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Media activism on and off line by Italian adolescents and young adults

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*Emma
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*Dedicated to Guglielmo,
who is yet to arrive but
already has endured a lot of stress!*

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Appendix

Media activism on and off line by Italian adolescents and young adults

Foreword

At the origin of this research lie two statements that I encountered quite often during my involvement in Media Education both as a student and as a professional.

I will start from the second of these statements, in chronological order, to better clarify my point: in a television broadcast of political information, Al Gore, Nobel Prize for Peace in 2007, declared that “Arab Springs have had the Internet as a tool”¹. The potential of new media² and the evolution of traditional ones, in a system where ordinary people are able to publish news on their own blogs or on social networks, are forcing politicians to work in a communicative environment more complicated than in the past. Political power is obliged to take into account the fact that information is now communicated and shared “from below”³. These changes have been acknowledged by studies of several authors who have dealt with these themes over the last ten years or so. Social networks such as Facebook, Google Plus and Twitter, blogs, platforms like Youtube allow to share information, videos, photos in real time with the whole digitalized and computerized world. Young people who gave birth to the Arab Spring have used these means to achieve their goals, according to Gore’s statement⁴.

Gore’s point and Arab Spring as well have led me to reflect on the activism of young Italians, on phenomena such as “Ammazzateci tutti!”⁵, “Indymedia”⁶, “Movimento 5 stelle”⁷, “Libera”⁸, the “Movimento No Tav”⁹ and others more. In particular, the possibility that the Arab Spring has really of time spent and activities performed¹⁰, but more importantly on how the Internet and Web 2.0 can be a tool for their reaction, for their efforts? What do kids do online? How? How does their online activity cross their offline life? How do online and offline merge in an environment that has no boundaries and where both dimensions are so intertwined that they have become a single dynamic flow of activity?

The political and social implications of Media Education and Media Literacy have always been a point of great interest in my studies and in my research: I have been working in media literacy projects aimed at adults and children and my assumption has always been the trust in the potential of media as tools of communication and exchange of thought, for the affirmation of individual views in an environment of free and democratic exchange with others.

The results which a digital literacy, when politically and socially conscious, could reach seem to have become strikingly manifest, at least in Europe, Maghreb and Middle East, during the

so-called Arab Spring, in the months preceding the riots in Iran¹¹ and in the following months, in Europe, with Spanish Indignados movement. Note that I'm considering only Europe and the Mediterranean area. In fact, a certain caution on such statements, a few years away from those facts and from Gore's assertion, is a must because many studies have been carried out in the meantime and some of these come to the conclusion that Arab Spring seen as an achievement of the Internet is no more than a Western European invention.

Valeriani (2011), professor of "Mass Media, conflict and international politics" at the University of Bologna, places the role of digital media within a narrower border of responsibility.

"It was then that for the first time, driven by excess of optimism, many observers spoke of 'Twitter Revolution', exaggerating the ability of those upheavals of civil society for destabilizing the regime as well as the role that social media would have played in supporting those actions. Their analysis, moreover, omitted the importance of cell phones, maybe greater than that of Twitter, in coordinating protests on the street. However, moving from the events of those days not only in Iran but also elsewhere, you can ask interesting questions about the relationship between professionals and 'amateurs', both in the world of journalism as in that of diplomacy".¹²

One of the two witnesses who helped me to come in and take my first steps into the world of Italian Media Activism, MT, media activist and computer expert, in an interview conducted during the course of this study, referred a condition of mutuality of influences between the facts – the riots and protests – and how the communication of these facts becomes "viral" through the web. About Tunisian facts he told me:

"As long as Arab revolution is concerned, he said [A. Corinth, author's note] that the Internet is not widespread there [in Maghreb, author's note] as it is here, and that this [Arab Spring, author's note] was a construction of the Western media, the so-called 'brain interpretation of the Western media', but that actually this aspect [the use of digital media, author's note] has allowed many of them [Tunisians, author's note] to communicate directly with many of us, this is also true."

