belonging to the digital methods approach, with particular reference to timeframe and geo-localization, data organization and data collection policies set up by online platforms there analyzed (Caliandro, Gandini, 2019); (ii) the most innovative research designs in analyzing the spreading of online disinformation and its impact on news consumption patterns; (iii) the chances for a renewed partnership between scholars and public sector in the regulation aimed at protecting the media pluralism (Parcu 2019) in the platform society (Van Djick, Poell, & De Waal 2018). Starting from the assumption that meaningful research access is a pre-condition for informed and effective platform governance (Ausloss, Leerssen, & ten Thije, 2020), the paper shall conclude with some recommendations aimed at stimulating the debate on the access to data useful for conducting research activities and promoting the quality of the news in the digital ecosystem as well.

Keywords: Disinformation, Research Community, Digital Methods, Collecting data tools, Online

Platforms, Media Pluralism, Quality of news.

@ConfesionesMachistas: Social networks, participatory online research and new masculinities

Javier Garcìa-Martinez, Independent Researcher, Spain

From March to June 2018, a participatory online research was conducted in Spanish throughout social networks on how to collectively identify and address sexist practices as a first step towards signifying new masculinities. New digital methodologies, ethical implications and new masculinities are the main points discussed in this work.

Social media platforms are the most populated and dynamic online spaces, as such they offer the opportunity of impactful interchanges. The uses given to these social networks are not always the ones focused a priori by the digital designers, as it is the case with the anonymous comment boards accounts existing across the different mainstream social networks. These specific profiles are based upon user-submitted content and offer spaces of common participation. In a way, this implies an adaptation of the old "forum" digital platforms into the more widespread social networks nowadays. Taking inspiration from this popular format, the social network account for this online participatory research proposal is introduced; Confesiones Machistas (which could be translated as Sexist Confessions), @confesionesmach, both present on Twitter and Instagram.

These "confessions" were composed of 25 user-submitted messages in Spanish by men publicly and openly shared anonymously which responses opened a starting point for mutual crossing debates through tweets and comments from both men and women. Based upon these anonymous messages, the community raised questions on how to identify sexist practices and rebuild masculinities towards a more equal society. The topics could be classified into the following: harassment, objectification, sexual violence, micro-aggression, household labor, possessive practices, homosexual sexism and sexist practices during childhood.

As both an ethnographer and moderator, there is a process of verification, edition and distribution of the texts. The verification process was necessary in order to reject the messages sent by "internet trolls" contrary to the basic principles of the proposal, although their interactions are meaningful to our analysis as well. The identities of the men who sent contributions regarding their practices remain undisclosed and are not shared with the community.

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The research was stopped due to a message sent by a new participant where he claimed to be the alleged author of a sexual crime. Ethical implications of the proposed methodology and this incident are discussed.

Keywords: Masculinities, Participatory research, Social Networks.

Gender models and sexual scripts of T people on online dating Apps: a netnographic study

Giuseppe Masullo and Marianna Coppola – University of Salerno (Italy)

The history of the transgender community in Italy differs from the historical evolution of the LGBT community due to the presence and persistence – as a result of the different movements within the rainbow community – of threefold divergences: in terms of definition, and self-determination, and visibility within society.

The relationship between the resources made available by the Web 2.0 and the various LGBT subcultures has been studied by several schools within Gender and LGBT Studies. Despite this important academic and scientific interest, there is a clear research gap on two issues: on the one hand, the use of social media and new technologies for communication by people with a non-regulatory sexual and gender orientation; on the other hand, the role that these tools assume within the processes of self-determination, socialization and construction of gender and sexual scripts in particular for transgender people MtoF (male to female) and FtoM (female to male).

In recent years, the LGBT community has seen an exponential increase in the use of specific online dating apps (e.g. Grindr and Wapa), designed to encourage meetings and affective or sexual exchanges, that have partially disrupted the traditional way of approaching studies on non-regulatory sexuality. Indeed, they changed the very meaning that some terms assumed in the past, such as "LGBT community" or "Rainbow Community" (Masullo, Gianola, 2018; Masullo, Coppola, 2020a; 2020b; Bacio, Peruzzi, 2017).

