Abstract Book

IV INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
INTERNATIONAL LAB
FOR INNOVATIVE SOCIAL RESEARCH (ILIS)

Rethinking social theories and methods in a digital society

Prague, 8-9 June 2023

University of Finance and Administration of Prague

Giuseppe Maiello, Giuseppe Masullo (eds.)

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI SALERNO

DISUFF

ILIS
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INNOVATIVE SOCIAL RESEARCH

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AND ADMINISTRATION

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Preface

This abstract book represents the first - very short - presentation of the research results of more than one hundred scholars who are about to participate in the IVth International Conference ILIS which will be held this year for the first time outside the campus of the University of Salerno.

From this ancient University, whose roots date back to the 9th century, a nucleus of young and active researchers was formed. First it extended to nearby Naples and then from here to Italian cities until it took the current step, that is to hold its conference directly in another European city.

At the IVth ILIS Conference entitled *Rethinking social theories and methods in a digital society*, more than one hundred scholars from 13 different countries are participating. Many of them are still second- and third-level university students, but among them are also eminent professors who act as leaders, chairs or organizers.

I am therefore very pleased to do the honors in the city that has welcomed me for almost forty years to all the colleagues who have contributed to this abstract book and participate both at the headquarters of the University of Finance and Administration and online at the Conference.

In the brochure, you will also find the conference programme. You will notice that in the plenary session there will be a *Lectio magistralis* by Nico Carpentier, whose abstract we report, but before him there is a session with other illustrious guests including the doyen of world sociology, Lord Antony Giddens.

We have decided to leave the personalities of this session full freedom, therefore you will not find their abstracts here.

The IV International Conference ILIS is a pleasant situation for meeting and exchanging ideas and I am convinced that the success of the Conference represents only the prelude to another year of success and study. In addition to my best wishes for good work, I take also the liberty of sending my sincerest thanks to all those who have contributed to this Abstract book and to the organization of the Conference.

doc. dott. Giuseppe Maiello, Ph.D. et PhD.

Prague June 1, 2023

Introduction

We have reached the fourth edition of the International ILIS conference, this year hosted by the prestigious University of Finance and Administration of Prague. The initiative is coordinated by the colleague Giuseppe Maiello, who has always been an active scholar and participant in many initiatives promoted by the ILIS network.

This event follows a meeting we had last April at the University of Finance and Administration of Prague, where we met with some colleagues to discuss challenges and opportunities of the digital turn (Caliandro, 2018), on sociologicy both from a theoretical and a methodological point of view. During that meeting, acquiring as a given the hypothesis of an increasing convergence between the real and virtual environment (cite), we considered it a priority to open a discussion on the validity of some classical sociological concepts. The hypothesis was that sociological theory and methods should be rethought given the pervasiveness of the digital in people's lives, an aspect that has modified our being in the world, our social relations, our opportunities adding structural limits unthinkable to the sociologists who gave birth to our discipline in the late 1800s.

That meeting thus enabled us to define the theme and consequent title of the 4th ILIS Conference we are about to experience: **Rethinking social theories and methods in a digital society.**

The conference intends the digital not as a separate or sectorial field of study, but rather as an irreducible field of analysis, both because it invades all the micro, meso and macro areas and aspects of social life (citizenship, identity, gender and sexuality, power relations, inequalities, social networks social structures and institutions, politics and economics, to name but a few) and because it is capable of generating new ways of living, social practices (think online transactions, travel, but also decision-making), socialisation processes, ties and relationships, and of re-distributing power among institutional actors.

Specifically, from a **micro perspective** the digital has the potential of **making porous the public-private boundary** for example by transforming traditional intimate and private phenomena into a public-facing genre such as in the case of digital suicide and the practice of publishing the last notes on social media (Marres, 2017) or in the case of the relationship with social media profiles of dead people. Moreover, the digital has accelerated the inclusion within daily life of practices related to virtual worlds and video games, such as gamification extended to every aspect of real life, virtual reality applications in every field of human activities, or the creation of the multiverse.

The digital is also a **socializing institution for legitimizing minority, non-normative and stigmatized sexualities** which use digital spaces as performative spaces for reflexivity, self-understanding and acceptance and language negotiation (Delli Paoli, Masullo, 2022). Sometimes the digital offers also *backspaces* **for deviant practices** (deviant sexuality, criminality, illegal actions, etc.) validating and exacerbating deviant desires and practices (such as pedophilia, child pornography, cybercrime, cyber bullying, etc.) (Delli Paoli, 2022).

From the meso perspective, the digital is impacting the forms of social ties and the relationships between social sectors and practices, as the example of forms of distributed democracy and citizen sourcing, clearly demonstrates. More in general it is transforming the forms of social support and **models of community** and communitarism, changing both the sources of **social capital** (strengthening existing social relationships but also activating new and latent ties), its consequences (both positive such trust and relationships' building and negative such as segregation, conflict, inequality and crime) and space-time anchorage (Caliandro, 2018).

From the **macro perspective**, the digital can produce **new organizational forms**, alternative to capitalist economy such as in the case of the *sharing economy* or **new spaces of inclusion/exclusion** by exacerbating inequalities, producing and reproducing social orders and stratifications, operating

along axes of divisions and differentiating people's space of opportunities, well-being and level of agency.

Apart from entailing broad societal transformations which need to find a place in sociological theory, the incorporation of technology into our daily materiality, is also transforming social research methods by providing **new methodological resources** for researching social phenomena (both intentionally and unintentionally produced digital data such as social media posts, narratives, storytelling, search engine queries, phone calls, and banking interactions) (Amaturo, Aragona, 2019). Digital has accelerated the hybridization and inclusion within social research methodology of practices and related disciplinary fields, such as video games. Video games are proving to be a fruitful analytical support for the analysis of social phenomena of various kinds, not only those closely related to the media sphere (Kennedy, 2006; Mayra, 2008; Neitzel, 2010). In this context, Game-Based Methods were born and are being developed. Initially adopted within educational research, in recent years video games have also been used in a variety of ways within social research: as a tool to conduct surveys (Keush & Zhang, 2017) or to detect (or "measure") complex concepts (Foroughi, Serraino, Parasuraman & Boehm - Davis, 2016), as an integral part of a research design (Denisova & Cairns, 2015) or as a general methodological perspective of research (Zendle, Cairns & Kudenko, 2015).

This opens new methodological challenges at different levels of the research process. At the level of data collection where the **non-neutrality of algorithms**, the **identity strategies of self-presentation** applied online, the **invisibility of the research design** in repurposing digital data, need to be taken into account (Veltri 2019; Delli Paoli, Masullo, 2022). At the level of research design where **new competences are required** implying technological proficient researcher able to use a digital language based on the affordances of online environments (the socio-technical architectures of media) (Marres, Weltevrede, 2013). At the level of sampling which is complicated on the web by **direct digital discriminations** (sampling biases deriving from procedures discriminating against minorities or disadvantaged groups based on race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) and **indirect digital discrimination** (sampling biases deriving from procedures intentionally or accidentally discriminating against a minority) (Criado, Such, 2019; Favaretto, De Clercq, Elger, 2019). At the level of data analysis both in qualitative approach due to **online narratives** being intertextual, transmedial, multimodal and interdiscursive and in quantitative analysis for example in **big data-based correlation** which are not automatically meaningful and do not tell much about humanity (human motivations, feelings, values, norms, meanings, etc.) failing to understand deep motivations (Fuchs, 2017; 2019).

Digital social research seems to extend the importance of human interpretation beyond the boundaries of qualitative research imposing to interpret technology and avoid the mythology of data objectivity also as an antidote for digital discriminations.

In the previous editions of this conference, which is now at its fourth edition, we focused on the epistemological impact of digital methods, on innovative methodological practices (digital ethnography, computational analysis, etc.), on the impact of the digital on traditionally "offline" and face-to-face contexts such as education, policy and politics, sensitive topics and population such as gender and sexualities.

This resulted in several publications which collect the outputs of the previous conferences:
- 2 special issues in Italian Sociological Review (Class A journal -ANVUR rating) dedicated to the reconceptualization of social research in the digital era
  - Vol 11, No 4S (2022)
  - Vol 12, No 7S (2022)
- A special issue in Italian Journal of Sociology of Education (Class A journal -ANVUR rating)
- A Handbook of Research on Advanced Research Methodologies for a Digital Society

- 2 special issue in Cultura e Studi del Sociale (Scientific journal – ANVUR rating)
  - Between Infodemic and Pandemic: On-line Researches in the Time of COVID-19 - vol. 6, n. 1, Special (2021);
  - Exploring Everyday Digital Life - vol. 7, n. 1 (2022)
- A book dedicated to ethnography and netnography

Leveraging on the previous editions, this conference will explore the main challenges digitalization poses to different strand of sociological theories and methods particularly investigating the distinctive topics of digital social research and the digital biases.

We firmly believe that this fourth meeting, too, will contribute to increasing our knowledge, and to consolidating a network that, although relatively young, has managed in a few years to animate a strong debate on digital methods and the challenges posed to our discipline by the digital society. This publication collects all the abstracts submitted to the conference, highlighting the different ways in which our scholars wanted to decline their interest in the themes proposed by this conference. There are more than 150 scholars involved in this conference, with a total of 70 contributions from different countries around the world (Brazil, Chinas, Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Poland, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom and USA). This year's edition reinforces its international nature with the lectio magistralis of Prof. Nico Carpenter (Charles University of Prague) and the participation of a prominent sociologist Antony Giddens, to whom we are very grateful for honoring us with his presence. For my part, I wish everyone a great work, with the hope of soon collecting the results of these meetings in a series of dedicated publications.

Prof. Giuseppe Masullo, PhD.

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Guest Speakers

Enrica Amaturo is Full Professor of Sociology (SPS/ 07 General Sociology) at the Department of Social Sciences of the University of Naples Federico II, where she teaches Methodology of social research in the Bachelor degree in Sociology and Critical Epistemology, in the Master degree in Digital Sociology and web analysis of the web. She is the Coordinator of the PHD course in Social Sciences and Statistics. From 2002 to 2006 she has been Dean of the Faculty of Sociology and, from 1990 to 1996 and from 2013 to 2018, she has been Head of the Department of Sociology, first, and of Social Sciences, later, at the University of Naples Federico II. From 2016 to 2020 she has been President of the National Executive Board of the Associazione Italiana di Sociologia (Italian Sociological Association, AIS) and Director of Sociologia Italiana-AIS journal of Sociology, Egea, Milano. She is currently involved in the coordination of various research units related to competitive projects of a local, national, and international character. Her scientific interests are mostly oriented to the methodological problems of the human and social sciences.

Anthony Giddens taught social psychology at the University of Leicester beginning in 1961. He then moved to King's College Cambridge where he became Professor of Sociology at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences. In 1985 he co-founded Polity Press, an international publisher of social science and humanities books. From 1998 to 2003 he was the Director of the London School of Economics. He is Emeritus Professor at the Department of Sociology of the same University. In 2004 became a member of the House of Lords of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. He is the recipient of many academic honours, and some of his books were translated in at least 29 different languages.

Claudia Santi is currently serving as a Full Professor of History of Religions at the "Luigi Vanvitelli" University in Naples-Caserta, Italy. She also assumes the role of director for the #luniguistic, historical, and anthropological series at the publishing house Agorà&Co., based in Lugano, Switzerland. Although her primary focus lies in the Religion of Early Romans, she has also delved into the realms of Folklore, Religion, and the web, exploring the intersection of religion and technology in contemporary society. Furthermore, Professor Santi possesses deep expertise in the Methodology of historical-religious research. As an accomplished writer, Claudia Santi has authored more than 120 scientific publications. Her extensive body of work includes eight monographs and an equal number of edited volumes.

Daniele Solvi, Associate Professor of Medieval and Humanistic Latin Literature and Co-Director of the Permanent Seminar «I santi internauti» at the University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli". Member of the PhD School in History, Anthropology, and Religions of Sapienza University of Rome. Editor of the OJS Journal "Finxit. Dialoghi tra arte e scrittura dal Medioevo all'Età moderna" ('Dialogues between art and writing from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era') and member of the Advisory Board of several scientific journals and book series in the fields of Philology, History and Religion. He is the author of almost 200 scientific publications, including 13 monographs.

Sonia Stefanizzi is Full Professor of Sociology and Director of the Department of Sociology and Social Research. She teaches in the bachelor's and master's degree program in Sociology and in the international doctoral program Analysis of Social and Economic Processes (ASEP). She has been president of the master's degree program Analysis of Social Processes and a member of the Academic Senate of the University of Milan-Bicocca. She is Vice President of the Italian Association of Sociology (AIS). She is responsible for the Research Infrastructure DASSI (Data Archive Social Science Italy) which is part of the European Network of Data Archives for the Social Sciences

(CESSDA) and is the Italian representative in the Strategy Working Group on Social and Cultural Innovation of ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures). She has coordinated several national and international research projects including the Project of Excellence (2023-2027) of the Department of Sociology and Social Research. Her research interests are in the fields of epistemology, research methodology, deviance and urban security.

Chairs

Felice Addeo, PhD in Communication Science, is Associate Professor in Sociology at the University of Salerno, Department of Political and Communication Science, where He holds the chairs of "Social Research Methods" and "Communication and Market Research Methods". He is the director of the Summer School in Social Research Methods (https://www.paideiascuoleestive.it/). He is a methodologist with a broad experience in Social Science Research Methods. His current research interests are: Digital Capital, Digital Poverty, Traditional and Digital Social Research Methods, Netnography, Migration, Trust in EU institutions, Game Studies. Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7072-7019.

Davide Bennato, PhD in Communication Sciences (University of Rome La Sapienza), is Associate Professor of Digital Media Sociology at the Department of Humanities of the University of Catania. In the same university he is president of the Degree Course in Sciences and languages for the communication, board member of the PhD in Complex Systems (Department of Physics and Astronomy) and board member of the Center for Digital Humanities. He is author of three books, co-editor of four and author of more than 70 between paper and essays. Research interests: digital sociology, collective behaviours in social media, computational social science. ORCID: 0000-0001-8110-3535.

Alessandro Caliandro (PhD, University of Milano) is an Associate Professor in Sociology of Culture and Communication at the Department of Political and Social Sciences at the University of Pavia. His current research focuses on digital methods, digital consumer culture, platformization of culture, surveillance capitalism and ageing in digital societies. He is Director of the 'Digital Methods for Critical Consumer Studies' summer school (Lake Como School of Advanced Studies) and member of the research network 'Ageing Societies'(https://ageingsocieties.unimib.it/). He is also research stream 3 leader of ACTIVE-IT (https://ageingsocieties.unimib.it/active-it/) and research coordinator of V-DATA project (https://vdataresearch.com/). He is the author of several books and academic articles on digital methods.

Marianna Coppola (PhD, University of Salerno) is a research fellow in General Sociology at the University of Salerno. She works on LGBTQ studies, media studies and sociology of health. She is co-author of the monography *Affettività invisibili: storie e vissuti di persone e Famiglie transgender* (PM Edizioni, 2022) and author of many articles and essays.

Cleto Corposanto, Full Professor of Sociology at "Magna Graecia" University in Catanzaro, Italy. Previously Associate Professor at University of Trento. Chair of Sociological studies in Catanzaro, Corposanto is editor of the #sociologies series for the publisher Rubbettino and is a member of the scientific board of several national and international journals in the area of Sociology. Methodologist, he was national scientific coordinator of the section of Sociology of Health and Medicine for AIS, Italian Association of Academic Sociologists. He is the author of more than 200 scientific publications, including 15 monographs and as many edited volumes.

Angela Delli Paoli, Ph.D. in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, she is researcher at the University of Salerno, where she teaches Sociology, Social Science Methodology and Sociology of communication and intercultural processes. She was visiting researcher at the London Business School (UK), visiting professor at the University of Finance and Administration of Prague, visiting lecturer at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. She participated as senior researcher and expert evaluator in several

European (Horizon 2020 interim evaluation, Eurofound expert groups), national (INVALSI; Youth Department, etc.), and regional expert groups. She also acts as independent evaluator for the European Commission General Directorate for Research and Innovation and the European Commission Research Executive Agency (REA). Her research interests are qualitative and quantitative social research methods and she authored monographic studies, several essays, book chapters and articles published in national and international academic journals on digital social research, sustainability, migration, non-normative identities.

Maria Paola Faggiano, Ph.D. in Methodology of Social Sciences, Tenure Track Assistant Professor of Sociology at Sapienza-University of Rome. She is the Scientific Director of the Communication and Social Research Laboratory (CorisLab) and of the Electoral Sociology Observatory (Department of Communication and Social Research – Sapienza). She has published numerous works and articles in national and international journals on methodological and sociological issues. Among her recent publications: *Content Analysis in Social Research. Study Contexts, Avenues of Research, and Data Communication Strategies* (Faggiano M.P., 2022, Brill); «Lessons for a digital future from the school of the pandemic: From distance learning to virtual reality» (Faggiano M.P., Fasanella A., 2022, Frontiers). Her interests include: youth lifestyles, political participation, the design and construction of the empirical basis.

Brian Joseph Gilley, Full Professor of Anthropology, Indiana University Bloomington. Director of the ASPIRE College Integrated Abroad Program, Italy (2019-2022), from 2010 to 2016 he directed the First Nations Educational and Cultural Center at the Indiana University Bloomington. The overarching focus of his research is on forms of institutional power, the circulation of presumptive discourse, social exclusion and the ways structural inequality seeps into everyday life. Taking a critical approach to Culture and cultures, he authored several ethnographic and theoretical works on gay American Indian men and mechanisms of social exclusion, particularly on the ways in which settler colonial ideas seep into Native ideas about gender and sexuality. In his ethnohistorical research on Indian removal, he has also investigated the impact of "residual" settler colonial ideas that go largely unquestioned even within the most traditional Native communities.

Estrella Gualda, Full Professor of Sociology at the University of Huelva (Spain), Full Member of the Academia Iberoamericana de La Rábida, Director of the Social Studies and Social Intervention Research Centre, past President of the Andalusian Sociological Association (2018-2022), and member of COIDESO and CISCOA-Lab (University of Huelva), NaSC-IRG and ILIS (University of Salerno). She holds a PhD in Sociology and a Master of Arts in Political Science and Sociology from the Complutense University of Madrid (Spain). Her recent research has addressed her interest in transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary research in areas as big data, computational sociology, social media, conspiracy theories and hate speech online, migrations, COVID-19, gender issues, and identities [www.eseis.es/estrella]. ORCID: 0000-0003-0220-2135.

Francesca Romana Lenzi, Assistant Professor of Sociology at University of Rome Foro Italico. Doctorate in History and Cultures of Europe awarded by Sapienza University of Rome. Rector delegate for Gender themes and for UniPeace Network, member of CUG. She is the author of more than 80 publications. Between them, 37 articles of which more than 10 included in WoS and SCOPUS database and 6 professional monographs. Research interests: sociological theory and methodology of social research applied to social identity and urban health, social determinants of health vulnerabilities and inequalities, social peripheries. Orcid 0000-0002-3591-6380.

Giuseppe Maiello, Ph.D. et Ph.D., Associate Professor at University of Finance and Administration of Prague. Here he leads the courses of Netnography and Digital Anthropology and Media and Culture. He is author of 5 monographs and more than 80 scientific studies. Actually, he is the Coordinator of the Student project "Massively multiplayer online role-playing game Theory, Study Methods, and Perspectives on Collaboration between Universities and Video game development companies". E-mail: giuseppe.maiello@mail.vsfs.cz. ORCID: 0000-0001-5700-5070.

Giuseppe Masullo, Associate Professor of General Sociology at the University of Salerno. He is Director of the International Lab for Innovative Social Research (ILIS) at the Department of Humanities, Philosophy and Education (University of Salerno) and Research Associate at the Department of Anthropology, Indiana University - Bloomington, Indiana (USA). For roles more closely related to gender studies, he is a member of the steering committee of the Interdepartmental Observatory for Gender Studies and Equal Opportunities (OGEPO) at the University of Salerno and the LGBT Observatory at the University of Naples Federico II. The research focuses on the field of social representations, health and disease, cultural dynamics in care relationships, paying particular attention to situations of disadvantage that arise as a result of the intertwining of conditions of psychological and social vulnerability typical of migration and gender, such as for migrant women employed in care work, and for citizens LGBT foreigners. Other areas of research concern the study of the condition of the young, with particular reference to the cultural models transmitted and the most widespread lifestyles in relation to the dimensions of health, body and sexuality.

Tomislav Potocký, Ph.D. Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences at the University of Finance and Administration, a.s. in Prague, Czech Republic. Doctorate awarded by the Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. Vice-Dean for Pedagogical Affairs at the Faculty of Economic Studies. Research interests: multilingualism, cultural intelligence, democratic theory. ORCID: 0000-0002-3258-398X.

Conference Schedule

08/06/2023

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM - Registration

9:30 AM – 10:00 AM – Conference Center – Virtual Room 1

Institutional Greetings

Giuseppe Maiello – Chief of the Conference, *University of Finance and Administration of Prague (Czech Republic)*

Bohuslava Šenkýřová – Rectrix magnifica of the *University of Finance and Administration of Prague (Czech Republic)*

Giuseppe Masullo – President of the International Lab for Innovative Social Research (ILIS), *University of Salerno (Italy)*

Stefano Tomelleri – President of the Italian Sociological Association (AIS), *University of Bergamo (Italy)*

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10:00 AM – 11:00 AM – Conference Center – Virtual Room 1

Plenary Session

Enrica Amaturo – *University of Naples Federico II (Italy)*

Sonia Stefanizzi – *University of Milan Bicocca (Italy)*

Claudia Santi, Daniele Solvi – *University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli (Italy)*

Anthony Giddens – *London School of Economics (UK)*

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11:00 AM – 11:30 AM – Coffee Break

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11.30 AM – 12.30 PM Conference Center – Virtual Room 1

Lectio Magistralis

The Discursive-Material Knot: Theoretical Reflections about the Dialogues between Discourse Studies and New Materialism

Prof. Nico Carpentier
Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic)

The (academic) discourse on the digital has, over time, swayed from the virtual to the omnipresent, where originally the non-materiality of the digital was emphasized, in juxtaposition with the "real". In contemporary theorizations of the digital, the idea of omnipresence has reversed the analysis, where the digital is now positioned as (almost) beyond the real. These resignifications of the digital are—arguably—part of a broader discussion on the relationship between the realm of the discursive (or representational) and the realm of the material. This floating of the "digital" signifier is an invitation to take a step back, and to use the invitation to reflect about the relationship between the discursive and the material, as this provides an opportunity for theoretical development. The entry point for this reflection is the tension between post-foundationalist discourse theory and new materialism, as both theoretical traditions ground their position in a reflection about the discursive or the material, while still attempting to respectfully integrate the 'other' component in their approach. When integrating these two traditions, a non-hierarchical model of the discursive-material knot can be developed, which allows theorizing the entanglement of the discursive and the material. This model allows for the acknowledgement of both the discursive and the material in social practice, recognizing the structuring and agentic aspects, and the contingent and fixated aspects of both the discursive and the material. The discursive-material knot model offers a novel way to study the digital, approaching it as an assemblage, which entangles discursive and material components, but also emphasizing the specificity and the contingency of the digital, resisting its articulation as all-encompassing reality, but instead positioning the digital as one of the many components of the social, which is an object of incessant political struggles over its discursive and material nature.