In addition, referring to an image virally widespread on the Net, a truck driven by a boy against the gates of the barracks, MT reads as follows:

“At this guy [the one on the photo, author’s note] was shown the picture of the truck and he was told that this was made possible thanks to the Internet, and he said, ‘Do you think I got on a truck and used it to break through the gates thanks to the Internet?’. The concept can be rough, but that picture is not a simple thing, it shows the perception that we have of technology. Surely cell phones were necessary to publish and share that picture. In Tunis, a substantial part of the protests are born with the viral video of the greengrocer who sets himself on fire in XXXX [missing in recording, author’s note]. Exhausted by the harsh social conditions in which he lived he set himself on fire and this was the match in a dry prairie and has ignited protests. But we are talking about a situation already present before [the use of digital media, author’s note].”¹³

While, in this first case, we are not able to tell whether the use of digital media has been designed, in the case of the Spanish Indignados M. T. refers preparation, digital media literacy and deliberate sharing of technical knowledge and communication for the virtual dissemination of material:

“[...] Spanish activists of # May 14 who deal with these aspects, even with the drift that these tools can take. At one point he ask them [an interviewer to Indignados, author’s note]: ‘What do you think about use and dissemination of images, for example on Social Networks?’ And they explain what kind of images they prefer and what they prefer to share or not to share on social networks. They also do proper training to newcomers. Like: ‘If you see something happening during the demonstration, what kind of photos you need to do, what are your rights if a cop comes and wants to take your phone from you.’ The media activism of the third generation is this. And that it has a social value, that’s for sure.”¹⁴

The actual role of digital media in young activism therefore is not a fact given once and for all, but requires, as I will try to explain below, an assessment time to time.

The second of the two statements I mentioned at the beginning of this Introduction, which led me to undertake this work, is one by Jacques Gonnet, a member of the study group on the French Media Education Clemi¹⁵, who said at a conference:

“... [There is a] fundamental link between democracy and media education: there is no possibility of making a newspaper, a magazine under a dictatorial regime because freedom of thought is not tolerated. School, a place of initiation into the values of a society, is part and reveals itself, thanks to media, in a political view of the world. Media education becomes an initiation to democratic practices, means promoting a culture based on mutual rigor of the argument and the enrichment through the diversity of opinions.”¹⁶

This statement by the French scholar has induced me to reflect on how and where young people and adolescents should do their training experiences in media. School? Family? Peers? The three things combined? Something else? Does school adequately prepare young people to use media, in a way that is not just “mechanical” basic literacy but a broader discourse of participation and democracy? As is emerges clearly from the statistical research at national and international level the interest shown by young people towards politics and social participation is low, and so are the OECD values about educational and academic outcomes. Maybe school does not adequately prepare our kids? If we add to these elements the fact that family is perceived by children themselves as ignorant on the subject of new media¹⁷, how did young activists, included the ten who have decided to participate in this research, specially chosen for their activism, understand that this particular type of media can play a role in achieving their socio-political objectives? Is it just a matter of generational choice among the means available?

Gonnet’s words are neat in defining school as “a place of initiation into the values of a society, [which] is part and reveals itself, thanks to the media, in a political view of the world.” But actually, does this really happen? And if so, does it happen “thanks to media”? The Moratti Law¹⁸, the Indicazioni per il curricolo by Minister Fioroni¹⁹, the decree of law 137 by Minister Gelmini²⁰, the School Project 2.0, the cuts to public expenditure introduced by Minister Brunetta have all contributed both to include in curricula the use of new technologies, gradually from the Nursery School on, and at the same time to reduce the funds available to schools, reduce teachers’ number and schedule and thus creating a series of material difficulties in the very capacity of the school system. In addition, the schools that were able to participate in the project School 2.0²¹ were not all the schools on the total national territory, with the result that some institutes were provided with brand new equipment while others were left with old terminals and devices and slower connections. But technological equipment is in itself the key to everything? Providing schools with PCs and connection to the Internet is in itself sufficient to “promote a culture based on mutual rigor of the argument and the enrichment in diversity of opinions”? Aren’t they rather asking school to distort

its task of being a place of cultural transmission critical thinking and reasoning in favour of a constant and never-ending race behind the last generation appliance?