This situation becomes even more complex if we consider specifically Transgender and Transsexual People. Unlike gays and lesbians, there are currently no specific Apps for dating for T People. This explanation is linked to the fact that these people orient themselves within the Apps based on their gender and sexual orientation, dividing themselves between those used by homosexuals (Grindr or Wapa) or heterosexuals (Badoo, Tinder).

This study aims to answer some research questions: how MtoF and FtoM people use the meeting apps (e.g. Grindr, Wapa, Badoo); which dating apps are most used by T people and how these new "communicative and

intersubjective spaces" influence, orient and determine the defining processes related to gender expressivity and sexual script construction; to what extent these channels constitute spaces to meet emotional and sexual needs; and whether these spaces reflect the same discriminatory dynamics that T people experience in offline reality.

In the first part, we will expose an indispensable theoretical premise necessary to allow the understanding of the possible phenomenologies through which T people relate to their sexuality, and therefore the concept of "sexual identity", expressivity and gender role. We will also further investigate the concept of "sexual script" (Gagnon Simon, 21984; Rinaldi, 2017) to complete the theoretical frame of reference.

In the second part, we will explore through a netnographic approach (covert and overt), the use of the most widely used dating Apps by T people (MtF and FtM). The analysis will also be accompanied by in-depth interviews.

The results of the profile analysis and interviews show a tendency towards normalization towards the heteronormativity pole. Ultimately, dating Apps contribute to a self-presentation of T people according to the main known gender models, but with differences between MtoF and FtoM. These differences are highlighted with the concept of passing for normals: which is the invisibility gradient of T people in the gender and sexual conforming population. Most FtoM people experience lower stigmatization and an adequate process of passing for normals (Ginsberg, 1996; Rinaldi 2018), so they easily relocate in the society with their new gender, assuming the prototypical sexual script of the hegemonic male.

Conversely, MtoF people have a double polarization: on the one hand, people with high stigmatization and low passing adopt, as a response, extreme behaviours and attitudes of the female gender role, emphasizing and feeding the stereotypes related to transgender MtoF; on the other hand, some MtoFs that present low stigmatization and high passing are polarized towards an extremely stereotyped female model that sees their ideal in the figure of the gender-conforming female, highlighting a sexual script characterized by subordination and dependence on the male figure, (mirroring what happens to FtoM). Consequently, they confirm and recreate the dominant heteronormative model.

Keywords: Gender expression, sexsual scripts, netnography.

Dear (digital) Diary....Evaluating the audio-diary technique as a research method in the social sciences

Veronica Moretti – University of Bologna (Italy)

Background: Within social research, diaries have been used in different contexts. In ethnographic research, fieldnotes can provide important insights in reporting how individuals and communities develop relationships and live in "their" world. In clinical research, diaries can help to overcome memory or to recall problems. With the development and widespread use of technology and digital devices, audio can substitute pieces of paper. However, audio-diaries, unlike written diaries, are not commonly used in contemporary qualitative research.

Hypothesis: Through this article I aimed to investigate how individuals interpreted and considered the audio-diary technique, understanding the interaction between the subject and the medium and the potential of new technological tools (e.g. smartphone, social network) in producing data.

The assumption was to reflect on audio-diaries as a research method to gather data and as a tool capable of collecting the most intimate thoughts and experiences of the narrator in real time.

Methodology: The research is based on a previous study conducted during the COVID-19 lockdown in Italy, more specifically, the transition from phase 1 to phase 2. Each participant – 11 female and 6 male, between 28 and 45 years old and living in the northern part of Italy – was asked to register one audio per day for a week (7-13 May). After this period, I realized a final follow-up semi-structured interview to evaluate how much the audio-diary had an impact both on people's daily lives and on their way of expressing information. The interviews began ten days after concluding the experience.

Results: The data collected suggests a number of advantages and disadvantages to the use of audio-diary to collect individuals' experience. Among the strengths:

 - Audios allow both individuals to provide data and researchers to collect information in real time thereby reducing the effort in doing it because they are "hands-free".