Nico Carpentier, Ph.D. is Extraordinary Professor at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, Chief Research Fellow at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (Lithuania) and President of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (2020-2024). Earlier, he was Treasurer (2005-2012) and Vice-President (2008-2012) of the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA), and Treasurer (2012-2016) of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR). His latest monographs are The Discursive-Material Knot: Cyprus in Conflict and Community Media Participation (2017, Peter Lang, New York) and Iconoclastic Controversies: A Photographic Inquiry into Antagonistic Nationalism (2021, Intellect, Bristol).

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12.30 AM – 2.00 PM – Lunch Break

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2:00 PM – 5:00 PM Conference Center – Virtual Room 1

Rethinking the Research Concepts, Objects and Methods in a Digital Society

Chair: Felice Addeo, *University of Salerno (Italy)*

Rethinking Platform Studies: The Ontological and Epistemological Challenges of Researching Platforms and the Case for Reviving Breaching Experiments	**Hossein Derakhshan** *London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)*
Everyday Conversation: The Effect of Asynchronous Communication and Hypercommunication on Daily Interaction and Sociotechnical Systems	**Caitlin Begg** *Harvard University*
An Internet Ethnography Perspective on Investigating the Possibility of AI-Generated Avatars to Reflect Social Identity in Online Communities	**Mariia Titova** *University of Finance and Administration of Prague*
The Role of Social Science in the Digital Era	**Muhamad Supraja** **Odam Artosa** *Gadjah Mada University*
The Esport Phenomenon and its Evolution: A Systematic Literature Review	**Francesca R. Lenzi** **Giuseppe Coppola** **Maria Elena Capuano** *University of Rome Foro Italico* **Vincenzo Esposito** *University of Rome La Sapienza*
Exploring the Reverse Review Bombing Phenomenon: The Hogwarts Legacy Case	**Valentina D'Auria** **Francesco Notari** *University of Salerno* **Eduard Kola** *University of Rome La Sapienza*
Online Research to Capture the Essence of Social Relationships in Digital Society?	**Cleto Corposanto** **Umberto Pagano** **Beba Molinari** *Magna Graecia University of Catanzaro*
Exploring the Role of AI Art Generators in Education: A Visual Content Analysis of Student Work on Purgatory Place and Role in 21st Century	**Jitka Cirklová** *Czech Technical University*

2:00 PM – 5:00 PM Virtual Room 2

Digital Methods and Applications

Chair: Angela Delli Paoli, *University of Salerno (Italy)*

The Method of Digital Ethnography in Research on the Use of Online Health Communities by the Older People in Rural Areas	**Konstantin Galkin** *Sociological Institute of Russian Academy of Science (RAS)*
Netnography in Online Gaming Community	**Alfonso Amendola** **Annachiara Guerra** *University of Salerno*
Videogame Street-Level Bureaucracy: From Virtual to Real Contexts	**Matteo Jacopo Zaterini** *University of Salento*
Excluded. A Digital Ethnographic Investigation on the Femcel Community	**Debora Pizzimenti** *University of Messina* **Assunta Penna** *University of Salerno*
Gamified Societies. For a Critical Analysis of the Gamification Process	**Ilaria Iannuzzi** *University of Rome La Sapienza*
The digital walkthrough: studying the nexus between social characteristics and material technicalities on an healthcare application	**Francesco Amato** **Biagio Aragona** **Mattia De Angelis** *University of Naples Federico II*

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM Conference Center – Virtual Room 1

Digital Research on Health, Migration and Education

Chair: **Francesca Romana Lenzi**, *University of Rome Foro Italico (Italy)* - **Tomislav Potocký**, *University of Finance and Administration of Prague (Czech Republic)*

Stories of Young Immigrant Women under 30: From Humanitarian Corridors to Widespread Reception in Italy	**Alessia Rambelli** *Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan*
The Role of ICT in Teaching Social Sciences in Tertiary Education	**Jitka Cirklová** *University of Finance and Administration of Prague* **Mirela Moldoveanu** *University of Hradec Kralove*
Audiovisual Languages for Health. Case Study on the Representation of Obesity on TikTok	**Vincenzo Esposito** **Ferdinando Iazzetta** *University of Rome La Sapienza* **Ciro De Falco** **Maria Elena Capuano** **Francesca R. Lenzi** *University of Rome Foro Italico*
Performance Management of Programmatic Advertising through Controlling	**Přemysl Písař** **Václav Kupec** *Prague University of Economics and Business* **Zdeněk Brabec** *Technical University of Liberec* **Naděžda Petrů** *University of Finance and Administration of Prague*
Discriminatory and Offensive Language in the Digital Environment Against the LGBTQIA+ Community. An Italian Case Study	**Laura Caroleo** *Magna Graecia University of Catanzaro* **Sara Galli** **Muhammad Javad Jamali** *University of Toronto*

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM Conference Center – Virtual Room 1

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM Virtual Room 2

Digital Methods and Social Media Analysis

Chair: **Brian Joseph Gilley**, *University of Indiana Bloomington (USA)*

Exploring Methodological Challenges of Researching Disability and Social Media in South Africa	**Fabiana Battisti** *University of Rome La Sapienza* **Lorenzo Dalvit** *Rhodes University*
A Multilevel Analysis of the Institutional Trust during the First Two Years of COVID-19 Pandemic in Europe. Does the Digital Economy and Society Index Impact on the Institutional Trust?	**Marco Carradore** *University of Verona*
Researching the Digital Society from a South African Rural Area: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations	**Talenda Chatikobo** **Lorenzo Dalvit** *Rhodes University*
Refused Knowledge Communities as Networked Social Worlds. Translating Shared Knowledge on Health into Two-Mode Networks of Claims and Actors	**Ilenia Picardi** **Marco Serino** *University of Naples Federico II*
Digitalizing Welfare: Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategies for Local Governments	**Giuseppe Luca De Luca Picione** **Lucia Fortini** **Domenico Trezza** *University of Naples Federico II*
Social and Technology Foresight: A Tool for Anticipating Future Scenarios	**Elvira Martini** *Giustino Fortunato University*

09/06/2023

Rethinking Social Research Methods in a Digital Society

Chair: Alessandro Caliandro, *University of Pavia (Italy)*

Enacting Algorithms through Encoding and Decoding Practices	**Riccardo Pronzato** *IULM University*
Exploring Methodological Devices: Understanding the Complexities and Implications of Research Methods	**Paolo Diana** **Giovannipaolo Ferrari** *University of Salerno*
"Difficult Targets" and Remote Focus Interviews: A Methodological Assessment of Anti-vaxxers	**Mariapaola Faggiano** **Antonio Fasanella** **Sergio Mauceri** **Barbara Sonzogni** **Fiorenzo Parziale** **Lorenzo Barbanera** *University of Rome La Sapienza* **Maria Dentale** *National Research Council of Italy (CNR)*
Tracking the Media Audience Research in Poland	**Bogumila Mateja-Jaworska** *Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan*

9:00 AM – 11:30 AM Virtual Room 2

Networks, Communities and Social Life in the Digital Era

Chair: Estrella Gualda, *University de la Huelva (Spain)*

In the Name of God: What is the Interaction of the Evangelicals on Twitter? A Study Report about Social Bubbles	**Lais Santos da Conceição** *Universidade Federal Fluminense – University of Naples Federico II*
Narratives of Solidarity, Outrage and Hatred towards LGTBQI+ People in the Digital Society	**Carolina Rebollo-Diaz** **Estrella Gualda** **Francisco Javier Santos Fernández** **Elena Ruiz Angel** **Patricia Ruiz Angel** *University of Huelva*
The Butterfly Dream. New Unexplored Pathways within the Fashion System	**Michele Varini** *Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan*
Urban Vibrancy in Roma's Neighbourhoods: A Case Study	**Ciro Clemente De Falco** **Francesca Romana Lenzi** **Federico Mari** *University of Rome Foro Italico*
Rethinking Identity and Privacy in the Platform Society	**Rosanna Marino** *University of Naples Federico II*
How Are Smart City Concepts and Dimensions Used? A Geo-Twitter Analysis of Smart Cities in Italy	**Maria Elena Capuano** **Francesco Calicchia** *University of Rome Foro Italico* **Ferdinando Iazzetta** *University of Rome La Sapienza*

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM <u>Virtual Room 1</u>

Rethinking Identity and Citizenship in a Digital Society

Chair: Maria Paola Faggiano, *University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy)*

Simulacral Realities as an Ethical Tool	**Edmondo Grassi** *San Raffaele University of Rome*
Online Generation as a Social Group: To the Question of Age Boundaries	**Roman Smirnov** *Free University of Berlin*
Digital Citizenship: Between Aporias and Meaning. Ethical Perspectives in the Off-Life Society	**Marinella Attinà** **Roberta Izzo** *University of Salerno*
Revisiting Social Institutions and Power Relation in Digital Society: Evaluating Digitalization in India	**Mahmudul Hasan Laskar** **Ankita Sharma** *University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya*
The Reign of the Screen. Adolescent Identity, Digital Media and the Possible Path of Aesthetic Education	**Paola Martino** **Elisabetta Villano** *University of Salerno*
Towards a "Critical Algorithmic Awareness"	**Isabella De Vivo** *University of Rome La Sapienza*
Environmental Activism: An Analysis of the Italian Context	**Ciro Clemente De Falco** *University of Rome Foro Italico* **Caterina Ambrosio** **Roberto Artiaco** **Nicolò Raucci** **Aurora Ventura** *University of Naples Federico II*

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM Virtual Room 2

Digitalized and Digital Methods

Chair: Davide Bennato, *University of Catania (Italy)*

Rethinking Interviews Conventions in Studying Influencers in Digital Societies	**Noha Atef** *Independent Researcher*
Exploring the Use of Digital Communication Technologies for Qualitative Social Research: WeChat and the Italian Migration to Shanghai	**Marco Di Gregorio** *University of Turin* **Pasquale Emanuele De Girolamo** *University of Florence* **Grazia Moffa** *University of Salerno*
Possibility or Barrier? The WeChat Influence on the Chinese Migrants' Integration (Siberian Case)	**Iuliia Koreshkova** *Palacky University*
Does it Really Work? Perception of Reliability of ChatGPT in Daily Use	**Giovanni Giuffrida** **Viviana Condorelli** **Fiorenza Beluzzi** *University of Catania*
TikTok Algorithm's Experience and Awareness. The Case of Algospeak Tactics to Bypass Algorithmic Logics	**Cristiano Felaco** **Francesca Pelliccia** *University of Naples Federico II*
Rethinking Sustainability in the Age of Artificial Intelligence	**Ciro Clemente De Falco** *University of Rome Foro Italico*

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1:30 PM – 2:30 PM Lunch Break

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2:30 PM - 5:00 PM Conference Center – Virtual Room 1

Digital Research on Politics and Communication

Chair: Giuseppe Maiello, *University of Finance and Administration of Prague (Czech Republic)*

Connective Parties during the Pandemic. The Communication Strategy of Podemos in Twitter	**Stefano De Marco** **Rosario Palese** *University of Salamanca* **Juan Antonio Guevara Gil** **Ángela Martínez Torralba** **Celia García-Ceca Sánchez** **Alejandro Echániz Jiménez** *Universidad Complutense de Madrid*
Cognitive Populism and Digital Society	**Stefano Nobile** **Lorenzo Sabetta** **Lorenzo Barbanera** *University of Rome La Sapienza*
Digital Assumptions in Social Movements: A Framing Analysis for the Italian Case of No Tav	**Giuseppe Michele Padricelli** *University of Salerno (Italy)*
Exploring Social Network Usage among Young People: Developing a WhatsApp Addiction Index	**Felice Addeo** **Valentina D'Auria** **Rocco Perrone** *University of Salerno* **Vincenzo Esposito** *University of Rome La Sapienza*
Airbnb Online Experience an Analysis of the Digital Space	**Amalia Caputo** **Vincenzo Laezza** **Simone Paesano** *University of Naples Federico II*
The Construction of the Expert and Public Engagement on Television. Case Study on the Vaccination Campaign in Italy	**Rossana Cataldo** **Gabriella Punziano** *University of Naples Federico II* **Barbara Saracino** *University of Bologna Alma Mater Studiorum* **Ferdinando Iazzetta** *University of Rome La Sapienza*
Measuring *Fabulation* in Russo-Ukrainian War Online Narratives: Conceptualization and Operationalization	**Luigi Giungato** **Olimpia Affuso** **Luciana Taddei** *University of Calabria*

Saltwork Tourism in Italy: A Mixed Methods Application on Tripadvisor Reviews to Detect Paths, Aims and Kind of Tourists and Tourism	**Amalia Caputo** **Gabriella Punziano** **Sabrina Bellafronte** **Angelica Coppola** **Chiara Busiello** **Martina D'Alessandro** **Alessandro Pappalardo** *University of Naples Federico II*

2:30 PM - 5:00 PM Conference Room 106 – Virtual Room 2

Student Workshop: Identity, Gender and Imagination in the Digital Society

Chair: Marianna Coppola, *University of Salerno (Italy)*

From the Routes to the Keyboards: A Cyber Ethnography Analysis of "El Camino de Santiago"	**Valentina Capone** **Martina Prinzo** **Francesca Saporito** **Luana Sibilia** *University of Salerno*
The Woman behind the Disease	**Cristina CitroMaria** **Edera Anna Ferraro** **Federica Giudizioso** **Lucia Potolicchio** **Antonietta Prisco** *University of Salerno*
The Impact of Digital Reality on the Ethical Side of Brand-Customer Communication	**Anastasia Kuznetsova** *University of Finance and Administration of Prague*
The Parental Responsibility of Mothers with Children with Specific Learning Disorders: Between Facilitation and Negationism. A Netnographic Experience in the Italian Panorama	**Carmela Esposito** **Rosamaria Altieri** **Federica Grillo** **Sabrina Notariello** **Anna Barba** **Sonia Sorgente** **Assunta Mozzillo** *University of Salerno*
Far from God, Far from Faith: A Netnographic Study of the Phenomena of Atheism and Agnosticism in Italy	**Antonella Nufrio** **Michela Capuano** *University of Salerno*
The Invisible Intimacy. Relational Dynamics and Couple Support of Women with Vulvodynia: a Nethnographic Inquiry	**Soriano Serena** **Vitiello Michela** **Giovanna Pipola** **Marianna Castaldo** *University of Salerno*
A focus group with MMORPG gamers	**Alexander Murad Babaev** *University of Finance and Administration of Prague*

2:30 PM - 5:00 PM <u>Virtual Room 3</u>

Digital Education

Chair: Giuseppe Masullo, *University of Salerno (Italy)*

The Uses of Digital Technologies in Schools. A Bourdieusian Analysis of Upper-Secondary School Teachers and Students in Rome	**Fiorenzo Parziale** **Maria Paola Faggiano** **Michela Cavagnuolo** **Alfredo Matrella** *University of Rome La Sapienza*
Using Virtual Reality to Train Dialogue Interpreters and Language Mediators in Italy. Reflections on Results of Two Pilot Studies	**Mette Rudvin** *University of Palermo* **Cinzia Spinzi** *University of Bergamo* **Edoardo Di Gennaro** *Independent Scholar*
The Role of Learning Processes in University Inclusion. The Italian Case	**Carlotta Antonelli** *University of Rome La Sapienza*
Self-Assessment Tools and Participatory Techniques. A Zoom on the Dyad "Rubrics" and "Online Focus Groups"	**Antonio Fasanella** **Veronica Lo Presti** **Fabrizio Martire** **Viviana Capozza** *University of Rome La Sapienza* **Maria Dentale** *National Research Council of Italy*

2:30 PM - 5:00 PM Virtual Room 4

Digital Cultures

Chair: Cleto Corposanto, *Magna Graecia University of Catanzaro (Italy)*

Risk, Crisis, Emergency: Changing Cultures in the Digital Society	**Francesca Cubeddu** *University of Rome Three* **Emiliana Mangone** *University of Salerno*
Trans-inter-Mediating Communicative Agencies: Revisiting the Concept of Collective Action in Digital Landscapes	**Lázaro M. Bacallao-Pino** *University of Salamanca*
Theorising Digital Society	**Suchet Kumar** *Rayat Bahra University*
For a Sociology of Art: Dancing Cyborgs between Digital Choreographies and Speculative Horizons	**Linda De Feo** *University of Naples Federico II*
Changes in Schooling: The Impact of Digitalization on PCTO (Work Experience Programs). From Planning to Implementation	**Antonio Fasanella** **Veronica Lo Presti** **Maria Paola Faggiano** **Fiorenzo Parziale** **Michela Cavagnuolo** **Milena Mitrano** *University of Rome La Sapienza* **Maria Dentale** *National Research Council of Italy*

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5:00 PM – 5:30 Coffee Break

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5:30 PM Conference Center – Virtual Room 1

Conclusions

Felice Addeo, Valentina D'Auria – University of Salerno (Italy)
Vincenzo Esposito – University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy)

Exploring Social Network Sage among Young People: Developing a WhatsApp Addiction Index

In recent years, the study of behavioural addictions has increased dramatically (Sixto-Costoya et al., 2021) in the number and variety of topics. Behavioral addiction is not caused by the substance itself but by repetitive behaviours providing short-term pleasure that may turn harmful in the long run and negatively affects other areas of people's daily life. Among behavioural addictions, we can take into account those related to the digital field, for example, gambling, gaming, shopping, watching porn, binge-watching TV series, and above all using social networks (Robbins et al., 2015). About the last, the overuse of social media has been proven to have adverse effects on people's well-being (e.g., Kross et al., 2021). Studies of behavioural addictions associated with the internet and social media have increased in recent years in some academic fields, such as sociology or education. For instance, negative early childhood experiences can have lifelong consequences on individuals and make them more vulnerable than others to developing Internet addiction, particularly if they experienced early traumas, emotional or physical abuses, social isolation, and even if they were massively exposed by parents to the use of the Internet and social media (Dalbudak et al., 2014). Of all the population groups, young people seem to be the most susceptible to the overuse of social media and the most vulnerable at the same time. Based on research findings from a previous explorative study we performed on a no representative sample of Italian users, our study intends to explore and deepen the use of WhatsApp among youngers in their daily life. From a sociological perspective, this study provides an empirical survey aimed at developing and subsequently validating an index for the detection of WhatsApp addiction.

Francesco Amato, Biagio Aragona, Mattia De Angelis - University of Naples Federico II (Italy)

The digital walkthrough: studying the nexus between social characteristics and material technicalities on an healthcare application

In the social sciences, the walkthrough approach is used to identify usability issues in different design settings. Although this approach originates from the field of software development, it has been shown to be applicable in several areas of social research. However, the application of this method still needs to develop a consolidated reference literature.

This article presents a reflection on the application of the walkthrough method to the study of human-machine interaction. In this research, the method consists of three phases. The first phase is a general observation of the platform. This refers to the reference literature on the focused ethnography method to identify relevant aspects for observation.

The second phase is defined by a walkthrough of the platform carried out by the researchers. Through an analysis of the researcher's field notes, a data collection form is created that reports triggers derived from the researchers' observations. In the third phase, a second walkthrough is carried out by a sample of users, who simultaneously complete the data collection form.

In this final phase, the walkthrough and the supplied activities will be carried out by two groups with the same characteristics, one of which will be accompanied by the presence of researchers during the process, while the other will carry it out completely independently. Given the exploratory purpose in which we believe this method can be inserted, this addition is important to understand whether it is possible to carry out this methodological approach without the actual presence of the researcher observing the completion of the data collection form.

To evaluate the effectiveness of this methodological path, a digital service was selected that satisfied three specific characteristics. The first characteristic: the platform must be experienced for the first time by all applicators, given the need to know firsthand the initial interaction with the application, as required by the reference method. The second characteristic: the application is provided by a public institution, is downloadable for free and aimed at citizens. The third: the application allows various actions such as making purchases, finding mobility information, and programming routes. The reference digital environment we have identified is the ATM Milano smartphone application, which provides all public mobility services in the city.

We argue that the methodological path proposed in this article can yield the desired results of a classic walkthrough approach. We believe it is possible to relate the experience in the field of third parties. Furthermore, it is relevant for the emergence of the interactional dimension that develops in the encounter between the individual and the digital environment.

If this formulation of the walkthrough were to prove effective, it could be employed for other exploratory studies on digital platforms and prove interesting if used in mixed-method perspectives applied to research paths that focus on human-machine interaction.