Aims of the research

This study has three objectives:

1. Through observation of the profiles on social networks of ten research subjects, try to understand what kind of social and political activity young people practice online and in which way their network of contacts is structured;
2. Observe and try to understand the flow between socio-political activities online and offline, by the 10 subjects of research;
3. Try to understand what have been the most significant learning experiences that have led the subjects of the research to appreciate the potential of the web as a tool for sharing information related to their commitment, and what the learning experience that allowed them to develop their active citizenship (School? Family? The peer group? Something else?) and what the meaning, phenomenologically speaking, that this same activity takes for them.

The research work

I decided to observe the activities of adolescents and young people for my study; boys and girls aged 16 to 21 years, 10 individuals active in associations, political parties and trade unions. Although by convention we place the onset of adolescence to 13 years, I decided to observe the socio-political activities of adolescents aged 16 because several studies show that at this age the use of the web begins to be significant in terms of time spent, skills, belief that they are more experienced and prepared than their parents²².

At the opposite end of the age range of this sample there are young people. Who are young people in Italy? For the law they are individuals aged 18 to 21 years who are “protected” by the case law. These are known as young adults, protected by welfare policies and the law, both civil and criminal, such as minors. We are facing a particular age range, in which the transition from childhood to adulthood is gradual²³.

The choice of this type of sample of subjects for research, responds to the need to observe different types of individuals: those who are active on the Web, who have had their first significant experience of social or political activism online and offline (although, as we shall see below while dealing with methodology, this distinction is not to be considered in neat terms), and those who vote, who are enrolled in a trade union or a political party, acting as volunteers.

Theoretical approach

The study, that is a qualitative one, has required me to work in an interdisciplinary manner. This has meant moving in the field of Communication Sciences, Developmental Psychology, Science, Sociology and, of course, pedagogy. It became imperative to identify and maintain a common thread that would allow an interpretation consistent both with the existing literature and with the data, both quantitative and qualitative, that I was collecting. Considering that one of the main goals of this work is the attempt to understand the “meaning” that media activism takes for the 10 subjects who agreed to participate in this research, and therefore the motivation that stimulates their activity, the thread was a phenomenological one, especially based on P. Bertolini’s pedagogical declination of the reflections made by Husserl. What does an action, an event or an answer mean to these people, what value does it take, for the subjects of the research? What value universe does take form in the perception of these ten guys that allowed me to come into their lives for an entire year?

For a more practical organization of work, I have grouped the issues that I was encountering in two main areas, the socio-political activism of young people and its communication (combining Sociology and Media Studies) and the construction of a public identity that refers both to Developmental Psychology and to the specific characteristics of the Net and to the interfaces of social networks. It is, therefore, also referred to Computer Science.

In my search for Youth Movements on the Net, I felt a strong need to connect to the “communicators”, the expert of the Net, such as the CBIT researchers at the University of Roskilde in Denmark. In particular, I was able to work along with prof. Tufte, who has been working for years in youth movements in poor countries of the world such as some areas of Africa and South America, and who has built over time a research and project team particularly active between the Scandinavian countries and these areas. Prof. Tufte has shown great interest towards my research project, given the current socio-political situation in our country and the proliferation of youth movements of contestation. My stay in Denmark for a period of six months within the European Project Marco Polo has proved an excellent opportunity to exchange and compare also because it gave me the possibility to move in various universities such as the Danish Roskilde, indeed, Copenhagen and Aarhus.

In addition to the dialogue with communicators and experts of the Net and youth movements, in Denmark I was also able to better identify aspects more closely related to qualitative research methodology and data analysis.

Methodology

The methodology chosen for my study is qualitative, and it is the Media Ethnography, and the tools are observation and in-depth interview. The observation was conducted online, through the Facebook profiles of the ten subjects of research, and offline, in the cases in which the subjects allowed me to attend public and party meetings, project presentation events, but also public events.