- The added value of audio diaries emerged as valuable when compared to written documents, since pauses, silences, tone and laughter are still present.

- Participant stated how this technique was "easy" and "friendly" to use, since audio messages form a part of everyday life today. Most used the "voice memo" function on the smartphone, some sent the audio directly through the WhatsApp social network.

As regards drawbacks:

- Some individuals felt uncomfortable with self-narration, deleting and registering the audio many times.

- Appropriate training and support for the duration of the period of data collection is needed;

- Record entries regularly over time may lead to participant fatigue and "data exhaustion."

Using this technique proved to be fruitful as I received detailed descriptions of the lives of certain individuals having a sort of trend about their hopes, desires, fears, emotions.

Keywords: Audio-diaries; qualitative approach; digital devices.

Tricked into supporting: a study on computational propaganda persuasion strategies

Valentina Nerino – University of Trento (Italy)

The beginning of the 21st century was characterised by a widespread cyber-utopianism concerning the Internet. Online communication was perceived as a new emancipatory tool, providing each and every individual with the access to – and the possibility to create and share – an unprecedented amount of information. In this sense, the rise of Social Networking Platforms (SNPs) was praised by numerous scholars, envisioning the democratising potential of such virtual venues. However, this initial enthusiasm rapidly waned when alarming evidence of a systematic process of misinformation occurring over SNPs started to emerge: Artificial Intelligence, Big Data and sophisticated persuasion strategies have been regularly employed by a growing number of political actors for altering online political information environment. A technologically enhanced form of propaganda – often referred to as computational propaganda – was flooding SNPs with political bots, fake news and hate speech, urging scholars to abandon their utopian views in favour of a more menacing perspective: SNPs could be used to manipulate the democratic processes in our societies. Since then, numerous studies investigating computational propaganda and presenting innovative methods to identify its presence on SNPs have flourished. Nonetheless, question concerning the extent and the causes of computational propaganda manipulative power are still puzzling scholars. To design adequate countermeasures, understanding what makes computational propaganda effective (i.e., successful in altering people's opinion over matters of public interest) is arguably as important as detecting its presence and grasping its technical functioning. This is the reason why this paper advocates for a multidisciplinary approach – encompassing computer, behavioural and social sciences – for assessing causes and extent of such effectiveness. The leading hypothesis, based on the Dual Process Theory of Cognition, postulates that computational propaganda effectiveness is attributable to its ability to exploit cognitive mechanisms employed during info-processing. By means of carefully designed stimuli – presented as info-cues embedded in SNPs content – computational propagandists are able to trigger specific cognitive reactions, boosting their audience's support for their political stances. To test such hypothesis and assess such info-cues existence and characteristics, a mixed-method strategy has been employed. First, a bot-

detection strategy, theoretically and methodologically informed by the existing literature, has been devised to identify automated accounts (i.e., political bots) employed to spread political misinformation and alter the natural flow of political debate over SNPs. Such detection task was performed on a dataset of EU-election-related tweets – collected in the months preceding the 2019 Elections – by means of a supervised Machine Learning algorithm based on a Random Forest classifier, which identified more than fivehundreds alleged bots. Subsequently, both quantitative and qualitative text analyses have been performed on these bots' tweets to identify info-cues embedded in their political messages. By combining Latent Dirichlet Allocation and Evaluative Qualitative Text Analysis, info-cues embedded in bots' messages have been identified and their characteristics (i.e., the type of heuristics they triggered to elicit the sought cognitive reaction) classified. Though further investigations are needed to test the magnitude of info-cues effects on social media users' opinions, this research represents a first attempt to investigate this complex phenomenon with a multidisciplinary approach.

Keywords: Computational Propaganda, Political Bots, Social Networking Platforms, European Elections, Persuasion Strategies.