Alfonso Amendola, Annachiara Guerra - University of Salerno (Italy)

Netnography in Online Gaming Community

The goal of our contribution is to propose a reflection - within the cultures of digital consumption - with a precise look at the online communities linked to the world of games. Nodal starting point are the «networked publics» (Varnelis 2008; Boyd 2010; Boccia Artieri 2012), in a changed condition of the audience, by virtue of the techno-socio-cultural practices that have redefined its statute. These are audiences which, in fact, are no longer limited to simply enjoying a content, but participate in the construction of meaning, in the construction of narratives that start from the bottom up (Jenkins et al. 2013). In essence, these are users who «participate in forms of production and distribution elaborated and guided by a driver which is that of the cultural convergence between mainstream media and grassroots conversations» (Boccia Artieri 2012: p.12), combining their own of the media to the languages of everyday life and «using the communicative opportunities that digital media in particular have opened up» (Boccia Artieri 2012: p. 64). The phenomenon relating to the development of online communities that manifest themselves on and through social networks must, in fact, be framed by taking into account the changes that have primarily affected the public. It is also appropriate to take into account the fact that the practices that characterize computer mediated communication (CMC) influence the perception of situations, news, topics. On social networks these mechanisms find space within "online communities" (Kozinets 2010) through which users interact and define their identity, sharing common interests, values, passions which, specifically in our research, we want to identify in the universe of games with particular reference to "Animal Crossing" and "Among Us" that we have identified as a sample to analyze. These are online communities, taken into consideration following the principles of relevance, activity, interactivity, heterogeneity, information richness (Kozinets 2010) and focusing the reflection in the field of netnography (Addeo, Delli Paoli, Masullo 2020; Avallone 2018; Hine 2000).

Carlotta Antonelli - University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy)

The Role of Learning Processes in University Inclusion. The Italian Case

This proposal aims to bring to the academic community's attention the first research outputs of the doctoral thesis project entitled "Universitabile: indagine sull'inclusione universitaria degli studenti con disabilità e DSA nel contesto universitario romano", based, specifically, on the relationship between educational inclusion (Ainscow and Miles, 2009) and ICT (Information and Communication Technology). Starting from a review of the literature on the role of universities as places of inclusion and confrontation with diversity (Bolt and Penketh, 2016; Moriña and Gavira, 2015), the proposal analyses the main inclusion strategies implemented by the three main universities in Rome: La Sapienza, Tor Vergata and Roma Tre. Through a mixed method approach, the contribution analyses the answers to the interviews administered to the operators of the dedicated services, facing the issue of barriers and facilitation mechanisms. In this context, ICT, during the Covid-19 emergency, acted as a facilitator allowing people with disabilities to benefit from distance learning by presenting new perspectives for the realisation and realisation of the learning process, a point that emerges from the voices of the professionals involved as shown in the following extract: "We have young people who have studied and finished their thesis with the tutor from home, sharing the Word file of the thesis in the drive and editing it in real time". In this sense, as Tsatsou (2020) found, the inclusion of people with disabilities can be facilitated by the use of digital technologies. The author emphasises how these help to alleviate stigma in several ways, by:

- assisting in performing daily tasks and overcoming difficulties;
- enabling connection with those who have the same type of disability, increasing their sense of belonging and improving their social integration;
- facilitating processes of self-identification and technology-mediated communication with others.

An idea that can also be found in Valentini (2008), who emphasises how the use of digital technologies is a prerequisite for the development of concrete solutions, these, in fact, "break down boundaries and create a new deterritorialised space that can be accessed by a wider range of users than that represented by traditional students" (ibidem:17). The author goes on saying that deterritorialisation "creates the prerequisites for carrying out actions and accessing services related to didactics and university training from different places: from home, from the workplace, from other centres that do not coincide with the university's seat, such as decentralised poles" (ibid:22). This process is considerably accelerated by the Covid-19 emergency, which provides the basis for rethinking technology in terms of Universal Design, that is "an approach to the design of technologies that pays greater attention to the concept of universal usability: buildings and tools must be conceived, designed and constructed in such a way as to be usable by all" (Fiocco and Martinati, 2002:232). Despite the evidence presented, it is useful to remember that technology if conceived as a facilitator but designed only on the characteristics of able-bodied users, can represent a barrier because, by replacing classic socialisation methods, it risks to become a powerful instrument of exclusion.

Noha Atef – Independent Researcher (Egypt)

Rethinking Interviews Conventions in Studying Influencers in Digital Societies

The formation of different digital societies creates new challenges for researchers, which requires rethinking the conventional research methods and their use. From December 2019 to February 2020, I conducted in-depth interviews with 15 popular YouTube influencers in Egypt, Jordan and the U.A.E to explore the potentiality of collaboration between the influencers and the public entities and civil society. In this paper, I reflect on my experience in studying social media influencers and explain the need to use unconventional methods to study this group and the behaviors that this necessity has produced. The paper suggests that the need to be unconventional, stems from: 1- *Dealing with the imbalance of power*, it is often in favor of the participants, who are "digital elite", "micro-celebrities". Participants would assess the researcher's digital presence before responding, and decide on communication based on their awareness. 2- *Manage a communication crisis with participants* due to cultural and age differences. Social media influencers have a high level of technological knowledge through their extensive use of the Internet. At the same time, some terms sound as jargons to the young influencers, for instance, when a researcher request "an interview" with them is usually understood as a media interview, because this is what they are used to. 3- *Fulfilling research ethics* as some of them cannot be fulfilled using the conventional ways for instance, the usual reward from the researcher and the interviewee cannot be a gift card, because they are making a decent income from social media. The possibility that lack of financial reward was an impediment to recruiting participants. I use some cartoons made particularly to explain my argument, and conclude with raising questions about the ethicality of following 'unconventional' methodological approach, inviting the audience to address in the discussion or joint future work.

Marinella Attinà, Roberta Izzo - University of Salerno (Italy)

Digital Citizenship: Between Aporias and Meaning. Ethical Perspectives in the Off-Life Society

Digital citizenship is a media-morphosis that leads us to reflect in the lights of a thinkable digital optative, which places the subject in formation on the threshold of an a-temporal vitality poised between the on-line paradigm and its next off-life drift. This typically inhuman tendency finds in ethics and education its own semantics of the future, as well as cones of light that allow to build epistemological banks with respect to the phenomenon of the digital divide, which places political-social-limes between a gold tension and a bronze-silver stasis of today's educational culture. In this sense, since the broadband society advances (per)formative requests capable of interacting with the image of Luttwak's Turbo Capitalism (Luttwak, 1998), with the search for 'unfindable paideias' (Acone, 2004) and with the antinomies of the pedagogical reason (Pagano, 2012) that characterize our elusive contemporaneity, it seems necessary to identify solid ontological principles and statutes that can re-configure themselves as a driving dimension of a digital citizenship that is able to trace its own ubi consistam in the remote, but next, alveolus of values. It is not possible, in fact, in the current cultural climate, to linger, to be suspended or stop (Attinà & Martino, 2016) at an antinomic crossroads that, settling on an insidious and monolithic versus culture, obscures a viable and desirable critical-hermeneutic dimension capable of conceptualizing a humanism in loop that allows us to glimpse a possible and clear source to draw from by facing an improbable desert of values. Therefore, through a rapid analysis aimed at re-designing the labyrinthine nomothetic lines of citizenship, an attempt will be made, in the course of these notes, to fathom the pedagogical horizons within which it is still possible to place the faded faces -which have become profiles today- of many virtual-nautae who pursue and weave the harnessed educational networks. Consequently, the aims will be to trace the thinkable routes of an education that, moving away from bottlenecks and merely technical traps, in a swirling digital crossing, is able to land on that happy island of on-life, orienting its sails towards an ethical north that allows the educator to bend the stormy algorithmic winds. Thus, ethics and meaning will be the roots of a master tree that will allow to cultivate and nourish an education, in Deweyan sense, far from a moral adiaphoria and that, considering a blind obedience to pseudo regulative principles, puts before and appeals to a form of citizenship that is able to answer for what one is not, strictly speaking, responsible.

Lázaro M. Bacallao-Pino - University of Salamanca (Spain)

Trans-inter-Mediating Communicative Agencies: Revisiting the Concept of Collective Action in Digital Landscapes

Social movements have become core socio-political agents in contemporary societies, a process that has implied the emergence of new research topics for social sciences. A particular aspect of these analytical challenges is the appropriations –understood as a complex and dual process in which the objective and the subjective dimensions are articulated, i.e uses and associations of meaning– of ICTs by social movements, given the relevance and the particular importance of the communicative dimension for these collective agents. The growing importance of social movements and the development of ICTs can be considered two parallel processes since the last decades of the 20th century. This paper aims to analyse how the appropriations of ICTs, in particular social media, by social movements have re-configured the processes and dynamics of collective action in two senses: on the one hand, within social movements, given the emergence of new communicative repertoires of collective action, and, on the other hand, in the interrelationships between social movements and institutional political processes and structures of representative democracy. Based on a systematic literature review of scientific articles that have analysed the appropriations of social media by different episodes of collective action worldwide –from the Arab Spring, to the Spanish 15M and OccupyWallStreet, from the Mexican #YoSoy132 to Gezi Park protests in Turkey and BlackLivesMatter–, we try to identify and examine the main lines and trends followed by these processes of appropriations, and their consequences for the staging of mobilisations, both online and offline, to the point of raising the need to rethink and reformulated the very notion of collective action, based on its transformation in the digital environment, particularly the so-called Web 2.0 and in social media. In this systematic literature review we have found some interesting theoretical proposals to name these new forms of collective action, based on the role played by ICTs in general and particularly by social media on it: viral politics and insurgencies (B. Arditi), connective action (W. Lance Bennett and A. Segerberg) or "open-source" protest model (F. Lee). Based on our analysis of previous studies we propose to go one step further and understand the digitalisation of collective action as a complex and multidimensional process, signed by the articulation of, on the one hand, the expansion of the repertoires of collective action given the inclusion of new communicative ones –such as virtual "sit-ins" or mass emailing–, and, on the other hand, the emergence of new interrelationships between digitalised collective action and instituted politics, given the revisions of the borders between the "inside" and the "outside" of social movements, due to a blurring between articulation and visibility that leads to simultaneous articulating visibilities and visibilising articulations, and complementing real virtuality and virtual reality (M. Castells). As a consequence, these digitalised social agents become trans-inter-mediating communicative agencies that, as indicated by the notion itself, provides a more fluid, flexible and reflexive perspective –showing the tensions and dualities of "being neither here nor there"– about the interrelationships between instituting collective action and instituted politics in digitalised contemporary societies.

Fabiana Battisti - University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy)
Lorenzo Dalvit - Rhodes University (South Africa)

Exploring Methodological Challenges of Researching Disability and Social Media in South Africa

In South Africa, profound inequalities along race, gender, socio-economic status etc. inherited from the colonial and apartheid past are reproduced online. Because of its intersectional character, multi-faceted nature and intimate intertwining with other socio-cultural aspects, disability represents an interesting dimension to explore such inequalities. Consistent with current theoretical understandings, disability is conceptualised as a discursive construct with a focus on the emic perspective, voice and experience. The present paper seeks to investigate the specific methodological challenges associated with researching social media (self)representations by people with disabilities in a multi-cultural, post-colonial and profoundly unequal context. The process of identifying and analysing 100 purposively selected social media texts (e.g., Youtube videos, Instagram or Facebook posts, tweets etc.) highlighted several issues.

First, social media users with disabilities tend to be members of a relative elite who have internalised western attitudes and worldviews, shaping their own conceptions of disability. While South Africa boasts one of the highest Internet penetration rates in Africa, social media access and use depend to a large extent on one's race, gender, socio-economic status and other dimensions intersecting with disability. South Africans with disabilities account for an estimated 7.5 to 12.5% of the population but the vast majority are severely underrepresented in the digital domain and, as a result, in social media research.

A second issue stems from the Eurocentric conception of disability as a discrete and homogeneous epistemological category. Unlike all-encompassing terms such as gender, age, race etc., the very word "disability" implies an exception to the "norm". Such exceptional positionality is often a matter of degrees and does not necessarily imply a commonality of perspective, experience or even interests among people with different disabilities. As a result of algorithmic bias, people whose disability conforms to Western imaginary and stereotypes (e.g., users of wheelchairs) tend to top the result of searches using disability as a keyword, despite accounting for a relatively small percentage of South Africans with disabilities. By contrast, people with invisible disabilities are almost impossible to identify through a web search, even when disability-specific keywords are used.

A third issue pertains to linguistic and cultural differences in referring to and understanding disability. For example, the word isidalwa in isiXhosa, one of the most widely spoken among the nine official African languages, can be translated as "someone who was created" and bears no semantic relationship with what an individual can or cannot do. Furthermore, traditional beliefs may determine whether a disability can be disclosed and whether it is indeed recognised as a disability at all. For example, several conditions which Western medicine categorises as disabilities could be interpreted as calls by one's ancestors (e.g., to perform a ceremony or become a traditional healer) within some African belief systems.

The three issues outlined above are illustrated by specific examples resulting from a systematic and rigorous analysis of quantitative as well as qualitative data.

Caitlin Begg - Harvard University

Everyday Conversation: The Effect of Asynchronous Communication and Hypercommunication on Daily Interaction and Sociotechnical Systems

Technology's effect on social systems begins with its impact on conversation. Digital communication often leads to difficulty in interpreting tones and intentions as compared to in-person conversation (Begg 2016). Using a year of in-depth theoretical research, ~78+ in depth interviews, and survey data, I analyze the effect of asynchronous communication and hypercommunication on sociotechnical systems and daily interaction. The theoretical component of this work centers around both American and French sociological texts from the 1940s to 2020s, mainly within three categories: everyday life and its alienation under capitalism; conversation trends over time viewed through a socio-technical lens; and community building viewed through a symbolic interactionist lens. Findings link changes in conversation patterns to the alienation of everyday life under technocapitalism, and I theorize that a lack of unmediated experiences in everyday life prevents meaningful connection through conversation its traditional form. This experiential deficit can lead to negative effects in personal and professional relationships, as well as to a large-scale erosion of community and collective solidarity. The internet, social media, and cell phones play a large part in this crisis of community present in modern-day communication, although I theorize that détournement of everyday communication at scale could change this. This research seeks not only to expand upon conversation and technology theories, but also to leverage qualitative data to provide a potential blueprint for increasing satisfaction and alignment in sociotechnical systems and everyday conversation — in part through what I refer to as "progression to analog".

Francesco Calicchia, Maria ElenaCapuano - University of Rome Foro Italico (Italy)
Ferdinando Iazzetta - University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy)

How are Smart City Concepts and Dimensions Used? A Geo-Twitter Analysis of Smart Cities in Italy

"Modernity has not freed us from nature, rather it has extended the spatial and temporal dimensions of our interaction and co-evolution with nature". Norgaard (1997)

Spatial analysis has long since become the subject of study of various disciplines, not only geographical, engineering, urban, but also sociological. The spread of technologies and the various benefits and risks they bring have allowed sociology to move towards a construction that is not only conceptual but also aims at design and research. The approach to 'urban issues', as defined by Castells (1974), have become an increasing object of study, especially with the advancement of smart cities or better known as smart cities. The possibility of being able to imagine a smart city today is increasingly common not only for large cities but also for small ones. "Indeed, 'harnessing' clean energy is one of the privileges that is chosen both in terms of costs and benefits as they increasingly make cities 'smart'. Various sociologists such as Giddens and Beck have already analysed the 'risk society', explaining risk according to the social, economic and political changes in the contexts in which it manifests itself, dwelling on the political implications and conflicts it generates. Beck and Giddens, supported by Bauman, Castel and Lash, have highlighted the emergence of the process of 'individualisation' in today's society. This generates a privatised subjectivity that is increasingly disengaged both from collective affiliations and from a 'public' place of reference capable of interpreting and providing meaning to individual projects. As a consequence of individualisation there is therefore a privatisation of the conditions of life, removed from the domain of state policies and public decisions. The individual wants to find private answers to problems that are socially produced and that deserve, by their nature, a collective solution. Even today, 'smart city' concepts and technologies are few if any. Just think of the relationship between the perception and use of smart city technologies and concepts. Although smart cities want to establish a dialogue with their citizens, bridging needs and co-existence processes between government and citizens, the opinions and concepts that are present online and especially on social media, seem to be controversial. This study aims to analyse how smart city concepts and technologies are perceived by the Italian population. In particular, it wants to create a social media listening method, through Twitter data mining. The methodology, therefore, would use an approach related to the analysis of social media, thus carrying out a Geo-Twitter in the Italian context. This would make it possible to carry out a descriptive content and systematic analysis of the territory capable of providing a perception and use of the Smart City concept relative to the Italian population.

Valentina Capone, Martina Prinzo, Francesca Saporito, Luana Sibilia - University of Salerno (Italy)

From the Routes to the Keyboards: A Cyber Ethnography Analysis of "El Camino de Santiago"

Although it dates back to the 9th century, even to this day "el Camino de Santiago" - known as "the Pilgrimage of Compostela" or "the Way of St. James" - is one of the routes (spiritually or not) embarked upon by the highest number of pilgrims all around the world. Its history, in fact, has inevitably fueled the myth of this Camino as a path of inestimable spiritual and cultural value, helping to shape the image and the meaning that people now attribute to it.

Given these premises, this research aims to understand, analyse and interpret the most important dynamics and the main reasons why people decide to take this Camino - focusing both on the influence that society has on individuals and, obviously, on the cyberspace used as context within which this choice is made and possible.

Thanks to the results and the analysis of the posts of the Facebook group examined, it is clear - first of all - which are the main causes that lead an individual to start the Pilgrimage of Compostela. Moreover, during the semi-participant observation of the community, it became evident how this Pilgrimage also enlightens the process of gender self-determination.

Starting from what can be considered as a real epiphanic moment, we tried to find a connection between the decision to take this journey and the adherence (or not) to the female gender types created by the society; these fundamenta divisionis led us to 4 ideal types of female subjects in the community examined.

Amalia Caputo, Gabriella Punziano, Sabrina Bellafronte, Chiara Busiello, Angelica Coppola, Martina D'Alessandro, Alessandro Pappalardo - University of Naples Federico II (Italy)

Saltwork Tourism in Italy: A Mixed Methods Application on Tripadvisor Reviews to Detect Paths, Aims and Kind of Tourists and Tourism

Sustainable tourism is gradually gaining interest and attractiveness as a theme in contemporary society, as it aims to reduce the environmental, social and economic impact of tourism on the destinations visited, ensuring its long-term sustainability. It seeks to balance the satisfaction of tourists with the preservation of nature, the protection of cultural heritage and the promotion of the local economy. In this mind some studies are being conducted on a new type of sustainable tourism, saltwork tourism. Starting from these premises, a study was conducted on saltwork tourism in Italy, with the twofold objective of investigating and understanding the phenomenon in its entirety, offering a temporal and spatial overview of the evolution that has taken place, and enriching the literature on the subject by identifying saltwork as a sustainable tourist destination, profiling and surveying routes, purposes and specific characterizations of places, tourists and modes of use. This is a study on secondary web data extracted from the Tripadvisor website; the unit is the cultural product and the 'data' is the review. If the first objective of this work is covered by the analysis of the time series data, the second is focused on the content analysis of the reviews that refer to the travel experience of tourists who visited the saltwork in Italy in the period between January 2010 and July 2021. The research uses the Mixed Methods methodology, which allowed the integration of a quantitative and a qualitative objective. To achieve this integration, the sequential explanatory research design was chosen. It starts with a quantitative research phase from the results of which a qualitative research follow-up is developed, with the aim of deepening the first results obtained with subsequent ones.

The starting point of the research process was to reconstruct the phenomenon starting from the global context and then delving into the national context through a longitudinal and spatial study. Subsequently, a two-way analysis of variance was carried out on the variables considered significant for the inclusion of this type of tourism in the aforementioned category. To enrich the quantitative research, a thematic qualitative analysis was then conducted using content analysis and sentiment analysis as support. Three main results were found: the first is that the temporal trend of saltwork tourism in Italy is a summer seasonal trend; the most popular saltwork fall within the definition of sustainable tourism and tourists prefer traditional experiences; finally, the negative reviews of the experiences are related to the disorganization of the visited tourist site.

The final part of the research a critical reading of the results obtained and methods applied was provided - highlighting the limitations and potential of the research and techniques used - and further insights and policy directions were provided. The research, therefore, synthesized the theoretical assumptions of sustainable tourism from an integration perspective and at the same time allowed itself to be guided by the suggestions from the data, having as its interest the study of an evaluative product that moves from a real-world experience into the digital.

Amalia Caputo, Vincenzo Laezza, Simone Paesano - University of Naples Federico II (Italy)

Airbnb Online Experience: An Analysis of the Digital Space

The contribution intends to present the results of empirical research aimed at exploring the transposition of guided tours into the digital environment. The topic is from a sociological point of view particularly relevant as, like other phenomena, it entails important changes in the tourism industry and highlights new potentials of the tourism industry (Reichstein & Härting, 2018). The starting point for the observation is to understand how the physical location of a user's origin influences the choice of a certain experience, trying to observe whether the distance from the places where these digital experiences are set can condition the choice. The study seeks to highlight the main elements of similarity and dissimilarity between experiences and which factors are most frequently perceived by users. The field of investigation, the AirBnB online experience, given the innovative and complex aspects of the phenomenon, it was decided to use a Mixed Methods approach. To begin with, a dataset of the entirety of the Airbnb online experience on the platform up to July 2021 was collected, containing 9388 reviews on 24 different experiences. Subsequently, with the desire to make the proposal clear in this new line of research, it was chosen to reason in terms of distancing from an existing classification; in this way, it is possible to identify the model advanced here, according to the classification proposed by Cresswell & Plano Clark (2011), in a variant of a sequential explanatory follow-up design (Amaturo & Punziano, 2016). The substantial differences that are proposed can be traced back to two moments of the analysis: the first is the data collection, which in this case is concomitant; the second is the predominance given to the qualitative method with the desire to address inconsistent results (Sprague & Zimmerman, 2004). On this basis, we started with a Correspondence Analysis with the dual purpose of studying the latent structure of the association between two qualitative variables and identifying the sample useful in the next steps. In the next step, the intention was to identify and explain the elements of similarity and dissimilarity between the groups of territorial aggregation, identifying the motivations that direct the choice of a digital experience; we then proceeded with the content analysis and digital ethnography of the reviews of 16 experiences present on the Airbnb portal. From the integration of the results that emerged from the use of qualitative techniques, in particular from digital ethnography, it emerges that the creators prefer to focus on a theme and the activities connected to it, rather than emphasizing the place of the experience; furthermore, the content analysis observed a polarization of user preferences towards westernized and less westernized experiences, evidence also identified on the level of correspondence analysis. The conclusion reached is that for the users of this new way of doing tourism, the theme of the experience is central.