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- ¹ Gore A., Nobel Peace Prize winner, 2007 as host at “Anno Zero”, political programme conducted by M. Santoro on Rai Tre channel, 19.05.2011.
- ² With the term “new media” I mean here the web 2.0.
- ³ Valeriani A., (2011), *Twitter Factor, come i nuovi media cambiano la politica internazionale*, Rome, Laterza.
- ⁴ Archivio Antropologico Mediterraneo, year XII/XIII (2011), no. 13 (2); I. Vitelli (2012), *Tahir. I giovani che hanno fatto la rivoluzione*, Il Saggiatore, Milan.
- ⁵ *Ammazzateci tutti, giovani uniti contro le mafie*, <<http://www.ammazzatecitutti.org/>>, last view 07th August 2013.
- ⁶ Indymedia, <<http://italy.indymedia.org/>>, last view 07th August 2013.
- ⁷ Beppe Grillo’s blog, <<http://www.beppegrillo.it/movimento/>>, last view 07th August 2013. For further details: L. Mosca, C. Vaccari (2011), *Nuovi media, nuova politica? Partecipazione e mobilitazione online da MoveOn al Movimento 5 stelle*, Franco Angeli, Milan.
- ⁸ Associations, names and numbers against mafias, <www.libera.it>, last view 07th August 2013.
- ⁹ No Tav, La valle non si arresta, (No Tav, the valley doesn’t give up) <www.notav.info>, last view 07th August 2013.
- ¹⁰ Livingstone S. et al., (2010), *Risks and safety on the internet. The perspective of European children. Full findings and policy implications from the EU Kids Online survey of 9-16 years old and their parents in 25 countries*, European Union and LSE, London, <www.eukidsonline.net>; Telefono Azzurro-Eurispes (2012), *Report Infanzia Adolescenza*, Milan; Unicef, Istituto degli Innocenti (2011), *Child Safety Online*, Florence.
- ¹¹ Particularly notorious became the video of Neda’s killing, the Iranian young woman accidentally shot during a demonstration in Teheran, although it has been seen more on tv than on Twitter, where it were “rebounded”.
- ¹² Valeriani A., (2011), *Twitter Factor, come i nuovi media cambiano la politica internazionale*, Rome-Bari, Editori Laterza, p. 4-5.
- ¹³ *Interview to M. T., media activist*, in Appendici, p. II.
- ¹⁴ *Interview to M. T., media activist*, in Appendici, p. XXIX.
- ¹⁵ French research centre on Media Education.
- ¹⁶ Gonnet J., (2002), *Medi@tando Conference*, Igea Marina, RN, Italy.
- ¹⁷ <<http://www.na.camcom.it/contents-sa/instance4/files/document/10004478Capitolo5.pdf>> Last view 05th August 2012.
- ¹⁸ Moratti Law, 53/2003, <<http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/03053l.htm>> Last view 04th November 2013.
- ¹⁹ Indicazioni per il Curricolo per la Scuola dell’Infanzia e del primo ciclo d’istruzione, <http://www.indire.it/indicazioni/templates/monitoraggio/dir_310707.pdf> Last view 04th November 2013.
- ²⁰ Disposizioni urgenti in materia di istruzione e università, <<http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/decreti/08137d.htm>>, last view 04th November 2013.
- ²¹ <http://www.scuola-digitale.it/classi-2-0/il-progetto/introduzione-2/>
- ²² Livingstone S. et al., (2010), *Risks and safety on the internet. The perspective of European children. Full findings and policy implications from the EU Kids Online survey of 9-16 years old and their parents in 25 countries*, European Union and LSE, London, <www.eukidsonline.net>; Telefono Azzurro-Eurispes (2012), *Report Infanzia Adolescenza*, Milan; Unicef, Istituto degli Innocenti (2011), *Child Safety Online*, Florence.
- ²³ Moro A. C., (1996), *Manuale di diritto minorile*, Bologna, Zanichelli.