The perception of the community and intimacy building in the artist-fan relationship. A self-netnography on Instagram feeds, stories and direct in the Covid lockdown period

Sonia Pozzi – Independent Researcher (Italy)

The use of music in recent years has become mostly digital (Maasø 2016; Datta et al. 2017). Digital has also become the relationship of fans with artists - singers, actors - and sportsmen: communication passes more and more often through Facebook, Instagram Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok, where artists advertise their "products" and, often, advertise themselves as a product. These apps - which have superseded the oldest paper "fanzines", and the most recent "fan forums" on the internet - are used by fans to exchange information, create a sense of participation and community around a common "idol" (Théberge 2005, Bennett 2012; Highfield et al. 2012; Chadborn et al. 2018; Jenkins 2018), which can also be perceived as a Durkheimian totem (Duffet 2003, 2012). The digitalization of the relationship between artists and fans, and the one among the fans themselves, constitutes a potentially enormous database useful to analyze - through digital ethnography or netnography (Murty 2008; Kosinets 2010) - the "fan" and "fandom" phenomenon, the ways in which the artists present themeselves, the ways of constructing the fan-artist relationship, and how all these can change in particular situations. This contribution is a self-netnography. I live in Lombardy, and during the Covid lockdown I found myself living alone in a house where I had recently moved, just over a km away from a large city hospital. The first weeks only the noises of ambulance and helicopter rescue were heard. Time was dilated and there was a need to fill it with activities that took thought elsewhere. As a music user, moderately passionate about some more or less famous Italian songwriters, I started, almost unconsciously, to follow their Instagram pages more assiduously: directs, feeds and stories. My sociological gaze led me to see almost immediately how the communication modalities had changed and how the interactions with the fans and among the fans themselves had also changed. The "self-promotion" mode and standardized comments has slowly given way to glimpses of "normality" – domestic situations, messy hair, no stage clothes -; the aura of "perfection" has faded and the artists have seemed more "similar", and close to their audience, almost creating a situation of "intimacy" (perhaps, for some, partly organized). The fans, in turn, told their

experience in the contingent situation, their fears, also through written comments, or by posting photos and songs of the artist with hastag and tags that included their favorite artist, and phrases in which they reiterated the importance of his/her presence - perceived in a continuum between the recreational and the psychologically salvific - in that specific moment of difficulty. The concept of community seemed to be linked not only to the artist, but to the common situation. The aim of this contribution is therefore to make a preliminary reflection, also starting from my personal experience, on how in the Covid lockdown period the perception of the fan-artist relationship has changed, and how this change has also contributed to modifying the sense of belonging, community and intimacy.

Key words: Netnography, music fans, Instagram, lockdown, artist-fan relationship, sense of community

Case studies and digital platforms: methodological directions from Reddit

Ilir Rama – University of Milan (Italy)

This paper suggests a methodological approach for case studies on digital platforms, by leveraging on the cultural and technical peculiarities of each online environment. The same platform, providing the same possibilities for action (or affordances, see Bucher 2018), can foster social formations with widely differing topics and objectives, as well as different social and cultural norms (Triggs et al. 2018). While this might move the platform out of focus, I argue that focusing on sociality while overlooking the digital context might underestimate the effects of affordances in engendering, altering, or denying social action and norms. Conversely, the focus on socio-technical understandings of affordances (Papacharissi 2010, boyd 2011) might overlook individual agency and the situated use of platform-specific affordances. I argue that a case study research involving digital environments cannot refrain from considering the peculiarities of the platform. This involves not only leveraging and following its affordances (Rogers 2015), but exploiting cultural connotations and clashes not only to ground findings, but possibly to unearth insights lying in the crevices and variations between cases (Yin 1981). Furthermore, this proves useful to unpack complex relationships (e.g. that of affordances and culture) and avoid methodological artefacts.

I present a study of self-censorship on Reddit, by considering how specific affordances affect cultural norms and, in turn, social action. Methodologically, it is a most different systems design leaning on mixed methods: ethnographic non-participant observation and automated text analysis (Caliandro 2018). More than 10 million comments have been extracted from two selected communities (Baumgartner 2020), ranging from January 2020 to September 2020 (currently up to June). The corpus is composed of three pools: comments deleted by users, deleted by moderators, and comments still online. A sample of these three categories is used to train a classifier using a vector space model, to then extract, group and compare relevant features (Ribeiro et al. 2016) as informed by ethnographic observation. To ground the findings into the platform two communities have been considered: r/coronavirus and r/gaming; the former is centred around discussion on the COVID-19 pandemic, while the latter concerns itself with

videogames and overall geek culture. These cases represent two different points of entry: r/gaming is an established subreddit, with a long history on the platform and an high number of active users, deeply rooted in the platform's geek, often toxic, culture and sensitivity (Massanari 2017); on the contrary, r/coronavirus is an emergent subreddit, focusing on a sudden phenomenon, to some extent exogenous to the website's logic.