Laura Caroleo - Magna Graecia University, Catanzaro (Italy)
Sara Galli, Mohammad Javad Jamali - University of Toronto (Canada)

Discriminatory and Offensive Language in the Digital Environment Against the LGBTQIA+ Community. An Italian Case Study

As Ludwig Wittgenstein stated, "the limits of my language are the limits of my world" (1922). Hence the words used by individuals can define their view of society. In the last decade, scholars have discussed how to make the Italian language more inclusive in debates involving native speakers beyond the academic community. The exchanges among users on online platforms such as Tik Tok and Instagram have generated many linguistic threads. There are many forums that exhibit hate-speech patterns aimed at members of the LGBTQIA+ community. With a record 35 percent increase in the number of users in Italy since 2018 (Statista 2022), these platforms can serve as a resource abundant in the number of tokens to be studied to glimpse contemporary Italian society.

This research investigates the social discourse around online hate speech in Italy, focusing on using offensive words against the LGBTQIA+ community and how people use these terms when participating in public policy debates.

Online hate speech has become a significant concern in many countries, potentially harming individuals, damaging social cohesion, and undermining democracy (Chouliaraki, 2010; Weinstein, 2017; Bilewicz and Soral, 2020; Gozined, Rico et Sarikakis, 2022). Many empirical studies have been undertaken to understand how much hate speech and denigratory words can impact different communities (Döring et Mohseni, 2020; Ortega-Sánchez,Blanch, et. al., 2021; Trappolin, 2021; Castaño-Pulgarín, et. al, 2021).

Through digital methods (Rogers, 2013; Delli Polli & Masullo, 2022) and data analysis, launching four research queries, the goal of this study is to map and track the use of offensive words on Instagram and TikTok, analyzing the networks of co-hashtags, content, top URLs and users to see how these platforms present their content differently but with some common characteristics.

Marco Carradore - University of Verona (Italy)

A Multilevel Analysis of the Institutional Trust During the First two Years of COVID-19 Pandemic in Europe. Does the Digital Economy and Society Index Impact on the Institutional Trust?

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted many aspects of daily life stimulating the debate on the role of social capital in response to it. Many studies have explained the impact of social capital on health outcome and its contribution to outbreak response, but a limited number of researchers have instead focused on the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on social capital.

This research bridges this gap by examining the role of the pandemic on institutional trust, a specific aspect (according to some scholars) of social capital, in the first and second years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To achieve this objective, two multilevel models, one for the year 2020 and another for the year 2021, the first of two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, were applied to identify the effect that the independent variables have on institutional trust. At the individual level, over the demographic features, the use of the internet as the predictive variable was considered; while at the country level, the percent-positive rate, the rate of deaths from COVID-19 and the Digital Economy and Society Index **(**DESI) were investigated. DESI is an index that monitoring the European countries digital performances, tracking the EU countries progress in digital competitiveness. The total number of individuals included in the analysis was 26.681 for the year 2020 and 27.409 for the year 2021, all citizens of one of the 27 European countries. The data used come from the Eurobarometer 93.1 (2020) and the Eurobarometer 94.3 (2021).

The first results achieved show that the country of residence has a different impact on institutional trust; as well as that some socio-demographic features increase trust in the institutions. Being female of high social class, for example, increases social capital more than being male of low class. Among the contextual variables considered is the satisfaction with the measure taken to fight the pandemic by the national government that has a strong statistically significant effect. The DESI index shows a significant statistical relation with the dependent variable, but its effect is not relevant.

Rosanna Cataldo. Gabriella Punziano - University of Naples Federico II (Italy)
Barbara Saracino - University of Bologna Alma Mater Studiorum (Italy)
Ferdinando Iazzetta - University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy)

The Construction of the Expert and Public Engagement on Television. Case Study on the Vaccination Campaign in Italy

Since the first COVID-19 infections were recorded in January 2020, the relationship between science and communication has become strong again, playing a key role in providing citizens with information and guidance on how to deal with the pandemic. The unprecedented level of involvement of scientific experts in media coverage and the exposure of the public to the experts' advice is remarkable, and unlike in other countries (Metcalfe et al., 2020), in Italy a plurality of perspectives with different expertise has emerged to the point of opening and shaping that crisis in the emergency on the public and institutional communication front. Overall, the media exposure to the pandemic crisis has led different scholars to emphasize the task of scientists in the communication process and the challenges included, thus underlining how in times of pandemic the role of expertise and the scientist becomes increasingly crucial not only in the academic debate (Algan et al., 2021). All this has reinforced the authority and key social role of scientists and science communication in society and in guiding public debate (Scamuzzi, Tipaldo 2015).

In The Visible Scientists (1977), Rae Goodell shows how the role of scientific experts in public communication has become increasingly central due to changes in the media landscape and the dynamics between science and society (Maasen and Weingart, 2005; Cheng et al., 2008; Bucchi and Trench, 2014). With the symbolic launch of Vaccine Day, the role of science communication experts proved useful in effectively promoting interventions both in support of vaccination choices through the mass media (Casiday R., 2007) and in response to instances of misinformation ready to cause social alarm (Diekema SD, 2012).

Considering the perspective of studies between science and society, the interest is to investigate the construction of the figure of the expert and scientific communication during the vaccination campaign on the main Italian television networks. Specifically, we intend to analyze the contents produced from 1/10/2020 to 30/10/2021 by monitoring with the keywords (expert/scianziat/vaccin) all the in-depth programs of the main Italian generalist networks: Rai1, Rai2, Rai3, Rete4, Canale5, Italia1 and La7.

The research questions from which the project starts are:

- How much and how did the experts communicate? What kind of strategy did they use? Which themes prevail, in salient terms, in the conversations produced by the various media? How does the construction of the scientist persona take place?
- How do alternative versions of the official scientific narrative filter into television programs?
- Is there evidence of conflict within the scientific community in the various conversations?

The empirical investigation will return useful results to understand how the public's engagement with science is increasingly shaped, defining the depth of expert communication, the type of strategic models and associated arguments, and trying to frame the problems that public communication has been confronted with.

Talenda Chatikobo, Lorenzo Davit - Rhodes University (South Africa)

Researching the Digital Society from a South African Rural Area: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

South Africa boasts one of the highest Internet penetrations on the African continent. Alongside hyperconnected metropolitan centres, the country is characterised by largely underdeveloped peri-urban and rural areas where the majority of the population lives. In the present paper, we focus on Dwesa, a marginalised rural area on the Wild Coast of the former homeland of Transkei.

For almost a decade and a half, the area has been the site of an intensive, multi-disciplinary and longitudinal ICT-for-development project called the Siyakhula Living Lab. Experiences in the deployment of ICT infrastructure, digital literacy training and co-development of e-services are documented in over 200 publications. Consistent with the established Western scholarly tradition, in the literature emanating from the SLL digital inequalities are often understood in terms of deficit of access, skills or accruing benefits. Alternatively, a more nuanced understanding considers how ICT supports different forms of social capital. Methodological approaches vary depending on disciplinary viewpoints. Within the social sciences component of the project, these include relying on established methods such as surveys, interviews and focus groups. As the project draws to a close due to lack of funding, key stakeholders moving away and the aftermath of travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to reflect on the theoretical and methodological challenges of conducting research in a deeply rural and socio-economically marginalised context. Through a critical review of purposively sampled publications, complemented by in-depth interviews with members of the Dwesa community, we problematise the predominantly Eurocentric orientation of the SLL project. An alternative decolonial perspective

based on the work of scholars such as Walter Mignolo, Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Nelson Maldonado Torres highlights the limitations and possible pitfalls of an unconditionally cyberoptimist and technologically-deterministic approach. At the methodological level, a decolonial orientation called for a shift away from extractive data collection methods. Through narrative accounts, we sought to reduce power dynamics between researchers and participants and elicit a truly emic perspective on how digital inclusion or exclusion is experienced by members of the local community. Findings suggest a complex and nuanced understanding of how global power dynamics, often serving the interests of multinational corporations located in the West, play out at the local level.

Jitka Cirklová - Czech Technical University (Czech Republic)

Exploring the Role of AI Art Generators in Education: A Visual Content Analysis of Student Work on Purgatory Place and Role in the 21st Century

This study investigates the impact of using AI art generators in the context of STEAM education, specifically among students of Architecture and Urban Planning. Our goal is to understand how the integration of AI art generators in seminars and practical exercises can foster the development of diverse competencies and enhance creativity and innovation among students. The research method used in this study is based on a combination of visual content analysis, participant observation, and netnography, following the integrated framework for visual social research and the Living Lab research concept. Our participants were students of Aesthetics and Sociology, who worked together to create both physical and digital exhibitions as part of their coursework. As part of their practical exercises, all students used AI art generators, which allowed them to develop knowledge and skills in both technical and social sciences areas. The theme of the coursework was "Ideas about the Form and Social Function of Purgatory in the 21st Century," which served as a unifying topic for the development of complex thinking and HOT skills. Our findings demonstrate that the integration of AI art generators in STEAM education can effectively support the development of diverse competencies, including creative problem-solving, interdisciplinary collaboration, and critical thinking. By providing students with the opportunity to work with cutting-edge technologies, we can encourage them to think beyond disciplinary boundaries and to explore new forms of expression.

Moreover, our study contributes to the ongoing discussion about the role of the humanities and the arts in the digital age. As Castells (2012) and Gerbaudo (2017) have argued, the digital condition and the new cognitive ecology offer unprecedented opportunities for connectivity and collaboration among diverse fields of knowledge. Establishing a political cosmology and ecology for the digital transition emerges as a new task of critical thought, a fundamental epistemic, cultural, and creative task of the humanities and the arts in the 21st century. In conclusion, this study provides insights into the potential of AI art generators in the context of STEAM education and highlights the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to learning. We believe that the integration of cutting-edge technologies in education can provide students with the tools they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world and can help to foster a more diverse, innovative, and creative workforce while emphasizing the critical role of the humanities and the arts.

Cristina Citro, Maria Edera, Anna Ferraro, Federica Giudizioso, Lucia Potolicchio, Antonietta Prisco – University of Salerno (Italy)

The Woman behind the Disease

Breast cancer is a potentially serious disease if it is not detected and treated in time. It is a tissue formation consisted of cells that grow uncontrollably and abnormally within the mammary gland, which mutate into malignant cells going to invade surrounding tissues and, over time, even certain organs further away.

Beginning with the sociological literature that frames this illness as a metaphor, highlighting the processes of stigmatization that characterize it, the research examines the Facebook group "Senologia e prevenzione del tumore al seno", in which there are women who compare against the same disease.

Netnographic studies will consider the resilience strategies implemented by women which are in coping with this illness, the metaphors used to describe it, as well as the purposes of the community as a place within which the underlying meaning of the disease is produced, to the extent that such a culture allows women to escape from the burden of social stigmatization suffered in the offline environment, and to prevent to a reinterpretation of themselves and the biographical moment experienced.

Cleto Corposanto, Umberto Pagano, Beba Molinari - Magna Graecia University of Catanzaro (Italy)

Online Research to Capture the Essence of Social Relationships in Digital Society?

Aspects of quantifying information, even the most ordinary information related to everyday life, surround our lives. We are immersed in the use of digital technology, from gamification to food suggestions to monitoring well-being between sleep and wakefulness. The increasingly pervasive use of geolocation can be found within devices of all kinds, from smartwatches to tag devices that can be linked to a particular object and/or person in real time. While such pervasiveness enhances a seemingly greater confidence of being able to know where to find an object or person, it also creates an unimaginable amount of information that we are increasingly learning to use for search purposes.

The article aims to explore the new forms of inquiry that have emerged in recent years with the advent of Web 4.0, from geolocation to gamification via online purchasing preferences, etc. Especially given the fact that in the field of research methodology we have moved from using so-called traditional tools to using new forms of online analysis, are we really sure that this shift has taken place consciously with its own epistemological status? The methodology of social research is a composite and in some ways fragmented reality, there are those who believe in the quantitative method, those who believe in the qualitative and those who believe in the mixed method, today we must therefore also add e-methods and the whole world of algorithms, without forgetting the recent artificial intelligence. At this particular historical moment, it is necessary to reflect on the general background framework of research methodology and question between traditional and digital methods focusing on new problems and new opportunities from an etymological and epistemological point of view.

Francesca Cubeddu - University of Rome Three (Italy)
Emiliana Mangone - University of Salerno (Italy)

Risk, Crisis, Emergency: Changing Cultures in the Digital Society

Risk, crisis, emergency have characterised and characterise the social system, changing its evolutionary processes and its socio-cultural and organisational dimension, even more so in a society in which information is largely conveyed by digital systems and social channels. Three distinct concepts that refer to very specific events, but which are also culturally constructed by promoting actions, practices and processes typical of the society in which they take place. These are concepts in which in the analysis of events it is possible to observe that there is a first common element: uncertainty. In uncertainty, risk as well as crisis and emergency find their condition of existence. Dissolving uncertainty requires an awareness of events and an awareness dictated by the knowledge possessed by each individual. An awareness that can lead to the resolution or mitigation of multiple problems or amplify them both scientifically and politically.

In the contemporary temporal dimension, one does not only observe risk (arising from nature or human action), but also the social and cultural impacts generated by crises or emergencies that may ensue (e.g. the economic crisis or the Covid-19 health emergency). These are events that entail a socio-cultural change that, in turn, is triggered by the population's responses on the basis of the social perception of the same events, also conveyed by the different forms of communication. If the concept of risk, in fact, has characterised societies since the end of the 1990s, in our contemporary society cultures of crisis and emergency assume, perhaps, greater relevance than risk in the light of the new phenomena that are being recorded (see the case of the pandemic). In this contribution we wish to highlight how today we cannot only speak of a culture of risk but also of a culture of crisis and emergency. Starting from the definitional problem of these concepts, cases will be brought to support the reflections with which to explain and interpret the socio-cultural and communicational dynamics and perspectives.

Valentina D'Auria, Francesco Notari - University of Salerno (Italy)
Eduard Kola - University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy)

Exploring the Reverse Review Bombing Phenomenon: The Hogwarts Legacy Case

With the proliferation of the Internet and social platforms, we have witnessed the birth and spontaneous spread of online groups formed by users connected by common interests or passions (such as gaming, reading, etc.). While belonging to a particular group can trigger a positive mechanism in terms of sociability and identity reinforcement, it can also lead to members becoming rigidly attached to the same opinions and the emergence of shared visions (Howard & Magee, 2013). The term for this phenomenon is echo chambers and refers to the tendency of users to prefer content that most closely aligns with their beliefs (Jamieson & Cappella, 2008). Social networks thus become echo chambers where individualism and radicalism are prevalent (O'Hara & Stevens, 2015). Digital contexts, which are the result of complex social dynamics, thus become structures that can collapse due to phenomena such as manipulation of public opinion, online bullying, etc. (Huberman, 2010). Our work focuses on the "digital collapse" phenomenon caused by one or more events that generate public outrage and criticism on social media, which is called "shitstorm" (Sutherland, Coddington, Sellnow, 2016). This occurs mainly through posts, comments, or tweets that spread quickly on a social network to express disapproval. This phenomenon, comparable to boycotting, can have significant consequences for the individuals or organizations involved. One of the shapes of shitstorms is review bombing, a form of online protest in which a large number of users post negative reviews to influence the reputation of the offending object (Çiflikli, 2020). However, this phenomenon can have unexpected consequences: while it can be an effective way of expressing dissent, it can also harm the reputation of users who support the boycott by triggering reactions from the fan base felt under attack in the media and ultimately polarizing public opinion, which often has opposite effects (Hogg, Vliek, Child & Walker, 2020). Our investigation is based on an exploration of these social dynamics and it focuses on one of the most recent attempts at a shitstorm in the gaming world. It was used by some LGBTQ+ communities some days before the Hogwarts Legacy official release date, as the author of the Harry Potter books, J.K. Rowling, had previously made some transphobic remarks. Due to a lot of Twitter posts inciting gamers to boycott the game by posting negative reviews, a shitstorm was created. To investigate the phenomenon, after a content analysis of the tweets that triggered the shitstorm, the review platform Metacritic.com was selected, from which the reviews of Hogwarts Legacy were extracted on all the platforms where it was published. Through content analysis and sentiment analysis, the most emerging themes were explored. The result of this campaign was, paradoxically, a reverse review bombing made of positive reviews, which probably had a positive effect on the game's visibility.

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Caterina Ambrosio, Roberto Artiaco, Nicolò Raucci, Aurora Ventura – University of Naples Federico II (Italy)

Environmental Activism: An Analysis of the Italian Context

This study was conducted in the context of political participation, and it investigates the phenomenon of environmental activism in Italy. In recent years, environmental activism has been in the limelight: the impact of climate change has expanded the pool of activists and discussions on environmental issues (Cody et al., 2015). This theme is included in the broad debate on activism and its declinations. Indeed, over the past 20 years, a new type of activism has been developed that uses digital infrastructure to foster change and achieve political, social, and other goals (George & Leidner, 2018).

The goal of this study is to explore the phenomenon of environmental activism by specifically examining the relationship between online and offline activism. It is relevant to clarify how online and offline activism have equal status in this study (Sivitanides & Shah, 2011). The hypothesis on which it is based is that the level of commitment (George & Leidner, 2018) and concern for specific environmental issues are conditioned by residence in a particular area (Stedman, 2002) and socio-anagraphic characteristics (Schradie, 2018). The framework that supports the analysis of the phenomenon is the one proposed by Milbrath in 1965 and later reworked by George and Leidner in 2019, who studied political participation, respectively offline and online (Milbrath, 1965) (George & Leidner, 2018). The approach used for the methodology is standard (Marradi, 1984): the data collection tool was a web-survey (Veltri, 2019), posted on the main social networks and filled out by 946 users, living in Italy, during the period from June 2022 to January 2023. The web survey proved to be a useful tool for analyzing individual actions taken by people (George & Leidner, 2018), giving us a general overview of the state of activism in Italy. Moreover, it was also useful for making methodological reflections on the limitations and potential offered to us by using digital tools.

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Rethinking Sustainability in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Among the most relevant transformations that have affected contemporary society is the one in which algorithms and, more generally, artificial intelligence (AI) are the protagonists. These socio-technical tools find applications in fields ranging from public institutions through the economy to the everyday lives of people, thus influencing multiple phenomena. In recent years, the topic of sustainable development has become central to the public discourse and national and international planning. The UN definition of sustainability is the 'satisfaction of the needs of the present generation without compromising those of the future generation', and to achieve this it has drawn up the 2030 Agenda. The pervasiveness and relevance of AI mean that it can be either a facilitator or an obstacle to sustainable development. In an article in Nature, Vinuesa et al. (2020) highlighted how AI can both facilitate the achievement of sustainable development goals and pose a threat to almost half of the goals set out in the agenda. The importance of AI in contemporary society requires a redefinition or, at any rate, a recalibration of the concept of sustainable development to 'protect' those areas that have become particularly sensitive with its pervasive diffusion, such as that of privacy, which is not directly mentioned by any of the 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda. Accordingly, the UN in 2017 issued a 'Guidance note on big data for achievement of the 2030 Agenda,' entitled 'Data privacy, ethics and protection.' Therefore, the focus on the role of AI in achieving sustainability should be accompanied by a reflection on how the concept of sustainability is transformed when it is related to AI. Therefore, the work proposed here aims to discuss how and on what dimensions the concept of sustainability changes in an AI society.

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Urban Vibrancy in Roma's Neighbourhoods: A Case Study

In the era of the data revolution (Kitchin, 2014), the availability of new data and sources makes it possible to study social phenomena in an innovative manner. The increasing availability of geo-localized data, in particular, has made it possible to jointly analyze two dimensions previously considered incompatible, such as the online and offline world (De Falco et al., 2021). With different approaches (De Falco et al., 2022), the study of urban phenomena has thus found a new life: the classical concepts of urban studies, such as urban vibrancy (Humphrey, 2020) can be analyzed more effectively. Urban Vibrancy refers to a dynamic phenomenon concerning the variety, intensity, and distribution of human activities in urban areas. Urban vibrancy is influenced by spatial characteristics, such as attractiveness, liveability, and safety. Because the absence of urban vibrancy might be an indicator of urban degradation, from the perspective of building efficient smart cities, understanding it is fundamental for policymakers to better manage urban space. Analyzing urban vibrancy through traditional sources is difficult because the dynamic nature of the phenomenon requires data sources that are constantly updated and have high levels of granularity. These data are represented by multisource urban sensing data, a type of big data that enables the study of urban territories. The aim of this work is to analyze the level of urban vibracy of Roma's neighborhoods and to investigate its relationship with their morphological and socioeconomic characteristics. Rome is an interesting case study due to the complexity of its territory characterized by non-existent borders and trans-territorial communities (Lenzi et al., 2021)

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For a Sociology of Art: Dancing Cyborgs between Digital Choreographies and Speculative Horizons

Human creativity records and throws again the dynamics of social transformations. It expresses itself into poetics that must be costantly interpreted. These poetics exhort us to think of the complex relationship between narrative fields, techno-communicative mutations and epistemological frontiers. The paper will focus on the analysis of the mirroring between the creative parable traced by contemporary digital choreographies and the speculative horizon. Object of the reflection will be some significant segments of imaginary, conceivable as transpositions into choreutical acts of theoretical assumptions. These theories can be intended as *narrations* of the present and of the future, particularly careful in the interpretation of the structural processes. It will attempt to demonstrate how by the actual acceleration of the computational power in the area of the simulation and in the area of the perceptual reorientation, the intersection between the spectacular domain and the conceptual one produces an extension of the operative field of the dance. Like a lot of forms of narrative, the terpsichorean art is increasingly acquiring a heuristic valence. The dancers destined to inhabit the mathematized space of digital descriptions incarnate the connection between the political experience - meaning the latter term in its noble etymological significance - and the sociomorphic representation of the human body. The protagonists of the works examined represent on *aesthetic* level the sense-informational *métissage* realized by the process of cybernatization of the human being, reflect the suspension of the semantic duality between biology and technique, interpret therefore the chimerical reconfiguration of the statute of contemporary identity. The dancing cyborgs are metaphors of an inexorable ontological shift. They reformulate traditional mythological semantism and loads it with valences suggested by scientific thought, redesigning ancient choreographies and continuing to match the "catastrophic" thrusts of historical change.