Chapter 1

Theoretical framework

Foreword

The present study requires multiple theoretical approaches. In consideration of the fact that my goals are:

- understand how young people engage in social and political activity online and how their networks are structured
- try to outline the flow of their socio-political activities on- and offline;
- investigate the role of school, peers and family in shaping socio-political education and media literacy,

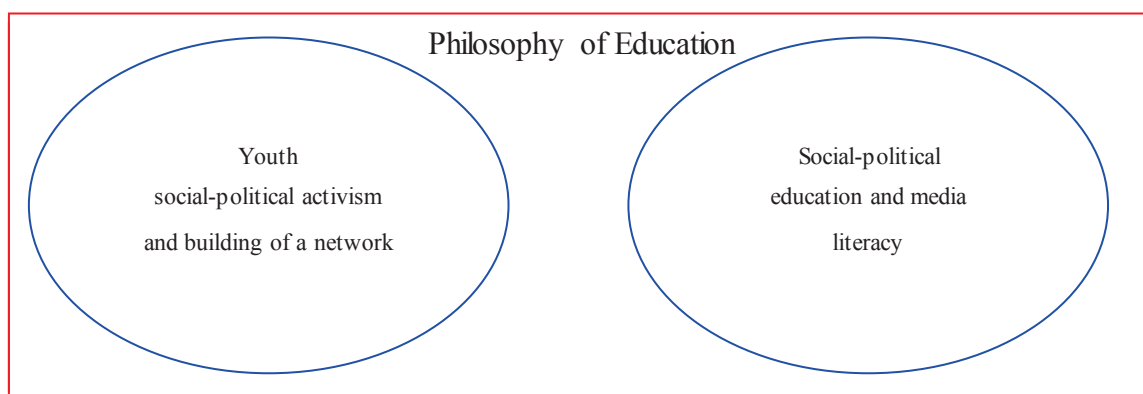
the need to involve multiple disciplines appears clearly.

In order not to compromise the complexity of the issue, it's crucial to maintain a framework to guide the research work. Philosophy of Education therefore will be the main frame of all my work.

For practical reason I divide the in two different areas the issues tackled:

- socio-political activism and the construction of a network,
- socio-political and media education of young people involved in the study, with a reference to the construction of a public identity specifically built within the Net.

Both areas will refer to Communication Science, Psychology as well as Sociology.



1. Theoretical framework

Philosophy of Education provides therefore the theoretical framework of this research. Piero Bertolini¹, educationalist, applied Husserl's phenomenological approach to Educational Sciences, thus starting a debate and a stream of studies about Philosophy of Education. What does it mean, in a work such as the present one, to apply phenomenological pedagogy? It means basically

“(...) to adopt as a reference for interpretation always only the direct experience that people have done in the past, do in the present and presumably will do in the future. This involves refusal of any abstraction in interpretation and thought”²

It means, as Bertolini puts it, to call into account specific situations, small events, different kinds of constraints that induce a person to live their reality in a certain way on the basis of an intentional relationship established between the subject and objective external data; it means also to consider the individual's ability to impress their intention on reality, making it be in a certain way, but with the understanding that this intent by the subject is always limited by reality itself:

“(...) Empirical research conducted on the basis of phenomenological pedagogy is exquisitely qualitative; it is aimed at grasping the experiences of individuals involved in the fact researched (of course without trying to reach a full understanding of it, which would probably turn into a serious risk of “total thinking”) and is interested in understanding their view of the world from which, we think, attitudes and behaviors are heavily affected”³

How does this apply to the present study? Addressing the socio-political activities of 10 subjects involved in this project, we try to investigate the “sense”, the “meaning” (phenomenologically speaking) that, for the same 10 subjects, that activity assumes. How and where starts their interest in politics or social? How does it develop? What is the fertile ground for it to sprout and grow? What educational experience is already given? What future aim drives these activities? What past, what present and what future have brought the subject to that particular view of the world?