Findings underline how social norms are negotiated and enforced through affordances of the platform, such as the karma system and comment chains, and are context dependent. While moderation leaned on explicit and crystallised rules, and was constant across cases, self-censorship varied. Comparing these norms across cases allowed to unpack the bundle of site-wide and community-specific norms: while some acts led to self-censorship similarly in both cases (e.g. political leaning), others were differing and context-dependant (e.g. fact-checking and reliability of source being more relevant in the Coronavirus subreddit).

In conclusion, I suggest the grounding of digital case studies to the platform in which they are located, by considering its socio-technical characteristics and norms. This allows to account for the complex assemblages of affordances, cultures and agency.

Keywords: Affordances, reddit, case study, digital platforms.

Being a pirate: how Pastafarian activism is built on the social media

Jacopo Ranzato – University of Rome, La Sapienza (Italy)

Since September 2015 I've been following the Italian Pastafarian Church (IPC) in a fieldwork that started in the Italian urban framework, but soon had to rely on the social media to understand the way Pastafarian believers build and shape their activism. The IPC is an association that promotes its religion's values (tolerance and secularism) with rituals held in the Italian cities, but is also a digital community articulated in dozens of groups and pages that span throughout different social media.

My research aimed to understand how the interpretation of Pastafarian values within the IPC influenced the group's activism and was simultaneously influenced by their affiliates' political position, and how those values were put into practice in the transit from digital to physical spaces in relation to the Italian political and social context.

The methodology I used to gather data is a combination of different interpretative tools I employed in the different moments of my research. Other than "traditional" ethnography tools such as participant observation and interviews, the fieldwork on the social media was mainly built upon digital methods, content analysis and discourse analysis. The latter were pivotal in the interpretation of the textual data produced on the social media by Pastafarian believers, while the former helped me to understand how the affordances and architecture of those media influenced the way the IPC and its Facebook public interacted.

My paper shares the preliminary results of my ethnography through the analysis of the "pirate", an emic category shaped by Pastafarian believers, whose main features emerged through the analysis of thousands of interactions in the IPC's Facebook pages. In the Church the word "pirate" is often synonymous with "Pastafarian believer" and portraits someone who shares the religion's values.
However, this category proved to be controversial even for the same people that are employing it.

Pastafarians believers would often argue that others aren't "behaving like a true pirate" when they don't share the same political views, sometimes with heavy repercussions upon the entire Church's activism. My reflection upon the "pirate" category draws upon a heated discussion that happened in June, 2019, after the IPC publicly praised the Sea Watch 3 landing in Italy with a

post on its main Facebook page. This discussion and the following arguments altered the internal balance of the Church and the relations between many of its associates.

This case study highlights the deep interconnection between digital and physical spaces, arguing how a dichotomous separation between the two might result counter-intuitive to the understanding of contemporary society. The construction and discussion of the discursive category of the "pirate" isn't just an example of textual analysis: rather, it shows how the communication inside Facebook might be linked to the perception of specific issues, influencing the individuals' political positioning and their participation in form of activism.

Keywords: social media, Pastafarian activism.

Back to practices. Auto-ethnography as a practice of access to data and algorithms

Elisabetta Risi – IULM University of Milan (Italy), Tiziano Bonini – University of Siena (Italy) and Riccardo Pronzato – IULM University of Milan (Italy)

In the last years platforms have emerged as a fundamental business model for companies (Srnicek, 2017) and as the main gateway to the Web for individuals, thereby penetrating every aspect of societies (van Dijck et al., 2018). In a platform society social life increasingly takes place in and through algorithmic media, which act as performative intermediaries that co-produce and shape how individuals behave, choose and relate (Bucher, 2018), while unilaterally and ceaselessly gathering data from them (Zuboff, 2019), which are often unaware of the goals and impacts of these recursive computational procedures.