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Digitalizing Welfare: Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategies for Local Governments

This contribution is part of the broader debate on "rethinking" welfare services and how they can be improved through the use of digital technologies (Frennert, 2018; Hansen et al., 2018; Visentin, 2019). As such, it aims to provide an analysis of the challenges and opportunities facing local governments in this context. In recent years, the application of digital technologies has become increasingly widespread in the field of welfare, transforming the way services are delivered and improving citizens' quality of life. At the same time, local governments are facing new challenges in providing welfare services that meet the needs of their communities (Frennert 2019, Manzini 2023). In this scenario, the digitalization of territorial welfare is seen as a way to address these challenges and create new opportunities to better serve citizens. Digitization of services also responds to the difficult challenge of increasing the rate of user take-up, that is, reaching everyone in need and facilitating their participation in the service.

The objective of this contribution is to analyze how Social Territorial Areas, i.e., the main local actors of services, are responding to these challenges. The contribution aims to explore the use of social media by Social Territorial Areas of Campania Region to promote welfare services and improve communication with citizens. The objectives, strategies, and communication activities on social media will be analyzed, evaluating the impact and relevance of these activities for user participation. Aspects related to privacy and data security will also be considered, essential to ensure citizens' protection in the use of digital platforms. Through the analysis of case studies and emerging best practices, the contribution aims to provide an overview of the state-of-the-art of territorial welfare digitalization and provide useful insights for local governments and sector operators to develop effective digitalization strategies for welfare services and communication on social media. In this way, the contribution aims to contribute to the creation of a more efficient and inclusive territorial welfare system, capable of meeting the needs of citizens and improving their quality of life.

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Connective Parties During the Pandemic. The Communication Strategy of Podemos in Twitter

Connective parties were originated as the response to the citizens inclinations towards the shared decision making and horizontality. To accomplish that, they delegate part of their organization to online tools on the net. In this research we study if those connective parties actually represent an innovation in terms of political representation. Thus, we observe – on an external level - the communicative manners of the connective party Podemos in comparison with four parties which hold the higher representation in the Spanish congress during the state of alarm in Spain due to the COVID19 pandemic. To this end, we measure the interactions and responses rate of the deputies in Twitter to the interpellations of the users and we determine if these are higher according to the message impact on the net or when it comes to users with greater influence and communicative power. Our results show that the external communication patterns of Podemos correspond to a vertical criterion in terms of communication which is typical of traditional parties.

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Towards a "Critical Algorithmic Awareness"

A context such as social media, characterized by informality, low cognitive investment, and salience of self-presentation motivation [Pennycook & Rand, 2020], encourages superficial information processing and the formation of judgments easily influenced by emotional reactions and automatic cognitive biases. Such biases and cognitive stereotypes are embedded in the natural learning process, which, however, are drastically amplified by the algorithms underlying the attention market. Thus, on the hand, the rationality of communication in the platform ecosystem is called into question by well-known phenomena which play with emotions and passions in the perception of reality, according to the principles of gamification and "emotionalization" (Sorice 2019) on the other hand new studies, such as AGCOM's inquiries in the Italian context, attest to not only how disinformation exploits emotional circuits, but also the so called 'motivated rational reasoning' in which biases are given by a previous social 'misperception', which may be the straight consequence of profiling based on so-called "data relationships." (Couldry, Meijas 2019): structured relations that allow the "natural" conversion of everyday life into a stream of data. Thus, an interdisciplinary perspective able to embrace the recent advances in cognitive science is a crucial step in the analysis of the new perceptive constraints that underlie the inner workings of digital platforms. Given the striking role of platform affordances in everyday sense-making processes, we believe that beginning with the study of users' awareness of the algorithmic inner working is essential. Most users could still miss the fact that there is no objectivity in the realm of personalization algorithms, and that they embody specific forms of power and authority. The processes of categorization, and their outputs are far from being neutral and may incorporate socio-cultural biases, resulting in new forms of "data-cognitive authorities", as well as data-discriminations. Minimizing biases in data sets and, algorithm decisions is indeed a multidimensional challenge that cannot be achieved through technological solutions alone. Therefore, we consider it a priority to recognize algorithmic profiling systems as socio-economic constructs: technologies embedded in organizations with their own fundamental goals, values, and freedoms, able to modify interactions with the human/economic/social environment in which they operate. Recognizing their performative role is a precondition for outlining new trajectories toward the development of a general, multilevel theory, which may contribute to a broader and shared understanding of the "quantification" of everyday life in data relation, and its truly impact on the reshaping of social reality. Therefore, starting from the inter-disciplinary critical framework- partly known as Critical Algorithmic Studies (Airoldi, 2021, Zajko 2021), the objective of this working paper will be, firstly, to provide a synoptic overview of the main findings of the most recent investigations in this field, secondly, to discuss innovative research directions for the development of a general sociological theory of algorithms along the three directions -arisen from the literature review- to:

A. Contextualize the algorithm from the study of the hidden social worlds behind the machine.
B. Historicize the technology.
C. Investigate the human-machine interaction.

We will then proceed to the mapping and advancement of empirical studies in the field of cognitive science with the objective of contributing to a 'critical pedagogical approach' (Markham, 2019), based on self-reflexivity, as a first step toward building "critical data literacy" capable of unveiling the 'hidden curriculum' connected to data positivism (Mertala, 2021).

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Rethinking Platform Studies: The Ontological and Epistemological Challenges of Researching Platforms and the Case for Reviving Breaching Experiments

Platforms are now mainly studied through algorithms. This entails major ontological and epistemological challenges.

Algorithms are hyper-modulatory, invisible, and inextricable and thus very elusive to study:

o Hypr-modulation: Unlike older objects of media studies such as films, news, songs, photographs, novels, tv shows, etc.), algorithms do not have a fixed textuality. Thus, any empirical attempt at studying them face validity issues. For example, a film's audience view the same film but interprets it in differently. But an Instagram's timeline is almost unique to each user at a specific time and space. No user or researcher can experience (or swim) in the same algorithmic flow twice. Thus, individual accounts algorithms are always multiple. Using the film analogy, it will be as if participants have each watched a different film while the researcher assumes they have watched the same film.

o Invisibility: Platforms are becoming infrastructures of sociality, then by definition, they and their algorithms are largely invisible to their everyday users.

o Inextricability: Algorithms are tightly interwoven with one another, the platform's core, and user data, and cannot be experienced in isolation from other aspects. This inextricability can make it challenging to isolate and analyze individual algorithmic processes. Drawing a parallel with films, just as people experience movies as a whole, the complex elements of directing, logistics, cinematography, set and costume design, acting, and more are deeply intertwined and difficult to separate for examination.

Therefore, I propose a different ontology and epistemology for studying platforms.

o Platforms are complex figurations with multiple, modulating, multisided, interdependent, and intermeshed processes. Instead of algorithms, I propose to study the two core processes embedded in platform figuration, instead of the concept of algorithms.

o Platforms have two parallel core processes: datafication and personalization.

Datafication consists of surveillance and categorization in the present time.

Surveillance is linking human life to digits, resulting in a relation which is called data and I call life-digits.

Categorization is linking these life-digits (data) to each other.

Personalization consists of prediction and fragmentation and is oriented to the future.

Prediction is to reconfigure the links between life-digits, orienting them to future.

Fragmentation is linking digits back to life.

Platform figuration			
(Present) Datafication		*(Future)* Personalization	
Surveillance	Categorization	Prediction	Fragmentation
Life→Digits (Data)	*Data→Data*	*Data→Other Data*	*Digits→Life*

Figure 1 – Proposed model for platform figuration and its embedded processes

A new epistemology of platforms is needed to address the three challenges above. That's why, I propose, breaching experiments to be utilized to tackle hyper-modulation, invisibility, and inextricability of platform processes.

Breaching experiments were developed by Garfinkel and inspired by Shutz, to generate 'disorganized interaction' in order to know 'how the structures of everyday activities are ordinarily and routinely produced and maintained' (1967, p. 36).

These are not experiments in the scientific sense, but are 'demonstrations' of how can the 'unnoticed seens' of everyday life, or what Schutz calls the 'world known in common and taken for granted', be rediscovered—' reflections through which the strangeness of an obstinately familiar world can be detected' (Schutz, 1996, quoted in Garfinkel, 1967, p. 36-38).

For example, an audience research about the everyday user experience of Instagram feed will be enriched if core aspects of that experience are disrupted, e.g. if participants are given a random stranger's account to use for a few months.

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Pasquale Emanuele De Girolamo - University of Florence (Italy)
Grazia Moffa – University of Salerno (Italy)

Exploring the Use of Digital Communication Technologies for Qualitative Social Research: WeChat and the Italian Migration to Shanghai

The growing popularity and widespread use of digital communication technologies have opened up new opportunities for social research. In recent years, researchers have begun to explore the potential of messaging apps and social media as tools for qualitative research. These apps offer a unique opportunity to study social phenomena in real time and gain insights into the digital worlds of the communities studied. This paper focuses on the use of digital communication technologies, in particular messaging apps and social media, as tools for qualitative research. We address the question of how these tools can be used to study social phenomena in real time and provide insights into the communities studied. The paper opens with a brief analysis of the results of research on Italian migration in Shanghai, conducted with qualitative analysis techniques and promoted by the Documentation Centre on New Migrations of the University of Salerno (Ce.Do.M-UNISA). Next, it focuses on some key aspects that characterise the methodological choice of using WeChat, the most widely used messaging app in China, as a research tool. Next, it examines the advantages found in using WeChat for our research in China. In this regard, it points out that WeChat, first of all, allowed researchers to create an informal and comfortable environment for frequent and real-time feedback, facilitating communication. Secondly, the ability to obtain the personal phone number or WeChat ID of key informants made a remote sampling strategy possible at no cost. Furthermore, the use of instant audio and text messaging allowed researchers to communicate asynchronously across different time zones. However, the paper also highlights the practical and ethical challenges of using WeChat as a research tool. The sheer volume and diversity of material obtained through the app can be overwhelming and requires careful consideration of how best to manage it for research purposes. In the concluding section, the paper offers some final considerations on the use of digital communication technologies for social research. In particular, it emphasises the importance of adapting research methods to the specific needs and circumstances of the case study in order to better engage research subjects and obtain more in-depth and insightful data.

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Exploring Methodological Devices: Understanding the Complexities and Implications of Research Methods

This paper explores the concept of methodological devices, which refers to the material objects and immaterial ideas that come together to configure ways of conducting social research. Methodological devices, like other devices, 'do things' and are linked to the relationship between method and object, as they constitute each other. The term acknowledges that social research methods are not only sociocultural artifacts but also work to 'make up' and may profoundly influence the phenomena they set out to study. Therefore, a methodological device can be viewed as an assemblage of material artifacts, human users, practices, ideas, and spaces that is constantly subject to change. Such devices are not only methods for research but also themselves may be viewed as objects of analysis. It is challenging to disentangle the distinctions between object, subject, and technique of research, and the focus of inquiry into methodological devices is not only on how appropriate, accurate, or ethical they are for various purposes, but also on their potentialities, capacities, and limitations, how they configure the objects they are attempting to study and measure, and how they serve political purposes. This paper highlights the importance of considering methodological devices as complex assemblages that are constantly subject to change and that possess a social life of their own. It emphasizes that these devices should be examined not only for their technical appropriateness but also for their political implications and how they configure the objects of study. The paper argues that understanding the potentialities, capacities, and limitations of methodological devices is crucial for making informed decisions about research methods and for critically examining the social and political implications of research practices. By exploring the concept of methodological devices, this paper aims to contribute to ongoing discussions about the role of research methods in shaping our understanding of the social world. In conclusion, this paper provides a novel and critical perspective on the concept of methodological devices, highlighting the importance of viewing them as complex assemblages that are subject to change and possess a social life of their own. It argues that understanding the potentialities, capacities, and limitations of methodological devices is crucial for making informed decisions about research methods and for critically examining the social and political implications of research practices. This paper contributes to the ongoing discussions about the role of research methods in shaping our understanding of the social world and suggests that further research is needed to fully explore the complex relationship between methodological devices and the objects of study they seek to understand.

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The Parental Responsibility of Mothers with Children with Specific Learning Disorders: Between Facilitation and Negationism. A Netnographic Experience in the Italian Panorama.

In the last few years, the focus on health has significantly increased in human science studies, in particular in the study of sociology that has always been analyzing the dynamics of society managing to grasp its own changing nature and those who are part of it. In this sense, health is seen as a factor of social change that affects individual and collective well-being. The sociology of health, in particular, argues that pathologies are related to the same societies, which not only "certify" them, but also define their symptoms and the subsequent treatments. In other words, pathologies would exist in the light of the society in which they manifest themselves, according to the dominant mental patterns and interpretative models. It is therefore society itself that defines the concept of normality, meant in a closely statistical sense as the most frequent condition of the population, which affects the perception and the popular imagination. Referring to this/In this regard there are many peculiarities associated with different issues that, not reaching the socially acceptable standards, are identified with the concept of diversity. The creation of categories inevitably causes discrimination against all those who turn out to be different from the majority, with the consequent setting up of abilist actions by the so-called "able-bodied". Subjects with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) suffer similar discrimination, as they are disorders based on neurobiological dysfunctions that interfere with the normal process of acquiring reading, writing and calculation skills, distinguishing itself, depending on impaired abilities, in dyslexia, disortography, dysgraphia and dyscalculia. It is important and necessary to underline that, unlike other disorders emerging during the developmental age, the specific characteristics of SLD come out only after that the social environment has placed the subject face those activities that bring out his real capabilities/skills. Consequently, the communication of a diagnosis to a family system can represent a moment of strong change/impact for the social dynamics, as it affects both the personal sphere, relating to the role of the parent itself and the expectation of normativity towards his own child, and the public sphere relating to the extra-family relationships. Since the family is the first agent of a socialization that is then reflected in the society, the ways in which both parents exercise their parental responsibility are decisive. In particular, this article focuses on the maternal role with the aim of investigating the psychological and social reactions that mothers have towards the certified disorders of their children and the use of online communities as a context in which to discuss, to inquire and to confront each other. The socio-psychological study has been conducted with an exploratory purpose following the dictates of netnographic research, concerning a qualitative method that transposes the techniques of ethnographic research for the study of physical communities to the study of virtual contexts, online communities and the web society. The research analysis carried out allowed to analyze and interpret the opinions and perceptions of a Facebook group created and joined by parents with SLD children, allowing the identification of the reasons why mothers log into online communities and identify four types of parental profiles resulting from the intersection of two central dimensions identified by this survey (such as benevolent ability and the type of parental responsibility).

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"Difficult Targets" and Remote Focus Interviews: A Methodological Assessment of Anti-Vaxxers

Recent studies centering on the portion of the population known as Anti-vaxxers have brought to light the complexity of decisional mechanisms connected with the choice of refusing vaccines (distrust in the process of vaccine production, fear of unexpected side effects, ideological aversion, etc.). This proposal wishes to discuss the main results of a qualitative investigation focalized on the theme of vaccine hesitancy, tackled on the basis of a large number of "remotely" conducted focus interviews (Merton, Kendall, 1948; Merton, Fiske, Kendall, 1956). This work's primary objective is that of carrying out a methodological evaluation through which the strengths and weaknesses of the investigation tools employed may be clarified, in consideration of both the reference participants, as well as the online transposition of interactions which are traditionally actualized in person. Focusing attention on the study subjects (so called Anti-vaxxers), the selection of the interview participants followed a complex research protocol: 1. the realization of a web panel survey (two survey rounds: spring 2020/spring 2021) has allowed for the identification of three Anti-vaxxer motivational profiles: a. deniers/trivializers; b. skeptical-apprehensive; c. compelled to submit to the Covid-19 vaccine (234 completed files in timeframes 1 and 2); 2. the subjects reached through the survey were newly contacted, as per their availability to a second interview, expressed after their completion of the second questionnaire, with a view to performing - between November 2022 and April 2023, aiming for quotas of equal numeric substance - 96 focus interviews (structured topics, associated with a flexible, non-directive style of interview); 3. one year later, only a portion of said subjects confirmed their effective availability for the purpose of the actualization of focus interviews. Based on the useful and valuable reports gleaned from those cases originally involved in the third survey round (approx. 30) - balancing out the examples attributable to the three aforementioned social types, and in due consideration of the interior distribution in terms of age range and level of education within each type (variables which emerged as particularly discriminatory during quantitative data analyses) -, a second section of cases was brought in in great numbers. The focus interviews - carried out remotely, on a digital platform - represent the empirical base from which multiple and significant methodological observations became achievable. The online context in which they took place (evidently "inhabited" by expert interviewers), and more effectively than a face-to-face communication flow on such a delicate and socially divisive topic, had a positive impact on the established ambience, it broadened its geographical reach, and fruitfully affected the fidelity of the collected information. As a preview of some of the surfaced insights, some of the advantages include: many of the participants reached, by virtue of the intercession of their screens, expressed their opinion on the vaccination campaign in a particularly spontaneous, uninhibited and truthful manner, they dwelled on the conduct adopted during the pandemic (even when "far from socially desirable"), as well as on attitudes and emotional states attributable to dimensions like contagion, civic responsibility towards those close to them, the social consequences of refusing the vaccine (dynamics of social exclusion, for example), their relationship with the traditional science of medicine and the establishment by and large. Equally complex is the spectrum of disadvantages, among which are the lack of consent by some subjects to audio-video recording of the interview, the pronounced reluctance to discuss personal problems on part of those participants less accustomed to the use of digital devices, or those who appeared to be visibly uncomfortable before a screen.

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Changes in Schooling: The Impact of Digitalization on PCTO (Work Experience Programs). From Planning to Implementation

Faced with the Covid-19 national emergency, the considerable resort to information and communication technology (ICT) has played a key role in the process of schools' digital transition, affecting the learning environment, redesigning the boundaries of space and time, modifying communication and socialization processes, and incentivizing the transference of transversal digital literacy and media education skills. The implementation of learning connected environments within the curricular and extra-curricular academic system, has profoundly innovated the configuration of the learning and professional orientation activities of students engaged in PCTOs (Work Experience programs). In particular, on account of the hefty recourse to ICT, schools were able to both aim at the broadening and consolidation of wide synergistic networks of collaboration with the world of businesses, and to a richer and more complex PCTO training offer, within which immersive on the job experiences found room, starting with hybrid modes of participation. Observations on the effects of the digital shift on academic planning of PCTOs (Work Experience programs) also characterized the research activities undertaken by a group of scholars from Rome's Sapienza University, with reference to the Research Project of National Interest (PRIN) "Evaluating the School-Work Alternance: a longitudinal study in Italian upper secondary schools". The research team had the opportunity of accessing a complex empirical base comprising 249 PCTOs (AY 2021/2022), uploaded by 78 Italian upper secondary schools - identified as traditional gymnasiums, technical and vocational institutes - on a digital platform specially dedicated to the storage of materials (it is a sample appropriately selected on a typological basis). Content analysis as a survey carried out on the complete texts of the projects of the selected schools yielded highly significant results, which lead one to dwell on the topic of innovative academic planning of PCTOs, with a view to the future of schooling. Recourse to e-learning (on a more general level, in hybrid modalities of organization of activities) has allowed those schools promoting the projects, besides the possibility of safeguarding foreplanned activities during the height of the emergency, to broaden the scope and the engagement of students in PCTOs, developing modalities and alternative criteria for planning and for the transference of competencies compared to the traditional paths of internships. The results of the technical analysis carried out on academic projects have also prompted hypotheses and research paths to valorize the role played by diverse academic courses of study (considering the distinction between traditional curricula, technical institutes and vocational institutes) on the innovation connected with PCTOs. In particular, technical institutes, the custodians, as it were, of the rotation between school and work, seemed to promote professionalizing projects, actualized through the traditional course of internships, while traditional high schools maximally invested in digital innovation (consider PCTOs hosted by cultural enterprises equipped to actualize training activities on digital servers). Conversely, professional institutes placed themselves halfway, by engaging students on the job, and by planning solutions like simulated training tasks. Finally, the analysis of the rich empirical base, has allowed for an overall assessment regarding the impact of digitalization on PCTOs, and to systematically identify the highlights and specters: on the one hand, are opportunities and inputs for fruitful transformations, on the other, extensive risks, including the depletion of content/human relations, and the debasement of the original PCTO objectives.

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Maria Dentale - National Research Council of Italy (CNR)

Self-Assessment Tools and Participatory Techniques. A Zoom on the Dyad "Rubrics" and "Online Focus Groups"

In the methodologies for evaluation the use of rubrics as a specific tool for competences assessment (Cortoni & Lo Presti, 2018) is supported by a wide research tradition, especially in the pedagogical field, that has circumscribed their application within dynamic learning contexts (Davidson, 2005; Benvenuto et al, 2011; Grion & Serbati, 2017; Mc Tighe & Ferrara, 2021). In didactic-educational environments, the administration of self-assessment rubrics can accompany and assist the learning process of students, stimulating in them the acquisition of critical self-reflection skills and drawing attention to those fields of experience that are traditionally connected to the teacher's evaluative sphere (performance assessment, learning tasks, innovative teaching processes, etc.) (Dawson, 2015). In the research The Social Impact Assessment of Distance Learning after Covid-19, promoted and funded by Sapienza University of Rome, combining tools for competences self-assessment (rubrics) and participatory research techniques (focus groups) has been particularly fruitful since it has made possible to meet the objective of raising students' awareness on the educational, relational and social potentials experienced and gained during Distance Leaning (DL) and Blended Learning (BL). In this research a total of 31 online focus groups were conducted involving 154 students aged 14-19 from 7 different schools in Rome. The self-assessment rubric administered during the focus groups is composed by 14 indicators of learning, enucleated in three specific dimensions referable to: personal attributes, process and context. On the practical-operational level, students were asked to place their level of learning on each rubric indicator having available a range of scores from 0 to 5, that is from a minimum to a maximum of experience/competence gained. The scoring system generated by the rubric has made possible on the one hand to reflect on the perceived level of competencies, on the other hand it has made possible to investigate more deeply the meaning of the items in the rubric and the impact of the DL/BL period on them. The rubric was therefore a stimulus to help students discuss the main changes regarding: i. learning styles; ii. leisure activities; iii. relationships with classmates and teachers. Combined with online participatory techniques, rubrics have maintained their nature as a non-reactive tool (Ametrano, Callaway & Stickel, 2001). In particular, the dialogic dimension generated by the focus group has made possible to neutralize the distorting effects associated with the concept of performance, preventing respondents from providing answers conditioned by social desirability (i.e. the tendency to give high scores on the scale). This has made possible to focus the discussion on specific aspects of the individual's experience, making the scoring process more closely aligned with the lived experience.