If observation of the online activity made by the subjects provides with objective data about the use of the web – posts' numbers and nature (links? Video? Pictures?) – and about the network of contacts that you build – contacts numbers and comments in the discussions –, in-depth interviews and observation of offline activity help us in understanding the “meaning” or the value of those

specific activities for those who make it, namely a subject immersed in an environment made by family, school, social and historical circumstances. Piero Bertolini explains:

“(…) It is a method based on strictness (rather than exactitude) or, if you prefer, in a critical rationality outstretched to avoid any misplaced concretization and therefore any replacement of authentic reality with a sort of exasperated mathematization / objectification”⁴

At this point it becomes crucial to clarify what we mean by “sense”. Bertolini tells us that we are referring to:

“…Consciousness and its operation, no matter whether emotionally, socially or intellectually connoted (…). In any case the intervention of the subject, who is its undisputable source, is undoubted (…). It refers to the personal history of each individual, whose dignity has an irrefutable truth and even an objectivity a posteriori that must be taken into account in order to understand it authentically. (…). No object is grasped in itself, since it needs to enter into a relationship with a person to get a meaning. This is obviously not to deny the existence of an objective reality (…) but to support and accept the idea that reality (…) can not be grasped by man / subjectivity if not in the direct relationship with man in his constitution”⁵

The phenomenological approach provided by P. Bertolini will constitute a reference also in the relationship between education and politics. In his book “Educazione e Politica” (2003) Bertolini goes back to the Greek classics to recover a relationship between individual, his education and political apprenticeship seen as a fundamental basis for being a full-fledged citizen, where an individual who refuses to get involved in communitarian was considered even “superfluous”. I’ll discuss this in more detail in the conclusions to this work.

Given the phenomenological approach as a frame of this research, I will try to move in the other disciplines that this study involves and to take a few steps in the field of sociology.

2. Media literacy. Not only a grammar, but social links and balances of power

The approaches of Communication Sciences and Sociology will be useful for a better understanding of the type of communication implemented by the research subjects, the context in

which they move and the specificity of the medium they use (in this case Facebook). It's important to know how interfaces, affordances and algorithms may influence the use of a medium in order to better understand the communicative tools available to boys and girls who use it to share their activism.

The web 2.0 has been formally recognized in 2004 during a conference of publisher O'Reilly Media. However the step from 1.0 to Web 2.0 hasn't meant huge changes at the technical level. What has changed is the participation of users in the process of building information and the interaction between people and their profiles. The web is therefore a window where people can show themselves.⁶

At this point, we try to define what a Social Network⁷ is. In their book "I Social Network", M. Cavallo and F. Spadoni (2010) first explain that:

(...) There is a social reality, regardless of the Internet (...) it implies a number of people related to each other by particular relations of interaction, a definition that has nothing to do with the Internet, and that suggests that anyone, in the course of their daily lives, moves, more or less consciously, in a dense and untangled network of interactions. (...) Strictly speaking Facebook, Myspace, Bebo, Netlog, Twitter, Badoo, LinkedIn etc., are not Social Networks in the strict sense, but only web sites that offer Social Networking services, platforms that provide the ability to create a network of contacts through the well established modes of communication via web, such as email, chat, forums, blogs.⁸

Others consider Facebook as "a phenomenon global and yet localized in groups of «friends»"⁹

Cavallo and Spadoni argue that a single definition of Social Network is not so simple to give. What are Social Networks? What is their relationship to society? The two scholars refer to them as to structures made by *knots* and *connections*.

"The former can be composed of individuals and organizations that are connected to each other by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as values, visions, ideas, financial exchange, friendship (...)"¹⁰

The latter, *connections*, are characterized by the relationships' content, which can be different for each situation. As the authors state, the predominant types of connections are based on five areas of interest: exchange of resources, information transmission, power relations, the interpenetration between the borders and the emotional attachment¹¹. Within Social Networks these are revolved

into as many categories: “Friends”¹², “Friends of Friends”, “Family”, “Work”, “University” and more, that emphasize the heterogeneity of the network itself¹³. Even Castell (2001) writes about it and defines networks as sets of interconnected knots that are the oldest form of human interaction, only brought to new life in our time, which is characterized by an expansion of the web¹⁴. For this reason, Castell speaks of “Internet Galaxy” which replaces the “Gutenberg Galaxy” mentioned by McLuhan.