Several authors (e.g. Beer, 2017; Seaver, 2017) have supported the need to investigate algorithmic infrastructures and their underlying meshing of human and computational logics. However, if platforms have become a key infrastructure of our societies, they are often black boxes (Pasquale, 2015), which have been proved difficult to access and study. Thus, how can we unpack these black boxes and increase citizens' awareness of the constitutive power of algorithmic infrastructures?

Although an ethnographic scholarship on digital platforms is still lacking in several research areas, some scholars have already suggested that ethnography can give a meaningful contribution to the study of algorithmic media (Geiger, 2017; Bonini and Gandini, 2019).

By following Markham's critical pedagogy approach (2019; 2020), in this paper we consider auto-ethnography as a response to datafication and as a practice of access to data and algorithms. The core idea behind this approach is to use interpretive and inductive methodological tools to help individuals critically reflect on their own social and personal activities, thereby empowering them and making their decision-making processes more aware and informed. Furthermore, data gathered through auto-ethnography can shine new light on these debates through a huge amount of rich first-hand data regarding the usage practices that individuals carry out in their everyday life.

This article is a methodological proposal from an ongoing ethnographic study, based on the auto-ethnographic diaries of 50 bachelor students from the IULM University in Milan and 30 bachelor students from the University of Siena (20-25 years old). We asked them to keep an auto-ethnographic report for five days regarding their own media consumptions, in order to conduct a participatory observation activity and to have a daily written record of their media usage practices, as well as reflections and feelings. While the results of this study are currently under analysis, in this paper we take into examination this methodological tool within the conceptual framework of Markham's critical pedagogy, thereby analysing its benefits and weaknesses.

This study aims to make a meaningful contribution by scrutinizing a method which can be valuable to develop critical reflections on the relationship between humans and algorithms. Indeed, this ethnographic research tool can shed light on the values incorporated in algorithms and data, and on how individuals experience and become conscious of the embedded presence of these computational recipes in their everyday lives.

The paper will be organised as follows. First, an extensive literature will be carried out in order to situate the role of ethnography and, especially, auto-ethnography in unpacking algorithmic media structures and impacts. Then, the methodology employed will be thoroughly described and critically analysed. Finally, conclusions will discuss the benefits and limits of this mode of enquiry and implications to future research into this area.

Keywords: Auto-ethnography, critical pedagogy, data literacy, research method, algorithm awareness.

Diaries from isolation

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The research investigates the social effects of the atypical domestic containment situation of the novel coronavirus during the Covid-19 emergency in Italy. During the lockdown the population was deprived of their usual daily routine. Forced into their homes, people have experienced different ways of relating to reality. The survey, which is placed in a phenomenological perspective, shows how individuals and the community have been able to develop an adaptation or resilience process to the lockdown in order to conform their life to the "new ordinary", making it real and purposeful. The research process, which was entirely conducted digitally through specific software for qualitative analysis, has developed dynamically and has raised new questions from time to time with respect to the original objective as well as enriching the theoretical starting interest of the Covid-19 emergency. Digital methods have made it possible to conduct research in real time, within social network platforms, digital diaries or daily reports that some users publish regularly. But social networks have shown limits of representativeness as it excluded categories considered "at risk" for health, economic and social reasons. Under such categories fall the homeless, the children, the roma people and the women in trouble. Understanding the importance of giving voices to these categories, the empirical material was extended to newspaper articles that reported testimonies and stories of those who for various reasons do not use public platforms to tell their daily life. Facebook posts and Instagram audio tracks combined with newspaper articles and email testimonials represent the cases of the research. The selection of the testimonies was conducted considering the heterogeneous points of view on the lockdown situation, in an attempt to explore how individuals relate to their daily lives in the emergency context. The phenomenon of prosumism has allowed to collect data from social networks in a non-intrusive way and also from newspaper articles that report testimonies of activists, volunteers, and different categories of workers . The investigation developed around two main thematic nuclei, the individual and the community. The lockdown has changed, on one hand, the habits, behaviors, thoughts and life prospects of individuals, and on the other, it has contributed to bringing out new problems and unprecedented challenges for society and for the community.