Cristiano Felaco, Francesca Pelliccia - University of Naples Federico II (Italy)

TikTok Algorithm's Experience and Awareness. The Case of Algospeak Tactics to Bypass Algorithmic Logics.

Algorithms are part of everyday life and govern the selection, classification, and presentation of information and communication on the internet, impacting the perceptions and behaviors of people (Kitchin, 2017; Droguel et al., 2020). Algorithms are implemented to decide how web search results must be displayed, how must be curated news feeds, or affect users' preferences by recommending music or movie on media consumption platforms (Gillispie, 2013; Milano et al., 2020); and they are also used for regulatory purposes for the management of public services (Aragona & Felaco, 2020), such as policing, health care, social benefit, or education. This paper focuses strictly on algorithmic awareness of TikTok users, and specifically to what extent it may define and affect user-algorithm interplay. In this regard, we discuss the content moderation mechanisms adopted by Tik Tok, on the one hand, and the strategies devised by users to counter them, on the other. In the case in point, we deal with what is named Algospeak, such as code words or expressions that social media users adopt in order to avoid content moderation systems or bypass the censorship and filters that platforms apply. We adopted a quantitative approach by using an online survey; and made a TikTok video to recruit users to join to research. The final sample consists of 200 TikTok users. The questionnaire is composed of three main sections: use of the TikTok platform, awareness, and knowledge about TikTok algorithm functioning and Algospeak strategies, and direct/indirect experiences with the content moderation system of Tik Tok. We performed a statistical multidimensional analysis intending. The main results show different user profiles regarding the levels of algorithm awareness and ways of using TikTok, how users deal with the moderation system, and when and to what extent they use Algospeak tactics for bypassing the moderation system of TikTok.

Konstantin Galkin – Sociological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences RAS (Russian Federation)

The Method of Digital Ethnography in Research on the Use of Online Health Communities by the Older People in Rural Areas

In the report, when considering the integration of older people into online health communities, I resort to considering the role of such communities in the lives of older people. This study contributes to the study of the possibilities and limitations of online communities for older people with chronic diseases living in rural areas. For older people with chronic diseases, such communities can serve as communities for communication, that is, those communities where communication is possible, which is often not enough for older people living in peripheral settlements.

Online health communities are initiatives that develop from private providers to treat illnesses. The stated purpose of such a service is to provide a platform for discussing various issues regarding the disease and health, as well as problems regarding disease treatment and obtaining alternatives.

In the study I employ two methods:

1) narrative interviews with older people;

2) digital ethnography in an online health community focusing on older peoples' postings. The method of narrative interviews is the main one in the study, while the method of digital ethnography is an additional method. I use these methods to consider comprehensively the communication and interaction of older people in online health communities. This article analyzes 35 biographical interviews with study participants. The study participants are older people living in rural areas. All older people had various chronic diseases. The age range of informants is from 65 to 88 years. The older individuals who participated in the study had devices that provided access to the Internet. Ten people used personal computers, and 25 people used smartphones. A total of 21 women and 14 men participated in the study. All the respondents lived alone in the villages constantly, but some had relatives who visited them during the summer.

The importance of such communities is determined by the fact that it is often difficult for an older person in peripheral settlements due to remoteness to get the necessary advice or recommendation from a doctor, and communication in online health communities and medical forums contributes to obtaining such advice, which is important in the treatment of the disease. Based on the studied groups of older people, conclusions are drawn and various strategies for using online health communities are typified. In particular, three strategies are identified: the communication strategy, the user strategy and the monitoring strategy. For each of them, the features of the use of online health communities are outlined, as well as the role of such communities in everyday life. Thus, the use and monitoring strategy are characterized by the fact that users — older people — are integrated mainly into online health communities for communication and interaction, while for representatives of the communication strategy, the most significant is the use of online health communities as a communicative platform for discussing various problems existing within rural life and health, and also for therapeutic communication.

Giovanni Giuffrida, Viviana Condorelli, Fiorenza Beluzzi - University of Catania (Italy)

Does it Really Work? Perception of Reliability of ChatGPT in Daily Use

How do individuals discriminate between what is human-made and what is produced by AI? Despite OpenAI mission "to ensure that artificial intelligence (AI) benefits humanity" (OpenAI, 2023a)., their cutting-edge technology, namely ChatGPT spans several questions about its widespread use in many areas, from education (Rudolph, Tan, Tan, 2023) to medicine (Kitamura, 2023), from everyday use (Chomsky, Roberts, Watumull, 2023) to scientific research (van Dis, Bollen, et al., 2023). ChatGPT is an AI language model based on LGAIMs algorithm, able to define itself as a "highly sophisticated tool for processing and generating human language, using neural network architecture, statistical and machine learning techniques, with a capacity for understanding and expressing complex ideas and concepts". The aim of this contribution (RQ) is to highlight whether users (with no specific knowledge in the field of AI) are able to distinguish between texts produced by ChatGPT and texts produced by humans, and more specifically (RQ2) whether there is a significant correlation between the perception of authoritativeness and trustworthiness and attribution of the text to AI. Our hypothesis (HQ) is that current ChatGPT technology is capable of producing texts with a linguistic accuracy that makes them indistinguishable from those produced by human beings, but, (HQ2) when there are trivially false sentences within the text, subjects are significantly likely to believe that the sentence has been made by a human rather than an AI. In order to verify the hypothesis and answer the research question will be conducted a controlled experiment, using qualitative methods, on about 70 individuals, freshmen of a bachelor course in political science. The experiment will be hold in a controlled setting and consists in different phases. One survey will be submitted at the beginning, halfway, and at the end of the experiment, in order to test the sample's general knowledge, perception, enthusiasm and reliability about ChatGPT, and how they change throughout the experiment. The students will be asked then to read various short text (with different complexity and topic) and try to recognize which are human generated and which AI generated. In a second row, the experiment will be repeated, but texts trivially false will be inserted inside, texts produced again by both ChatGPT and humans. Then, they will have a short time to experience ChatGPT in a freely way to get first impressions of use.

If the "the real challenge - as it has always been - is to understand the potential of new tools to augment our existing capabilities in order to get better innovation results. Doing so can be tricky because these tools are not always what they appear to be" (Euchner, 2023), understanding how people expect these new technologies to work and how they use them to find answers to their problems could say a lot about the future we are already building.

Luigi Giungato, Luciana Taddei, Olimpia Affuso - University of Calabria (Italy)

Measuring Fabulation in Russo-Ukrainian War Online Narratives: Conceptualization and Operationalization

The narratives of the Russian-Ukrainian war involve independent reporters, analysts, and commentators not directly affiliated with traditional news. Such disintermediated narrators use their social accounts – mainly YouTube, Telegram, and Instagram – to broadcast their content (Boyte, 2017; Stolze, 2022; Maathuis & Kerkhof, 2023). Starting from Lyotard and Turner's (1979; 1982) and Benjamin's (1936) perspective, the contribution aims to conduct a new theoretical-methodological definition of the concept of fabulation (Jedlowski, 2022), as well as to assess the possibility of its use in the sociology of communication, as an exploratory paradigm in the study of today's information wars (Libicki, 1995; Arquilla, Ronfeldt, 1999; Rid, 2022). To this end, a preliminary critical itinerary in the scientific literature will be undertaken: from Bergson (1932) through Deleuze (1985) to arrive, finally, at Paolo Jedlowski's proposal (2022). Jedlowski indicates two narrative tensions that animate the narrator in fabula: (1) enriching reality (fabulation), (2) documenting reality (testimony). These two possibilities, however, far from being mutually exclusive, coexist in the same story, albeit to varying degrees. Operationally defining fabulation can give social scientists a new instrument to evaluate online war narratives and discern testimony from fabula, emancipating from the classical dichotomy of true/false (Czarniawska, 1997; Hansen, Kahnweiler, 1993; Nash, 1990; Riessman, 1993; Schegloff, 1997; Smith, 1994). Fabulation, in fact, is the way in which the narrator can capture the reader's attention and affection, consequently increasing his followers and redefining public opinion, contributing to creating opposite war fronts and different narratives on warfare. We propose a strategy to operationalize fabulation concept, with the aim to analyze Russian-Ukrainian war online narratives, and perhaps others. To improve the reliability and validity of our new tool, we will develop a preliminary computer-assisted content analysis with the N-Vivo software investigating fabulation concept with a qualitative-quantitative and socio-semiotic approach. The case study will consider a set of narratives relating to the bombing of the maternity hospital in Mariupol (9 March 2022), analyzing the textual and visual data extracted from Telegram by a set of disintermediated narrators and war correspondents affiliated with both the Ukrainian and Russian armed forces.

Edmondo Grassi - San Raffaele University of Rome (Italy)

Simulacral Realities as an Ethical Tool

The digitization process in postmodern society can be observed as a counter-space that generates new offshoots for the identity formation of the individual, canceling the real and virtual dichotomy and implementing liminal mutations in the perception of the self. Starting from this observation, the contribution aims to analyze the collective imagination in the form of novels and video games that have anticipated and still anticipate the narration of the person in which the relational mechanisms, behavior models, values and tools of material culture have had the opportunity to deconstruct itself from the usual space-time boundaries to recompose itself in other simulacral grammars anticipating post-reality (Grassi, 2022).

There are many questions that pour from the imagination into philosophy and sociology: to what extent does technology affect the life of the individual? What weight does human consciousness have in the creation of artificial intelligence? How does this change into the dualism that shakes the relationship between person and machine? By means of this dialectical process between fiction and the spectator, we want to sensitize the public on issues relating to the psychoanalytic, cognitive, existential development of the person and the time in which he lives, but above all of what he will bequeath to those who will come after and they will inhabit its own places. With reference to the field of the imaginary, the environments that will be analyzed - with a theoretical-qualitative approach - will allow reality and its evolution to be observed through the mirror and the lens of a specular world. The stories described by Stephenson or Gibson, as well as the video game worlds of Horizon or Detroit: Become Human, become sociological video-texts-video-stories that allow the reader-player-researcher to live simulations of future experiences, to encounter present ethical dilemmas, to cross interstices through which to outline futuristic perspectives.

Ilaria Iannuzzi - University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy)

Gamified Societies. For a Critical Analysis of the Gamification Process

For a long time, the game has been considered, in the sociological field, an element of marginal character, as if to affirm, more or less explicitly, that dealing with the study of the game is itself a game, believing that this dimension is not able to add anything really significant for sociological theory. There is, instead, a close relationship between society and game, as Simmel already in 1917. The game is connected to the organization of society (Huizinga, 1964): there is a parallelism between playful structures and social functions. More and more frequently, in fact, the term gamification spreads and expands, becoming a real social imperative, which progressively affects more and more areas, from education to the economy, to finance – which becomes "creative" and is configured as the "game" of the Stock Exchange – and even at work. On closer inspection, however, – and this is what we propose to do in this paper – the gamification of societies does not seem to represent only a simple fashion, as such transient albeit recurrent, but rather appears as an economic and efficientistic process. The goal of this paper is to highlight, through the theoretical research method proper of the general sociology processes that employ leisure, fun and recreation by bending the constitutive dimension of meaning of these areas, bringing them back to an economical logic. Consequences, in terms of inclusion, but particularly in terms of exclusion, need to be deeply analyzed.

Iuliia Koreshkova - Palacky University (Czech Republic)

Possibility or Barrier? The WeChat Influence on the Chinese Migrants' Integration (Siberian Case)

Consuming technologies has become an integral part of everyday life. Consequently, a discussion about the role of social media and digitalization in the lives of migrants (digital diaspora) has developed. However, research in this area is just emerging, and we need a more detailed understanding, given the additional digital dimension in existing practices and processes. First, digitalization is blurring national boundaries; the migrant is successfully included in networks 'here' and 'there', regardless of where he/she is physically, further enhancing the promise of a transnational approach in migration studies. Second, it raises the problem of the effects of the digital dimension on integration in the host countries. In this investigation, based on the classic studies of H. Esser and F. Heckmann, the author will attempt to demonstrate how Chinese migrants' use of social media influences their experience of cultural, structural, and social integration. In the example of the Siberian case, it will be illustrated that the Chinese WeChat platform mediates and facilitates the structural (inclusion in the local economy) integration of the Chinese abroad but appears as a barrier in situations of cultural and social integration.

In addition to qualitative research methods such as participant observation and semi-formalized interviews (more than 30), the study used digital ethnography (WeChat migrant group analysis). In this connection, the author will also discuss the following methodological issues:

1) The use of digital ethnography – obtained from WeChat - provides unique data to triangulate conclusions drawn about closed groups or sensitive topics (such as informal employment or working in precarious labor markets).

2) The use of WeChat (as well as other social media) allows researchers to become almost equal participants in closed groups, which raises numerous ethical dilemmas.

3) WeChat ethnography differs from the ethnography of other social media in terms of access and available data, which raises the question of data comparability.

Suchet Kumar - Rayat Bahra University (India)

Theorising Digital Society

Our world is constantly evolving. ICTs have changed human life. Communications-computing convergence has grown during the past 30 years. Internet, WWW, and mobile communications are now essential to society and its people. We live in a new reality that differs from the one people have lived in for thousands of years. Cyberspace complements and integrates with reality. The most significant change is the shift from viewing humans as separate entities to seeing them as information organisms connected to the world. The information revolution has made it possible to communicate with everyone and access a wealth of information and expertise without worry. Today's digital devices are smarter and more personalised due to AI breakthroughs. Big data mediates practically all human interactions. This shell gives a person context-oriented, personalised information for making several decisions. Thus, human conduct, which largely involves these decisions, has evolved. Because human conditions are evolving, their worldviews depend on their physical and virtual locations. Hence, the Onlife Manifesto asks, "What does it mean to be human in a hyper-connected world?"

Digital shift research has many methods. It is a technical post-industrial, information, and awareness revolution. These methods compliment one other to reveal this era's central phenomenon. The paper aims to examine a theoretical framework of digital society and the consequences of the digital revolution. The paper proposes that more attention has to be paid to cultural studies as a means for the understanding of digital society. The approach is based on the idea that the digital revolution's essence is fully manifested in the cultural changes that take place in society. Cultural changes are discussed in connection with the digital society's transformations, the distinction between reality and virtuality and among people, nature, and artifacts, and the reversal from informational scarcity to abundance.

Anastasia Kuznetsova – University of Finance and Administration of Prague (Czech Republic)

The Impact of Digital Reality on the Ethical Side of Brand-Customer Communication

The paper examines how new digital reality changes market relations and affects the ethical side of brand-customer communication. New digital reality is conditioning the emergence of fundamentally new business models, changing modern society and communication in various ways. Aside from sociological and psychological effects on consumers' behavior in society, it affects business, marketing strategies, and tools. Our study examines how it affects relations between companies and their consumers. The Internet and social media use has made it easier for customers and stakeholders to review companies' market history and hold them accountable for their actions. New reality made brands more transparent in their operations, including disclosing information about their products, services, and supply chain and avoiding offensive or discriminatory language in communication. Consumers use social media, online reviews, and other digital resources to learn about brands and exchange information about their experiences. It became much easier to compare the prices and reviews online on any product or service, which highly influences the purchasing decision. This increased transparency pressures brands to be more honest and accountable, excluding the possibility of cheating or performing unethical behavior. The value of a company's reputation increased accordingly, as the precedents of ethical violations fueled by social media presence have further changed modern business culture rules and standards. On the other hand, the latest technologies made it easier for companies to play with the brand image by advertising and presenting fake materials in media. Competition for likes, comments, and customer attention increases dramatically - brands are using whatever it takes to improve their image in the market. Artificial reality made it possible to use algorithms to manipulate customers, track their actions, and collect data on buying behavior. An average shopper can hardly imagine that his next purchase has already been pre-calculated, and the purpose is to increase his buying activity even more. We assume to live in the era of paid comments and "greenwashing." Another example we're approaching is how the ease and anonymity of online communication have led to increased unethical behavior by companies. Currently, consumerism is crucial in constantly pursuing profit through advertising and online communication. That's why companies' ethical behavior is a hot topic that needs to be addressed. Certain brands mean to make significant changes and improve ecological and social situations; others use this "green" trend to attract new customers. The interdependence between consumers and brands and between falsified and honest approaches strongly influences the buyers' perception of the market and the strategies companies use to stay stable in digitalism and economic crises. Our paper will explore this transformation of communication between brands and customers and analyze the effect of digital development from an ethical point of view.

Mahmudul Hasan Laskar, Ankita Sharma - University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya (India)

Revisiting Social Institutions and Power Relation in Digital Society: Evaluating Digitalization in India

With new modes of development through the information and communication technology revolution, digital society emerged globally which has an enormous impact on every realm of society. In the digital society, social institutions, communities, social relationships and power structures have undergone structural transformation in their functioning and implications. This new process of transformation and development may not be well grasped by conventional sociology, so digital sociology has made an attempt to redefine them in the new methodological and theoretical framework. The primary focus of this study is to examine how social institutions can be redefined as digital family, digital education, digital capitalism (consumer society), digital art forms, etc. These social institutions are not merely societal elements but rather a signification of technological advancement and represent people's progress in the digital society. The question arises, is socio-cultural values and norms disappeared or lost significance due to the predominance of digital-oriented social institutions? Is this new digital transformation socially and culturally progressive in Indian society? These questions appeared because modernity is still an ongoing process, so how far digital society is a reality in India? Digital society has new power relations rooted in new digital capitalism. Techno-social power, the power of digital media, and digital surveillance are new fields of power relations emerged in the digital society. These power relations have the basis on the economy and politics of digital technology and its advancement. People's emotion and consciousness is influenced significantly by digital media. Digital media today redefined political narratives, social discourses, choices of lifestyle, and gender appearances. Thus, a new mode of development or advancement has come into being that instituted a new form of regulation and hegemony in the digital society. India's digitalization cannot be just reduced to a technological advancement rather question of modernity and its societal impact must be taken into account while checking the growth of digital society. Modernity in India has a significant impact on infrastructural transformation but we don't find its equal affect on social, cultural, and human development. So, it is a matter of assessment that how social institutions in India are redefined in the context of the global digital society. New power exercise has a specific affect on India's common masses.

The proposed study is to explore how social institutions are redefined in digital society with a special focus on Indian society. It will also explore new power relations and forms of hegemony in the digital society and see how Indian society is experiencing it. The study would further look into how new digital social institutions and hegemonic forces have influenced and manipulated the consciousness of the common masses in India. The study is a theoretical proposition based on qualitative methods of content analysis of social media, popular culture, and digital fields; participant digital observation; and unstructured interviews among social groups.

Francesca Romana Lenzi, Maria Elena Capuano, Giuseppe Coppola - University of Rome Foro Italico (Italy)
Vincenzo Esposito - University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy)

The Esport Phenomenon and its Evolution: A Systematic Literature Review

Hardly any social dimension exists today that do not occur via the web. One of the fastest growing phenomena that uses the internet as its primary channel is undoubtedly the dimension of electronic sports competition, with the growing importance of the Esports. With the gradual increase of the Esports market, the number of participants in competitions and the number of spectators who decide to spend their time watching Esports competitions every day, the attention that academia has paid to this new phenomenon has also increased. In recent years, studies have been carried out that have aimed to investigate the complex world of Esports from different perspectives. Given the great number of publications and the growing interest of scholars in investigating the phenomenon in question, this article aims to categorize and classify the existing articles on the Esport phenomenon. The systematic review of the current literature will allow us to draw a symbolic picture that illustrates the present representation of the Esports phenomenon in the different contexts in which it is analyzed. This will take place based on the nature of the research analyzed, its features, the subject matter and the disciplinary perspective that characterizes each research. The authors will structure the work in several phases to fulfill this objective. It will proceed with an initial extraction of the articles using Scilit, an indexing service of scientific citations based on the existence of a DOI or a PubMed code. After having carried out this first phase, a grid will be created which has the purpose of collecting the previously extracted articles and categorizing them according to some characteristics:

- The topic covered in the article: the role of the athlete or the role of the spectator, the Esport – industry, gender studies relating to videogame and Esports practice, the communication strategies adopted by professionals in the sector;
- The academic discipline to which they belong: the articles extracted are very heterogeneous, some articles investigate the social and communicative component of the Esports phenomenon, articles that investigate the technical and instrumental components useful for the Esports activity, and articles that show how the Esports industry is economically thriving and growing;
- If the article has an empirical or theoretical approach;
- Who authored it (academia, specialized centers, other);
- Where it was authored (country).

In the last phase, the abstracts and keywords of each article will be collected and the main research topics on the Esports phenomenon will be identified by using content analysis.

Francesca Romana Lenzi, Ciro Clemente De Falco, Maria Elena Capuano - University of Rome Foro Italico (Italy)
Vincenzo Esposito, Ferdinando Iazzetta - University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy)

Audiovisual Languages for Health. Case Study on the Representation of Obesity on TikTok

Actors inhabiting the digital public sphere contribute to the public discourse on health and well-being through the production of bigdata in different ways. User-generated health data are natural digital traces (Peng et al., 2019) and can be generated by social networks (Ayers et al., 2016), wearable devices and health apps (Casselman et al., 2017) and search engines (Mavragani et al., 2018). The proliferation of user-generated content are elements that generate an impact on the production, circulation and consumption of health news and ensure a vibrant public sphere on the topic (Hodgetts et al. 2008). Today, it becomes crucial to identify how new health-produced datasets can be used to assess Social Determinants of Health (SDH), understood as non-medical factors that influence health outcomes and include the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age and include what shapes the conditions of daily life (WHO, 2007). In this scenario, health technologies hold great promise for developing digital health skills and improving health outcomes for patients with chronic diseases. Indeed, contemporary societies have undergone an epidemiological transition (Omran, 1971) that has seen infectious-predominant diseases transform over the years into chronic-degenerative diseases. Social media provide an open forum for communication between individuals and content creators on TikTok are progressively changing the way audiovisual texts are produced and enjoyed, following a logic that tends towards media convergence and intermediality. The aim of this article is to conceptualize how influencers providing public health information promote knowledge related to the obesity debate. Starting from a selection of Italian language case studies, it will be possible to return findings and interpretations useful to explore the discourses and thematizations underlying the content produced by influencers to recognize information and dimensions close to the health advocacy narrative.