Relationships are therefore the most important elements in Social Networks. Without them the nodes among individuals would be completely disconnected¹⁵. Communities are networks of private emotional ties that provide sociability, support, information, a sense of belonging and social identity.¹⁶

With the birth of Web 2.0 these relations have lost the concepts of space and time as we have known them up to that time. We are facing a temporality that brings together past, present and future. Everyday life is faster and simultaneous and at the same time spatiality is canceled by this new form of time transformed into a stream where everything is present at the same time¹⁷. In this new concept of space and time that we have built on the Internet, new forms of sociability are developing, where it is not important to know each other in order to communicate, rather we meet in the moment in which we, like e- mail, chat, forums, blogs are available at the same time and where the watchword is “share”¹⁸. For the same reason Social Networks become “places”; virtuality is concrete, we can not consider it a non-place as in the past because emotions live inside it. For similar reasons we can speak, with Geert Lovink, of “osmotic interfaces between the inside and the outside” between the web and everyday life¹⁹. According to Cavallo and Spadoni, cyberspace is a new arena where reality and virtuality meet and where users, when they log in, do not disconnect from society, but it accompanies them in their relationships, in their experience and in their objectives²⁰. At the same time the transit from Social Network to daily life offline increases individualism. Individuals build relationships and create personal communities that move around him²¹.

Concepts of space and time can be, and are also in this study, read according to several points of view. What I just described is the sociological approach, but there are more. The first one refers to the theoretical approach of this study, phenomenological space that is yes what appears in front of our eyes, but it is never something neutral nor homogeneous, because each subject experiences it differently; therefore, there is not only one space, but more space given by multiple subjectivity:

“Space is phenomenologically understood is the living space of experiencing, seeing, imagining, hearing, touching, of moving away and coming closer, of contamination and

*involvement with things and objects in that incessant movement that is the flow of life
(...) a living space (...) through the concept of intentionality”²²*

This view applies quite well, in my opinion, to the personal space that each user builds in the network and that within the limits imposed by the system is built in their own image through the use of texts and photos shared on their bulletin boards. We'll see it in the data analysis and conclusions of this work.

A third concept of space is the anthropological one related to research methodology and , in this case, the application of anthropological and ethnographic methodology to the environment of the web. This third aspect is tackled more in detail in the methodological chapter.

In Social Network there is also a concentration of social media that are designed individually as e-mail, chat rooms and forums, which nowadays are functions of one system, all accessible at the same time and using the same digital identity. Each person posts one discussion that can get on board with others who are “friends” on Social Networks²³. Social networks are media that create a community using a combination of tools that belongs to the field of communication, information and update. The result is that the Social Networks absorb social media and provides them with a new more current form²⁴.

3. Balances of power

There has been talk about the limits of communication and general expression imposed by interfaces and structures of the various systems available on the Net. In fact, when you get into your network and you decide to become a producer or a sharer of information, you enter in a market environment that imposes rule and where not only goods but also information is exchanged. Not only that, you get into an environment where different forces play their own game. In this regard, the authors of the Collective Ippolita, in their book titled “L’acquario di Facebook”, explain:

“The use of technology is not neutral at all (...). Technique is power, the use of technological tools implies the exercise of skills that come from knowledge (...) The crucial point is that the use of tools for communication explicitly dedicated to socialization changes not only the identity of individual users, but also collective identity. The use of technology in the social sphere is a source of social power (...).

Social power concerns the more subtle and less obvious ability to shape, make more or less desirable a given action, address, persuade, create attitudes”²⁵

And:

“Skill [in the use of the Social Networks, author’s note] is a knowledge-power that is completely dependent on heteronomous production (directed by others according to rules set by others) in the world “out there”, especially if I have not the slightest idea of how Facebook technically works (and therefore I’m not independent from my medium) while using it compulsively. In fact, when due to the Default Power the rules of Facebook or another medium change, as a user I remain puzzled (...) In a way I am the obsolete one, the one who needs to be updated in order to be adequate to the system”.²⁶

Sharing of information and news is the main item in Social Networks²⁷. According to a statement by MT, privileged witness of this work, it is also the main mission of the media activists. The relationship between users allows the sharing of information reinforced by manipulation of each individual user. Some authors argue about “collective intelligence”, meaning a kind of giant brain and turning “cogito” into “cogitamus”, so that:

(...) People can put together their memories and their projects in order to produce a co-operative brain that pursues common objectives. (...) Nevertheless, the rapidity of onset and the amount of messages created they go prejudice the duration and quality of the contents, which become less important and are short-lived. (...) The greater the choice of content, the higher the risk of information overload, that interferes with the rapid judgment, for which little information is needed. (...) When we are in possession of too much information, we run the risk of confusing the important content and the background noise of the message”²⁸.