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In the adaptation process, from the individual to the community level, a fundamental role has been assumed by digitality as a means of maintaining social networks. While on one hand, the digitality has allowed an individual the perception of normality by feeling part of a community, on the other it has revealed various forms of digital divide, characterized by different levels of literacy at school, at work and domestically. The social disadvantage does not exclusively concern the digital world but rather on the lockdown that has heightened the systematic exclusion of the most fragile sections of the population.

Keywords: Covid-19; lockdown; adaptation process; digital research; digital divide; social networks; individual and community; qualitative method, phenomenological perspective, representativeness.

Culture and networks in online social fields. Studying the duality of culture and practice in social network sites through Bourdieu's theory and social network analysis

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Digital sociology (Lupton, 2014; Marres, 2017) has flourished in recent years with growing attention to the socially constructed dimension of digital devices and Internet-based services. Still an emergent field, digital sociology may benefit from enriching its theoretical framework, mostly with respect to established sociological traditions. On a similar note, scholars also sustain that 'social media research needs social theory' and vice versa (Lindell, 2017). Bourdieu's theory, especially practice theory (1977; 1990), can contribute a great deal to the development of this field (Levina and Arriaga, 2014; Julien, 2015; Lindell, 2017; Ignatow and Robinson, 2017). As digital devices and services now encompass many if not all aspects of social life, it makes sense to consider their use through the lens of practice theory in order to understand how the material and the cultural (symbolic) are intertwined (Breiger, 2000). In this light, this paper sets forth a theoretical and methodological proposal for studying tastes and distinctive practices as they are conveyed via the use of social network sites (SNS) (boyd and Ellison, 2007; Liu, 2007; Boccia Artieri, 2017). Online interactions occur among individuals and between these latter and online shared contents. This may lead to apply the "cultural matrix approach" (Edelmann and Mohr, 2018) to "online fields" (Levina and Arriaga, 2014), which entails considering the relationships between structural and cultural dimensions that can be formalized through classical "people-by-choice" data tables. In turn, these tables can translate into matrices representing affiliation networks (Wasserman and Faust, 1994), where actors are connected through their choices in terms of cultural products and practices, while these latter are connected through those who share them. Such data frame provides insights into the duality of practice and culture, i.e. the mutual implication of social relations and shared cultural contents (Breiger, 1974; 2000). Sharing contents concerning cultural products like movies, books, music, videos, news, and even "memes" can express "taste performances" (Liu, 2007), while user-generated contents (UGC) prove useful for the study of distinction and status production in online fields from a Bourdieusian perspective (Levina and Arriaga, 2014). Combining

field theory and social network analysis (De Nooy, 2003; Serino, 2018), the cultural matrix and duality principles go hand-in-glove with SNS in that these latter offer fruitful ways to investigate the relationships between social actors and cultural practices and products. Hence, in this work, online platforms like SNS are considered as far as they can help reveal how social fields are structured on the basis of the characteristics of both people and contents, the latter being a manifestation of the former's cultural inclinations – a form of "position-taking", in Bourdieu's lexicon. This proposal will be exemplified by discussing how the processes of content sharing and tie formation are at work on Facebook (Lewis et al. 2008) and Pinterest (Sauter, 2013), where social actors express their tastes, classify (and are classified by) cultural and symbolic content.

Keywords (at least three) Bourdieu, practice theory, social network analysis, digital sociology, social network sites

The political communication of Italia Viva on Instagram: from its formation to the COVID-19

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On 16th September 2019 Matteo Renzi in live recording announces his exit from PD and the formation of a new party called "Italia Viva". This was the first time in Italy that the main creator of government pact leaves his party to build a new one. Italia Viva is the expression of a new political-communicative player. In light of this historical, social and political events the research aims to analyze how Italia Viva's communication on Instagram page has changed in its first six months of activity and during the COVID-19 emergency.