Rosanna Marino - University of Naples Federico II (Italy)

Rethinking Identity and Privacy in the Platform Society

The paper focuses on sociological concepts of "identity" and "privacy" and describes how they are changing in the platform society from a theoretical point of view. Starting from the idea that digital communication has the potential of making porous the public-private boundary, the contribution analyzes the meanings that identity and privacy assume in social media platforms by looking at the users practices. In the field of internet studies, the reflection on online identity and privacy started in the Eighties, parallel to the appearance of the first tools of computer-mediated communication (CMC), and has developed in relation to the technological contexts of Web 1.0 and Web 2.0. A central point of the scientific debate is the rise of social media, which decree the transition from the phase of "opacity" of the Internet to that of "transparency", in which a new culture of the online self and privacy is gradually born. Many scholars have investigated in the last two decades the relationship between social media, identity and privacy, underlining the influence of platforms on the processes related to the construction of identity and the privacy management, for example new ways of self-presentation, self-expression, self-experimentation, self-regulation and self-visibility. In this sense, the paper aims to provide a systematic literature review, underlining that identity and privacy gets new meanings in the platform society, which depend simultaneously on the affordances and the technical features, on the vertical relationships between users and providers of web services, and on the horizontal relationships among users. In order to support the theoretical framework, the paper offers also an empirical case study, focused on Italian young people practices in social network sites (SNS) during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research is based on a quantitative methodology (survey), conducted on a sample of 500 young people (14-23 years). Data analysis is actually in progress.

Elvira Martini – Giustino Fortunato University (Italy)

Social and Technology Foresight: A Tool for Anticipating Future Scenarios

The challenge of contemporary society is that of planning possible paths for the future. In the current scenario of hyperconnection, men and technologies, human and artificial intelligences are intertwined in such complex ways as to generate multiple possible futures, up to the limit of the capacity of imagination (Martini, De Luca Picione & Ciaschi, 2022). In particular, it is precisely the frontier of digital and technological changes that obliges social actors and socio-economic institutions to know how to intercept the dynamism of the transformations taking place. That allows them to support the ability to imagine a desirable future, and to sustain intelligent trajectory of sustainability, of well-being and the ethical responsibility of one's own actions (Buffardi, 2020). In this perspective, the reflection on the so-called future studies is developed. As Barbieri Masini wrote in 2012, it becomes a necessity especially in times of change: if the rhythm of change increases, we need to look further (Berger, 1964). The challenge today for globalized societies consists of understanding possible technological developments and outlining possible economic, social and market impact scenarios. In particular, the misuse of technology, the digitization of many living and learning environments, the collection, management and analysis of huge data raise many ethical and social issues. Concerns about data security and privacy have been highlighted, as well as the more substantive issues about the influence and control that these technologies can have on people's lives (Amaturo, Aragona & Felaco, 2022). For these reasons, in the area of innovation, the concept of "responsible innovation" has emerged, signifying that innovation processes have to take into account ethical, social, and cultural considerations and changes. To make sure that responsible innovation has a positive and effective impact, it is important to develop "responsible foresight," that is, a combination of "responsible futures" and a responsible foresight process (van der Duin, 2018). From a social perspective, we are convinced of the need not only to stimulate the creation of spaces for knowledge and innovation but also technology foresight spaces: the challenge is to systematically organize reflection on possible future scenarios to anticipate or prevent the most impactful consequences from an ethical-social point of view.

Paola Martino, Elisabetta Villano - University of Salerno (Italy)

The Reign of the Screen. Adolescent Identity, Digital Media and the Possible Path of Aesthetic Education

Pedagogical *semio-technical device* (Barone, Barbanti, 2020; Ferrante, 2017; Foucault, 1975), with proper *performativity* and *agency* (Barad, 2008), the digital constantly reshapes ways and places of human relationships, standing out as a pervasive, sometimes privative, socializing institution.
From a pedagogical perspective that reads education as a process of *personal identity construction* (Xodo Cegolon, 2003), of becoming person in the own body by esteeming the Self by virtue of the recognition of others, the phenomenology of the digital compels to bring the new media educational effects into focus in connection with that transitional phase of growth, adolescence, that most passes *unseen* (Acone, Visconti, De Pascale, 2004), *always on* (Savonardo, Marino, 2021). Identities in flux, consigned to *consumer subjectivity models* (Barone, 2021), adolescents form in the *connective map* of an *exhibited Self*, as the object of *a cosmesis of the presence* (Boccia Altieri et al., 2017) whose experiences are entirely confined to the framework of a mediatised reality.
If it's not possible to sidestep the progressive identity fluidification and the election of the virtual space to a place of digital disguise, of *authentication* (Ippolita, 2015), fixing the gaze on adolescents it would also be ingenuous not to point out that digital communities allow for an identity redefinition capable of leaving room for a ritual of conversion that can bring out a subjectivity that expresses itself beyond and in spite of the primary identification given by nature (Lucci, 2016). Virtuality makes it possible to emphasise the multi-identity character of every human being (Sisto, 2022).
Identity is an open process that takes form through the *optical encounter* as well, the *interfacial faciality* (Sloterdijk). Humans are initially among faces, only after they *fall into the mirror's reign* (Sloterdijk, 1998). Just like the mirror, the screen is both an *ego-technical medium* – an instrument of autogenous subjectivity completion (Lucci, 2014; Sloterdijk, 2004) – and a surface that establishes relations (Carbone, 2016). Starting from Macho's idea of the *techniques of solitude* as *doubling techniques,* as *self-perception strategies* (Macho, 2000), through Lucci's articulate re-reading (concerning primary and secondary techniques of solitude), the study firstly aims to rethink the relationship between identity formation, adolescence and the digital from a critical-pedagogical perspective and in the light/shadow of the screen, along a historical-cultural path capable of eluding the *technological newism* in favour of a *media archaeology* (Huhtamo, 2004).
The archaeological perspective on media opens the way to a pedagogical path centred on human education as performative aesthetic process (Diodato, Aimo, 2021). In this sense, considering the *epistemological function* of imagination (Spivak, 2012), on the background of Wulf's reflections on the ontological, cultural and pedagogical connection between man and gaze, image and education (Wulf, 2018), the study closes by arguing about the possibility of rethinking aesthetic education as a fertile pedagogical path that can support identity formation dynamics in aestheticized digital environments*.*

Bogumila Mateja-Jaworska - Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan (Poland)

Tracking the Media Audience Research in Poland

One of the most important themes that has emerged throughout the history of media studies has been the struggle between proponents of media power and audience agency. Tracing this dispute shows that the most radical concepts have tended to emerge in times of unrest - when technological innovations (i.e. radio, television, the internet) have emerged or significant political events have taken place. In the last decade, analyses of the processes of datafication, algorithmisation and the increasingly crucial importance of artificial intelligence have outlined for the media studies a specific framework for viewing media audiences as media users. While quite a lot has already been said about how technological issues are changing audiences, little attention has been paid to other factors. As I will argue in my presentation, one of these seems to be the dominant types of audience research in a given time and place. I will try to show that narrowly conceived or industry-specific quantitative research such as telemetry supported a vision of audiences as lonely individuals 'locked-in a room" succumbing to the power of the media. In turn, the rise of qualitative research, especially ethnographic research (e.g. in the 1980s and 1990s) - fostered the formation of ideas about active audiences. As I will try to show, the current fixation in the media industry on big data and the tracking of users through a variety of tools and sensors, once again imposes on us a vision of individuals vulnerable to the power of the media. Like Ien Ang in 1991, I will argue in favour of expanding and valuing qualitative audience research also in the era of big data (including the social perception and dealing with algorithms), highlighting that this would yield a more nuanced view of audiences. I will also consider the problem of the media industry commissioning/using specific audience research and then creating a particular image of the audience on the basis of which it takes further action. I will situate my considerations not only in the context of media audience studies, but also in the sociology of knowledge. This is because the situation discussed above prompts us to consider the relationship between socially prevalent perceptions of audiences and transformations in the forms of knowledge production about them.

Mirela Moldoveanu - University of Hradec Kralove, Hradec Kralove (Czech Republic)
Jitka Cirklová- University of Finance and Administration of Prague (Czech Republic)

The Role of ICT in Teaching Social Sciences in Tertiary Education

ICT is increasingly becoming part of every aspect of our life, and developing digital skills becomes a personalized experience, from school training to independent practice. In addition, having gone through a pandemic the world needs more people able to teach any subject in a digitalized environment. Using Uri Bronfenbrenner's bioecological systems theoretical framework, this study researches the usefulness of digital tools in teaching in higher education to emphasize its complex developmental process. The study is based on quantitative and qualitative data collected in three classes of 16-31 students, with a total of 36 students involved in the final examination, who were taught by the authors of this study across twelve weeks. In the three classes both conservative and digital teaching tools were used. Questionnaires measuring the students' digital skills were used as pre-tests, seminar assignments were used to assess their digital capabilities using ISTE digital skills criteria, and semi-structured interviews with 11 students of a small private higher education institution enrolled in a social science program were used to investigate the impact of ICT tools in teaching and the school's digital maturity on the students' accumulation of knowledge and performance in class. The findings suggest that individual factors matter for the level of comprehension of the subject matter, such as the student's digital skills and motivation to learn. Similarly, exo- and macro-system factors contribute to the structured distribution of information, and factors such as the school's digital infrastructure, the provided access to digital study sources, the consistent and methodical use of digital channels used in the two-way student-teacher and student-school communication, and the teacher's ability to blend different teaching methods and structure the material in a easily comprehensive manner are recognized by students as important factors in comprehension. However, for the retention of material, ICT tools are useful to the extent to which they support the development of new skills and trigger the student's curiosity, while debates, simulations, games, and direct interaction with the material, such as museum and exhibitions visits, are valued as more important for the retention of the material by the surveyed sample. The study found that the students' performance in tertiary education is influenced at multiple levels, as stipulated by the bioecological system theory.

Stefano Nobile, Lorenzo Sabetta, Lorenzo Barbanera - University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy)

Cognitive Populism and Digital Society

Over the last two decades, economic inequalities have increasingly grown, forcing people to face the loss of material and cultural references and making their future extremely uncertain. The processes of globalization have contributed to the growth in the number of people who feel they have had to pay the price of modernization and who perceive themselves as losers in the face of the blockage of the social elevator. New forms of resentment have thus emerged, combined with feelings of helplessness and loneliness that politics used to its advantage for consensus building. Further, processes of disintermediation and polarization took place especially through online platforms and social media: insults replaced debates, slogans arguments, opinions facts, turning every political issue into radical dualism between friends and foes. This dynamic points to the existence of new socio-cognitive organizing principles, that is, new social mindscapes manifested mainly through the use of the new media. Indeed, socialization to politics is now mediated by social networks and digital platforms, and this is even more so when it comes to the younger generation. Through a recent quantitative survey conducted on Italian high-school students (6.689), who are at that crucial stage of forming their values (Inglehart, 1977), this paper intends to shed light on these aspects that are related to what one can call "cognitive populism". Though the phenomenon of populism is difficult to define unequivocally (Elster, 2020), but it surely encompasses many dimensions such as trust, resentment, social bonds, and sense of belonging: these elements are affected by new lifestyles developed onlife (Floridi, 2014), and it is therefore useful to understand how multiple forms of cognitive populism can gain momentum in this "new hybrid world," where the boundary between reality and fiction becomes particularly blurred. To this end, it is necessary to better understand how social media and the interaction order (Goffman, 1983) straddle online and offline. Illustrating a series of empirical results, this paper argues that digital society (inhabited primarily by the younger generation) might represent not only the space in which cognitive populism takes shape, but also a structuring element (Bourdieu, 1990) of young people's social scripts and cognitive schemes.

Antonella Nufrio, Michela Capuano - University of Salerno (Italy)

Far from God, far from Faith: A Netnographic Study of the Phenomena of Atheism and Agnosticism in Italy

Atheism is a way of thinking that excludes the existence of a God; it consists in the denial of the existence of a divine entity, that is, of a superhuman and supernatural being. Those, therefore, who do not believe in the existence of a God are called atheists. The latter argue that if divinity is above human nature, it is not observable with human senses, casting doubt on its existence. The term agnosticism, on the other hand, denotes the suspension of judgment regarding the existence or nonexistence of a deity. From the definition of these concepts, it can be inferred that despite the commonality of the figure of God, in the former absolute denial prevails, in the latter there is no certainty of his existence. To date, such phenomena are increasingly prevalent in society, and the subject of attention by sociology, which since its inception has investigated religion as a constitutive phenomenon of a society, and of common collective representations. In recent years, while the sociology of religion has highlighted the spread of processes of secularization that have led to a decline for the individual in the importance of religion in aspects of daily life, it has also brought to light the centrality that the discourse on the existence of ''God'' still assumes in contemporary times. The present research aims to investigate the phenomena of atheism and agnosticism in Italy through a netnographic approach of the Facebook community "Realist Atheism and Agnosticism," focusing on the aspects of subjective and collective meaning called into play by people discussing religion within the spaces of the web society. After examining some theoretical aspects, the second part of the essay will illustrate the results of an investigation that, through a netnographic approach, examined the discursive and relational dynamics that characterize this virtual community, bringing out four types of attitudes that people take with respect to religion.

Giuseppe Michele Padricelli - University of Salerno (Italy)

Digital Assumptions in Social Movements: A Framing Analysis for the Italian Case of No Tav

The transition to the late modern society drives us to rethink the role of the digital scenario and its influence on every aspect of daily life. The digital issue intended as a making-value repertory made by practices, techniques and representation, found a place in the sociological debate in the 1990s and reached a central position in the frame shaped on the analysis of collective action also. It is enough to think about the digital influence approached by social movements studies. All this from the multiple perspectives related to the digital features that concern the empowerment of communication of activists, the architectures of relations, networks or those processes of sense-making built through narratives of actions. This paper aims to shed light on the key role of digital repertoire for the bottom-up participation forms. Thus, overcoming the idea of Cyberspace that considers internet as a cultural artefact, a flexible, dynamic and pervasive object, a place that transcends from reality in terms of sense making processes. The research design drives to retrace the the narration and performance patterns in last 10 years of No Tav case study: a movement active in Piedmont (Italy) that fights against the building project of a high-speed railway line. The work deals with the research object shaped on the innovation concept intended both as an instrumental evolving repertory and as a set of users' practices. The empirical work deals with the framing perspective addressed by a digital content analysis run through quantitative textual analysis techniques (Topic Modeling and Lexical correspondence analysis). It starts form the research questions oriented to comprehend if and how knowledge can be produced and shared among activists, which mobilization patterns emerged and have been enabled by digital media and, finally, how changed the organizational assumptions because of the digital turn. Finally, the attended results aim to shed light about the main digital-mixed methodological practices and the needed complementarity between traditional and web-based methods to study such an evolving object as the innovation of internet as well as a very fast-mutable element as movement.

Fiorenzo Parziale, Maria Paola Faggiano, Michela Cavagnuolo, Alfredo Matrella - University of Rome La Sapienza (Italy)

The Uses of Digital Technologies in Schools. A Bourdieusian Analysis of Upper-Secondary School Teachers and Students in Rome

In Italy, as well as in other European countries, since the early 2000s the political agenda has attributed a strategic role to the use of information and communication technologies in teaching and learning.

However, recent studies show that digital mediation in the classroom causes both engagement and disengagement in students' learning processes (Bergdahl et. al, 2020) and that there is an internal differentiation among teachers regarding its use (Comi et al. 2017; Vattøy et al. 2022).

In general, individuals from middle class are more likely to use technologies in a way that strengthens their cultural capital, while the most disadvantaged ones are characterised by more superficial and lacking use (DiMaggio et al. 2004; Hargittai, Hinnant, 2008). If we consider the studies on the relationship between access and use of digital technology (Gui 2014; Gonzalez-Betancor, Lopez-Puig, Cardenal 2021), we can discover how digital mediation is concretely employed by teachers and students in schools (Selwyn, 2013; Mascheroni, Ólafsson 2018). Resorting to the Silverstone's (1994; 2005) approach on domestication of media and Bourdieu's (1979, 1984) habitus theory, the aim of this paper is to understand whether teachers' and students' use of the digital technology changes due to their habitus and consequent collocation within the school field. The research was carried on through the administration of two online surveys to students (no. 993) and teachers (no. 196) of 20 upper-secondary schools in Rome.

The cases have been selected through a stratified sampling by school track (high school, technical and vocational) and social composition of the schools (middle class schools vs working class schools). Through Principal Component Analysis, four types of indices were constructed for both surveys related to the type of use of digital technologies in the classroom, namely: frequency of use (Hargittai, Hinnant 2008), degree of familiarity (Gui, Büchi 2019), type of skills taught/learned, and overall judgments on the usefulness of these technologies in schools (Olmes et al. 2021; Szyszka, Tomczyk, and Kochanowicz 2022). These indices have been examined together with the background variables of schools and respondents through the use of Multiple Correspondence Analysis combined with Cluster Analysis. Among the most interesting findings there is the association of a more critical orientation towards the use of digital technologies in schools on the part of students and teachers from middle-class backgrounds and the "dominant segment" of the school field (high schools located in middle-class areas); whereas students and teachers from the working class and vocational institutes located in working-class and suburban areas show a favourable approach to digital technologies but at the same time have a lesser familiarity with them and are more oriented towards a vocational use. These general trends suggest to pay attention to how the digitisation of education contributes to the persistent reproduction of educational inequalities due to social origin.

Ilenia Picardi, Marco Serino - University of Naples Federico II (Italy)

Refused Knowledge Communities as Networked Social Worlds. Translating Shared Knowledge on Health into Two-Mode Networks of Claims and Actors

This study adopts a mixed methods perspective that combines Social Network Analysis (SNA) and a narrative approach to investigate how refused knowledge communities (RKCs) – i.e., communities that rely on a body of knowledge partially or totally refused by institutional scientific authorities – build their own proposals regarding health and wellbeing, and share them through social media. We focus on two RKCs: the alkaline community, which promotes the consumption of alkaline water and food as a health practice, and the followers of the Five Biological Laws (5BL), a set of concepts and practices aimed at understanding and treating many different diseases. The main aim of the study is to map the structuring of knowledge contents produced and shared within these communities – which are conceived of as "social worlds" – by analysing the patterns of connection between the knowledge claims proposed by RKC members, and those human and non-human actors which are discursively enrolled to sustain and legitimise these claims. We thus detect the linkages between claims and actors through the analysis of qualitative empirical materials emerging from a web-ethnography conducted between January 2020 and December 2021 on the online spaces (blogs, Facebook pages and profiles, YouTube channels and the like) related to these communities. A content analysis of the narratives observed in the alkaline and 5LB communities leads us to identify: a) the claims of refused knowledge; b) the actors discursively enrolled in the communities, i.e., users interacting in the social media environment as well as objects and people related to orthodox science (like instruments and devices, institutions, scientists, and scientific papers); c) the linkages between claims and enrolled actors. For each RKC, these elements have been transposed into a two-mode network made up of two distinct sets of nodes (claims and actors), and the ties between units belonging to each of the two sets. We choose this operationalisation as we deem it appropriate for the relational structure we aim to analyse, building upon known strategies of analysing relations among heterogeneous actors through affiliation two-mode networks. In our case, this heterogeneity is preserved in the set of actors by means of node attributes.

We thus perform a visual network analysis and make use of betweenness centrality for two-mode networks in order to highlight those nodes – be they claims or actors – which play a bridging role by connecting different areas of the graph and which we consider as "boundary objects." In addition, we perform a community detection analysis via the Louvain modularity algorithm, aiming to explore the patterns of connection among clusters made of claims and actors. A classification of the clusters is then conducted by considering how the different narrative repertoires resulting from qualitative analysis are reflected in the grouping of claims and actors we observe in the network. The main findings of this analysis show how differentiated repertoires are at work in the network and how the main "biomolecular" repertoires of these RKCs are recombined with symbolic, social, and political repertoires by means of several "boundary objects."

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Zdeněk Brabec - Technical University of Liberec (Czech Republic)
Naděžda Petrů - University of Finance and Administration (Czech Republic)

Performance Management of Programmatic Advertising Through Controlling

Programmatic advertising is becoming a popular product for online media buyers and an essential part of modern marketing. The present study examined this issue in the Czech Republic using the Association for Internet Progress (SPIR) data for Q4 2021 on a research sample of 270,250 records of online advertisements. In the first phase of the study, the sample was analyzed using statistical and mathematical methods. Based on the findings obtained and the method of regression analysis, a model was developed for the dependent variable Cost Per Thousand (CPT). In the second phase of the study, the knowledge gained was used to develop a financial controlling model, which was experimentally tested on n=31 advertisers. The goal of the financial controlling was to improve the efficiency of online advertisement and decrease CPT. This experimental testing found that advertisers commonly do not use any tools to optimize online advertisement performance. By implementing and actively using the financial controlling model, online advertisement performance increased on average by 10-25% (meaning that CPT decreased). The research found that the performance of online advertising, particularly programmatic advertising, is highly optimized. It was found that the operators/sellers of online advertising use advertising product marketing campaigns, and the traded price is not equal to its performance (there is a big gap). This finding is a consequence of the rapidly developing advertising environment and the advertisement buyers who are buying more based on "feel" than on the real performance of advertisements. Therefore, there is a need for its optimization. Based on the research and the results of experimental testing, the Financial Controlling Model was developed. This model was used and tested in real practice. It was proven that financial controlling is a tool that can improve online advertising performance and increase average values beyond 15-25% in the first three-four months of its active use. The experimental testing found important standard practices and experiences useful for online advertising in real business practices. This research has its own limitations in terms of the factor of time. The problem is that the rapid development of the online advertising market prevents more data from being collected and deeper analyses from being performed because the results are becoming "old" within a short time. Due to this limitation, the results could not be generalized. The data and knowledge obtained can be used, for example, for better online advertising performance guidance. Future research could be focused on developing this problem in order to identify new trends and practices. Transfer the issue to the area of personnel marketing, perception of the company's future employer brand, viewing of advertisements with recruitment video and controlling evaluation of the effectiveness of online campaigns.