In order to answer the research question, there were analyzed Instagram posts from 17 September — date on which Renzi forms his party — to 19 February; and from 20 February — date on which Italy begins to enter in the COVID-19 emergency — until 3 June. Therefore, the approach used is that of Digital Methods, that has the aim of developing methods, approaches and research tools to study digital environments by exploiting the technical features of media devices. To detect the data, a manual extraction method of the posts was used, given the unlimited time availability of them. After the collection and extraction of the data, an analysis of the quantitative content was carried out, in order to breaking down messages into simpler building blocks. A standardized encoding card containing 14 categorical variables[1] was then defined. From the data obtained, an Analysis of Multiple Correspondences (ACM) was carried out, which allowed us to point out the characteristic of the party's way of communication. The main results showed that in the first 4 months from the birth of the party (September-December) communication was focused mainly on economic and antagonistic issues against the leader of the Lega, Matteo Salvini. From January to February there was a strong propaganda action, chiefly on political and social issues, such as the DDL "Family Act", while during the COVID-19 emergency the central content of the communication was public health, mainly enhancing the social and economic aspects of Italian public health. In conclusion, from April to June the communication process changes again and becomes

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[1] For examples: "Publication date", "Prevalent theme", "Numbers of tags", ecc.

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antagonistic, this time, however, towards the same representatives of the allied government, especially against the Movimento 5 Stelle. All these connotations in the communicative style have consequences on the image that Italia Viva provides of itself in the public opinion. At the end of the research we propose a reflection on how effective communication has been and whether this may have increased or not the participation and the support to the voters in favor of the party, considering the degree of adhesion and appreciation express in the political polls.

Keywords: Italia Viva, Political Communication, Digital Methods.

Delphi MIX method for future scenarios during social distancing

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In the era of digital society and in a hyper-connected world, social research must devise innovative and adaptive methodologies with respect to new forms of communication and social interaction. The social distancing due to the spread of COVID-19 has produced the need for the social sciences to respond to research needs by making the best possible use of information technology and tools. This may mean: 1. adapting traditional research methodologies to new digital tools and remote communication; 2. use mixed research methods to ensure maximum reliability of the results; 3. design innovative research methods that can similarly derive from the sociological tradition. Consistent with these assumptions, our aim is to present an innovative method of participatory social research, which can be framed in the context of future studies. This method, called Delphi MIX, has been developed by CNR-Irpps researchers since 2003. Over time it has been applied in international and national projects (EU, UN, etc.) and it has undergone several changes that have made it more effective. Finally, a last adjustment has been designed as a consequence of the coronavirus crisis. Delphi MIX is based on the logic of the traditional Delphi method and which emphasizes the iterative process and asynchronous remote communication with the support of software allocated on the CNR server which guarantees the immediate recording of search results. Delphi MIX is a method for participatory strategic planning. It provides the opportunity to make the best use of digital tools by connecting experts, professionals, policy-maker and stakeholders (expert research panel). In order to identify the consensus within the panel the Delphi MIX method aims to guide the communication among the its members. Communication is always anonymous and remote. The result of this method is a future scenario, built with a view to a predefined time threshold. It can be understood as a political agenda that points to a desirable and achievable future, and which is made up of policy objectives and key success factors: the first are the elements that guarantee the construction of the future scenario, the seconds are the actions that allow the achievement of each objective. The method is defined according to the logic of questionnaire/feedback/questionnaire cycle until the broadest consensus on the policy objectives is reached. It includes and integrates three

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different components into a systemic operating logic: the traditional Delphi Policy method to define future scenarios in relation to specific problems; the theory of the Appreciative Inquiry which allows to identify future scenarios starting from the strengths of the present one; the SWOT Analysis that defines exogenous and endogenous factors of the future scenarios. Each scenario is critically contextualized from the socio-economic point of view defining the order of intervention priorities. With the spread of Covid-19, the construction of future scenarios is crucial and is more urgent than ever, since it help us to face the challenges of the present and shows us a highly shared way forward. The result are quick and concrete solutions to complex problems.

Keywords: Delphi; mixed methods; social distancing; future scenarios.