Debora Pizzimenti – University of Messina (Italy)
Assunta Penna – University of Salerno (Italy)

Excluded. A Digital Ethnographic Investigation on the Femcel Community

This paper aims at exploring the bursts of anger shown on digital platforms by a community of women who feel excluded by the cultures of intimacy and sex. This sense of frustration, in the era of digital communications, is amplified by the architecture of these platforms, which reinforces and reproduces the existing hierarchies of power (Papacharissi, 2021), confining individuals in echo chambers (Bentivegna, Boccia Artieri, 2019). More specifically, a non-participant observation has been conducted to explore the kinds of gender abuses and the forms of sexualization that these users claim. The amount of academic studies dealing with women's suffering because they feel sexually failed is poor; on the contrary, male Incels (Nagle, 2017; Ging, 2017; Bratic & Benet-Weiser, 2019), have received the attention of academics and journalists for their lack of sexual capital (Kay, 2022). Through digital ethnography (Kozinets, 2010; Sumiala, Tikka, 2020), a qualitative research approach adapting ethnographic techniques to the needs of studying an online space of discussion (Delli Paoli, 2021; Delli Paoli & D'Auria, 2021), the Reddit community for Femcel (women who are not voluntarily single) "Vindicta" (an online community only for women) is going to be studied. The community has been chosen for relevance (the group is composed by 56.561 female users); activities (interactions among members are regular), interactivity (communication among participants is substantial). Comments in the forum have been manually extracted and saved when they seemed to be significant for the community, in relation, for example, to the high number of feedbacks. A total of 1000 comments have been analyzed. The investigation (still in progress) has highlighted that Incel women, although considered ugly and "unfuckable", complain they are not authorized to claim for an identity based on this state of abjection (Deliovsky, 2008), because the assumption is that any woman is able to seduce a man, if she really wanted it. In this way the figure of Femcel is not recognized as a legitimate identity, in contrast with what happens with male Incels.

Riccardo Pronzato - IULM University (Italy)

Enacting Algorithms Through Encoding and Decoding Practices

Digital platforms have become infrastructural elements of our everyday life (van Dijck et al., 2018), and the algorithmic models underlying their functioning are not neutral intermediaries, but socio-technical artifacts embedding cultural values and biases (e.g., O'Neil, 2016; Noble, 2018). In this scenario, questions have been raised about how researchers can consider the relationship between culture and algorithms. According to Seaver (2017), algorithms can be considered "as culture", i.e., not fixed artifacts with which individuals interact, but rather unstable, malleable objects which are "culturally enacted by the practices people use to engage with them" (p. 5). If algorithms materialize in and through human practices and emerge differently in relation to these activities, how can we approach them?

In this contribution, I draw on the Encoding/Decoding model elaborated by Stuart Hall (1973; 1980), and the following applications to algorithmic media of several authors (e.g., Shaw, 2017; Lomborg and Kapsch, 2020; Siles et al., 2020), to argue that algorithms are enacted by the encoding and decoding practices of their producers and end users. Thus, I merge different approaches, such as the one considering culture as "practice" — i.e., an outcome of the human activities composing cultural life (Swidler, 1986; Mol, 2002; Seaver, 2017) — and the tradition of cultural studies, which recognise different degrees of power and agency in how individuals construct and interpret texts and artifacts. Regarding the encoding of digital platforms, I consider the "intended uses" and related socio-cultural values "*encoded* into the design of interactive objects/texts" (Shaw, 2017, p. 597) by platform producers as dominant "meaning structures" (Hall, 1980) inscribed into these artifacts. Thus, I argue that programming and coding activities can be framed as encoding practices, which are also the outcome of how data workers and companies interpret, i.e., *decode* the role of the algorithmic systems in the world. Through these encoding/decoding practices algorithms acquire and suggest meaning, and are, in turn, enacted, i.e., brought into being in the social realm. Then, also how end-users use and make sense of, i.e., *decode* (Lomborg and Kapsch, 2020) digital platforms can be considered "a process of enactment" (Orlikowski, 2000, p. 404), potentially enabling a better understanding of how these technologies deploys, as individuals "enact structures which shape their emergent use of the technology" (Constantinides and Barrett, 2006, p. 31). Specifically, the idea "of "enactment" points to how people forge and sustain specific realities", hence, how individuals make sense of platforms, and of the world through them, can "enact data assemblages by forging specific links between their constitutive dimensions" (Siles et al., 2020, p. 3). Furthermore, following the recursive logics of algorithmic systems (Airoldi, 2022; Beer, 2022), users' decoding practices are also the outcome of previous activities which were datafied and processed by the system, i.e., *encoded* into its functioning, to recommend and rank contents in unneutral manners. Given this framework, I claim that also the decoding/encoding practices of end users can culturally enact algorithms and should be scrutinised by researchers accordingly.

Alessia Rambelli - Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan (Italy)

Stories of Young Immigrant Women Under 30: From Humanitarian Corridors to Widespread Reception in Italy

This research intends to focus on the migration of young female immigrants under 30 (however of age), in an age group of transition to adulthood, who arrive in Italy through humanitarian corridors and experience a widespread reception in the country. This research has the following goals: to get to know the stories of young immigrant women who have arrived in Italy via humanitarian corridors; to identify the specific features of the relocation and reception programme; to observe whether and how this programme contributes to the development of young immigrant women's empowerment, what positive effects can be registered in the communities and territories that practise widespread reception.

RESEARCH METHODS

Given the above goals, the main research question is: *What are the life stories of these young women who arrive in Italy with the humanitarian corridors and are within the widespread reception*? *How is their empowerment possible? And what are the 'positive' repercussions recorded in communities and territories that practise widespread reception?*

Hence, the methodology consists of two actions. For what concerns the first action, it intends to take a picture of the humanitarian corridors and the widespread reception system through the reconnaissance of general information and data regarding both: with regard to the first one, a workshop was held with the promoters of the corridors and the main institutional actors involved in the system of widespread reception, as well as semi-structured interviews with the privileged witnesses of the humanitarian corridors and those involved in the system of widespread reception. On the other hand, the survey of data on humanitarian corridors and widespread reception will be based on an analysis of secondary data (in historical series) on humanitarian corridors and widespread reception, provided by the promoters. The second action concerns the collection of stories of young women and welcoming realities. Twenty young immigrant women will be taken into consideration, with whom a first in-depth interview is planned (semi-structured with non-directive conduction); each woman will be followed for about 6 months with a digital spontaneous and relatively constant contact (e.g., pictures); finally, there will be a second semi-structured interview after about 6 months. With reference to the collection of experiences of the host realities, semi-structured interviews will be carried out involving the tutor figures (operators, educators, tutor families, volunteers), in order to investigate the empowerment produced both for the women and for the host realities.

MAIN RESULTS

It is expected to identify the main areas in Italy involved in the humanitarian corridor system and their respective reception realities. Despite the difficulties linked to a different culture and language of origin, a different original life and vulnerable conditions, it is expected to identify the huge potential both for the women welcomed as well as for the communities and territories that receive them (given by the value of warm relations and micro-hospitality), as well as critical elements linked to the expectations of the welcoming community.

Carolina Rebollo-Diaz, Estrella Gualda, Francisco Javier Santos Fernández, Elena Ruiz Angel, Patricia Ruiz Angel – University of Huelva (Spain)

Narratives of Solidarity, Outrage and Hatred towards LGBTQI+ People in the Digital Society

This communication will explore different case studies on how LGBTQI+ people are sometimes supported in digital society. Other times LGBTQI+ people are recipients of online hate speech or different conspiracy theories in other scenarios, for example, in films, series, videogames, and others. It is possible to find online narratives about LGBTQI+ people in different social networks that go from the more positive pole (support, solidarity, or even outrage when LGBTQI+ people are rejected or recipients of hate crime) to the more negative one (disseminating hate, fake news or conspiracy theories).

The communication explores different [viral, highly spread] case studies where LGBTQI+ people are recipients of support and rejection (in the last case, in the form of hate speech online or conspiracy theories) to compare cases of support, solidarity, hate or conspiracy theories in social media, with a focus on cultural products and debates around them, and to identify main discourses, networks and communities, looking for patterns in communication at disseminating hate or conspiracy theories.

Through this work, we analyse different case studies about LGBTQI+ people on Twitter, having collected tweets from three different hashtags that work as search criteria: #justiciaparasamuel [dataset: 343.780 tweets, 2021], #gaysper [dataset: 53520 tweets, 2019], and #lightyear [dataset: 1.521.759 tweets, 2022-2023]. We collected and analysed data with the support of R (for instance: rtweet or academictwitteR, for collecting tweets; quanteda, tidyverse and others, for analysis), and other software such as Atlas ti. In the global project, we carried out a mixed methods approach, taking advantage of descriptive, content and thematic analysis, social and semantic network analysis and, a qualitative approach based especially on critical discourse and narrative analysis and a sociosemiotics visual focus.

Results suggest that online narratives represent, in a great measure, what can be found today in society (maybe on a different scale). On the one hand, we found solidarity and outrage as a form of support of the LGTBQI+ community, the use of humour and cultural appropriation as a counter-narrative to hate speeches, but on the other hand, strength and recurrency of different very emotional conspiracy theories associated, for instance, with danger or risks for minors or with grooming).

Mette Rudvin - University of Palermo (Italy)
Cinzia Spinzi - University of Bergamo (Italy)
Edoardo Di Gennaro – Independent Scholar (Italy)

Using Virtual Reality to Train Dialogue Interpreters and Language Mediators in Italy. Reflections on Results of two Pilot Studies

This paper presents the results of two pilot projects at the Universities Bergamo where custom-made Virtual Reality software was tested as a didactic tool for students of 'Language Mediation' (used in Italy to broadly denote community interpreting and public service interpreting). In collaboration with an IT company, we developed a software platform where trainees virtually interacted with each other as avatars. Our working hypothesis was that VR would be particularly suited for both pedagogical and practical/cost reasons. Good interpreter training requires intense student-trainer interaction and preferably in small groups; thus VR environments can drastically reduce the costs of training. Developed during the pandemic, logistical considerations were also foregrounded.

By allowing students to virtually try out professional scenarios before experiencing them in real life in a risk-free environment, our hypothesis was they would be better equipped for high-stress 'real life' environments; they would be more familiar with the terminology, nonverbal language, conversation coordination, have more self-confidence and be able to negotiate empathic bonds better. For the Palermo project, we were focussing specifically on affect-based aspects. The feedback we have received so far from the pilot groups has been largely positive; challenges were primarily technical. Recording the students' performance provide the pedagogical opportunity to observe and learn from their mistakes. Among the many benefits that have emerged so far were: knowledge retention, increased enthusiasm and engagement in the classroom, and improved communication and collaboration skills. In this paper we describe the methodology and results achieved so far and link our work to Barsalou and Cheng for context and Braun et al.'s and Chan's work specifically on interpreting in order to suggest paths through which to effectively apply VR to training in the area of 'Language Mediation' and dialogic forms of interpreting more broadly in Italy.

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In the Name of God: What is the Interaction of the Evangelicals on Twitter? A Study Report about Social Bubbles

This paper intends to understand how the relation through different social groups works in Twitter, given the segregation between the various social bubbles. At the beginning, an analysis is made of how the sociability has been changed through the social media and why this new way of socializing has effects on society. Through the comprehension that the identity in the post-modern age is reinforced by the religious fundamentalism, this research aims to analyze the Christians believers in the website. How their religious ethic influence in their behavior online – having in mind also the way in which this moral is recognized, accepted or rejected by other users. To do so, a quantitative methodology is used to obtain data by Twitter's API, collecting tweets through keywords that permeates the religious lifestyle and vary from habits from users that do not share the same belief. Results demonstrate the particularities in this website for being a proper environment to reproduce the phenomenon of the echo chambers and generate interactions of these different bubbles through conflicts. Considering that, the keywords used to collect data in Twitter were chose for being frequent in discussions about the Christians lifestyle such as relationships, beliefs and ways of living – searched in influencers' profiles and about the famous Christians in Twitter. Furthermore, it shows how this specific group is perceived – the religious ethic is not approved – and how it relates to other groups through conservatism.

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Online Generation as a Social Group: To the Question of Age Boundaries

The Internet and social networks play an increasingly significant role in the life of society and, in particular, in the socialization and social development of young people. Today we can say that there is a whole new generation of young people who grew up and socialized under the influence of the Internet culture and online communication (online generation). However, the sociological operationalization of the concept of "online generation" has not yet been carried out: unanswered questions remain about the age boundaries of the online generation, about its features and characteristics. In the presented essay's frame, the question of the online generation's age boundaries will be discussed. This question is discussed from two perspectives: demographic and sociological. That is: 1) a generation as a whole as an age group/demographic community, and 2) a generation as a group of people with similar social and cultural backgrounds. Based on the approach of Howe and Strauss and author's periodization of historical development of the Internet as a social media instrument, the following age boundaries for the online generation of youth have been proposed: 1989–2007.

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The Invisible Intimacy. Relational Dynamics and Couple Support of Women with Vulvodynia: A Nethnographic Inquiry

In the last few years, great attention was given by sociology to the topic of health, understood no longer only as the absence of disease, but as a total state of well-being which follows from a set of factors: psychological, social and relational. This new approach has given the opportunity to study and analyse even those diseases that are poorly understood and which create a condition of invisibility of the person carrying the disease. This includes vulvodynia.

Vulvodynia, a gynecological disease with unknown aetiology, is characterized by chronic pain in the vulva and tissues surrounding access to the vagina. It entails a disabling condition of female sexuality, just because it intervenes incisively in the life of a couple. Indeed, in vulvodynia, sexual intercourse is marked by pain. As a result, partners tend to adopt behaviours that progressively lead to total self-denial of sexuality, risking compromising the composure of the relationship. Therefore, sexuality is an important indicator of perceived well-being and allows shedding light on the dynamics that inscribe the relational life, in particular, that of couples.

Hence, the purpose of this nethnographic study is inspecting how women face this disease (vulvodynia) and cognitive and social resources they carry out to understand it, including those found through the web society, which makes them available to women. Notably, this delving examines two Facebook groups dedicated to the topic, with the aim of highlighting the strategies that women fine tune once they receive the diagnosis of this disease. This research highlights how these contexts turn out to be important, not only to show a subjective sense of the disease, but also to confront problems that come to light in relational life, above all in that of a duo. To conclude, this inquiry has allowed us to notice some profiles of couples that emerge from the centrality assumed by the agency of the woman (in the way she faces the disease) and by the type of support detected by the partner.

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The Role of Social Science in the Digital Era

Social science according to Jurgen Habermas (Frankfurt School, generation II) can be divided into three perspectives. *First,* the empirical-analytic, where this tradition has a purpose and a spirit of control. This tradition views the strong influence of scientific logic (natural sciences), as reflected in the various theories, for example; *structural-functionalism, systems theory*, etc. *The second,* known as historic hermeneutics, where the task of social science in this context is to gain mutual understanding between individuals, various examples that can be classified in this outlook are; hermeneutic, symbolic interaction, phenomenology, ethnography, etc. *The third perspective* is the critical-emancipatory tradition, where in this context the task of social science is to change the structure or system in the framework of social transformation. The sharing of knowledge as stated by Habermas above does not include various developments of all perspectives in social science, such as; postmodernism, poststructuralism, etc. Where these two perspectives stand on a different foundation from the philosophical basis put forward by Habermas, because postmodernism and post-structuralism do not stand on the basis of modernism which believes in the existence of universal truths, or narratives of absolute truth, while Derrida, Foucault believes more in an assumption that the truth of science is nothing but power-narrative. So, if Habermas believes in the grand narrative of modernism, absolute truth, on the other hand postmodernism figures such as Foucault and Derrida believe in small narratives and relativism of truth, however both Habermas and Foucault and Derrida among them still have a point in common, namely they all have concern for various forms of crises that are currently occurring in contemporary era, both humanitarian crises and environmental crises. The various social science perspectives above each have methods to approach the "object of study", such as; *quantitative methods* as commonly used in the empirical-analytic tradition (theory of functionalism, structuralism, systems, etc.), there are methods of verstehen, hermeneutical interpretative, dream interpretation, phenomenology which are commonly used in the hermeneutic-historical tradition, while there are participatory methods (participatory action research) which are usually used in the emancipative critical knowledge tradition. It is not relevant if asked which one is the best, the answer will really depend on what "object" is being researched, while in postmodern or poststructuralist traditions various subjective methods such as phenomenology, ethnography, CDA are commonly used in their studies, because what is studied is text. In the digital era, the various methods described above are still relevant to use. In fact, the digital era enriches and broadens the area of social science studies, including studies on new media such as YouTube, Facebook, What Up, Instagram, etc. Social science can sharpen the study of various new media, even provide a deeper frame of meaning.

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An Internet Ethnography Perspective on Investigating the Possibility of AI-Generated Avatars to Reflect Social Identity in Online Communities

Internet ethnography has reached a new frontier because of the interaction of social identity and technology. With the advancement of artificial intelligence (AI), it is now feasible to create digital representations of persons throughout virtual communities. These representations, referred to as "avatars," can be used to examine how social identity is produced and conveyed in digital arenas. This article addresses the use of artificial intelligence to generate avatars as a means of communicating social identity in online communities. It begins with a definition of social identity and an outline of the theoretical frameworks behind its development and expression. The paper then explores the existing literature on the usage of avatars in online communities, focusing on how they have been used to represent social identity. The article also describes a hypothetical scenario whereby an online platform could employ AI to generate user-specific avatars. This scenario allows us to study the potential implications of utilizing AI-generated avatars to reflect social identity in online communities, regardless of whether such a platform already exists. The article contains a qualitative examination of fictitious user-generated information, such as forum posts, social network profiles, and chat logs, in order to forecast how avatars might be utilized to express social identity in this type of community. The results of this study demonstrate the potential for AI-generated avatars to express social identity in online communities. Specifically, they demonstrate that avatars can be utilized to provide a sense of identification and belonging within a group, as well as to communicate social status, gender, and other aspects of identity. The conclusion of the paper addresses the significance of these findings for internet ethnographic research as well as the creation of online communities. It shows that the employment of AI-generated avatars has significant consequences for our understanding of social identity in digital settings and offers up new study routes into the link between technology and social identity. This work contributes to the expanding body of literature on the convergence of social identity and technology by giving a comprehensive analysis of the use of AI-generated avatars to express social identity in online communities. It reveals that avatars can be an effective method for investigating how social identity is built and expressed in digital spaces and that they have significant consequences for our knowledge of online communities and social identity development in the digital world.

Michele Varini - Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan (Italy)

The Butterfly Dream. New Unexplored Pathways within the Fashion System

In recent years, various fashion brands have experimented with forays into videogames, a subculture peculiar in its imagery, rules, and languages. An interesting case in point is Animal Crossing, a gaming platform developed by Nintendo. The game is a life simulator where users act in a media context with customized avatars. A relevant phenomenon, given the possibility of customizing avatars, is the production by users (and digital artists) of customized "outfits," many of them inspired by collections of major designers. There are profiles where these digital "outfits" are shared, reworked, creating dedicated spaces, especially on Instagram. Within the same platform, another sign of contamination between fashion and digital can be traced in the fashion shows hosted in the medial environment: Animal Crossing has hosted fashion shows by various fashion maisons (Valentino, Gcds, etc.) that have created, ad hoc, digital clothes and accessories, designed to be worn by avatars in the media context of reference, and purchasable directly on the platform.

To address a field such as digital fashion, which moves between on and offline, making even these distinctions obsolete and hermeneutically insignificant, methodologically a netnographic type of investigation was chosen.

A first phase of the research involves an exploratory observation of social networks to identify Instagram profiles dedicated to sharing Animal Crossing fashion. The sampling involves a 'snowball' strategy until semantic saturation is reached: starting from "animalcrossingfashionarchive," the most important profile dedicated to Animal Crossing fashion creation, the research selects the profiles of followers dedicated to sharing content of the same type. Once the data set has been constructed, the research proceeds through a visual ethnography: the images of these digital fashion products are then coded and analyzed to obtain information about stylistic and aesthetic choices, with the aim on the one hand of identifying recurrences/dissonances with respect to the mainstream fashion imaginary. On the other hand, the research aims to reconstruct the fashion imaginaries produced by the users. The mixed approach thus allows for an observation as faithful as possible to the peculiarities of the field of study, which is "fluid", non-static.

Through this investigation it is therefore possible to reconstruct not only how the paradigms of consumption and production, but also the creativity itself behind fashion objects, respond to or modify the trajectories traditionally followed. For this reason, the results of the study also shed light on how the skills and creativity in the reproduction/creation of fashion and imagery with these digital tools are changing, or how they have stabilised and been internalised by users.

The results reveal a conservative dimension: users' imaginaries and productions are mostly aimed at emulating mainstream production and communication. The creative and technical possibilities made available to users, both by social media and the gaming platform, are used and rethought creatively, but with conservative/emulative production goals. An interesting development of the study could be the creation of interview tracks, supported by photographic stimuli, to be submitted to the players, aiming to explore their idea of digital fashion, its artistic and economic value.

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Videogame Street-Level Bureaucracy: from Virtual to Real Contexts

The aim of the paper is to analyse video game works within which it is possible to identify an organised representation of law enforcement or other contextual forms in which street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky, 1980) takes shape whose in-game behaviour is modelled on the user's actions and decisions. Different types of titles (action, narrative, rpg) will be examined to identify common characteristics of the various representations.

Design/methodology/approach

Videogames are works of fiction that represent parts of reality (Longo, 2012). As cultural object (Griswold, 1994) they are a source of social information, a "quasi-social setting" (Longo, 2006) generating hyperreal contexts within which various aspects of reality are amplified and deformed. Through this sociological perspective, it is possible to analyse what happens on screen as actual social situations, although they are simulated ones.

Findings

Starting from the above-mentioned assumption, through the adoption of the role of the ethnographic observer, an attempt will be made to identify the elements common to each representation of the different simulated social contexts to create a generalised representation of the video game street level bureaucracy (VG- SLB). This model will be compared with the theoretical framework proposed by Lipsky to identify and interpret possible differences in its specific characteristics.

Originality

The video game medium does not have the same academic interest that other media possess. However, it is the only medium whose interactive component is particularly developed. In highly interactive social contexts such as those affected by SLB, it would be interesting to see how the interaction aspect between user and street level worker is utilised to understand its contemporary implications and future developments.