In this system of information sharing people are completely free to stand in one or more groups. At the same time they are free to leave a group at any time, if they are not satisfied with the intellectual opportunities that it offers. These groups, these communities are cemented by a common production of knowledge and sharing. This gave birth to the figure of “nomadic user”. All users who want to increase their knowledge tend to intellectual nomadism and at the same time are responsible for their own knowledge, and that of others in the group. To that end users make available to other knowledge and skills.

Cavallo and Spadoni identify some indicators to understand whether a user is a “major actor” within his community. These indicators are “centrality” and “centralization”. According to these authors, poor participation, the presence of isolated members, weak relationships between individuals are negative elements for the collaborative construction of knowledge²⁹. As the authors state, the power of the Internet is the ability to create and share content. That’s why they speak of “communicracy”, word that emphasizes the concepts of communication and community³⁰. We’ll see, when analyzing the available data, if the subjects observed in this study can be considered or not “relevant actors” for their community³¹.

4. Facebook: The Social Network most used in Italy

Facebook has been designed with the aim to be clear, easy and without too many colours or animations in order to have a good responsiveness time³². Within Facebook it is easy to identify the different sections of a profile; in this way in a short time you can find information on the owner as his or her favourite groups, school affiliation, photos and more. Facebook is so easy because you do not want the user to be distracted by other things but focused on content³³. However, as Collective Ippolita notes:

“An account on Facebook, Twitter, Google+ is not a property of the user. It’s a space that you can use for free in exchange for his willingness to be sectioned into portions of commercially recognized interest”³⁴

In this regard however Cavallo and Spadoni discuss the real power of control that these systems have on the user and evaluate the possibility of a dialectical form between mainstream culture – determined and imposed from above – and a grassroots culture resulting from that part of the public who does not passively enjoy contents transmitted by the majors but manipulates and reuses them to their own purposes.³⁵

5. Privacy and identity on the Net

Privacy and identity are further elements to be taken into account when entering the Net. According Collective Ippolita³⁶ privacy does not exist on Facebook because of what is called the “default power”. It means that the Social Network can suddenly and completely change the privacy settings of thousands and thousands of people without any prior notice. Changing only a few parameters, Facebook can make all our data public³⁷. Also thanks to so-called “total transparency”,

Facebook, Google, Twitter, Amazon and others are able to sweep away the privacy of users in order to establish a reign of customized consumption³⁸. We will see later what this entails.

According to the same authors, users have given Google a hegemonic power stemming from their “search intent”³⁹, which also affects the construction of information technology:

“I am what Google knows [about me, Authors Note]. My research and my online moves, my acquaintances and my preferences, my email and my pictures, my private and public messages, everything that makes up my identity is managed “for my own good” by Google. (...) In the “cloud computing” FOG spreads: no fog, but fear (Fear of Google), fear that a monopoly of knowledge poses a threat not only for individuals but also for businesses and state or supranational authorities”⁴⁰

It’s worth reminding that when one opens up a profile on a Social Network, such as those involved in this research, we are confronted with the image that they want to give of themselves. This is not just the result of choices made by individuals about how they want to look and not just a matter of being or not who you claim to be. Interfaces, affordances, specific limits of the instrument they use, affect the construction of the public image. Hine states (2000):

“(...) Technology is causing a change in the conception of identity (...) [but] conventional categories such as identity, race and sexuality are far from being deleted, there is considerable evidence that these are still an important way in which network users organize their understandings”⁴¹

To begin with, however, let’s define “identity” from a psychological point of view. The formation of identity is a psycho-social process that arises through the progressive evolution of individual in the values and roles that the social context offers.

“The formation of identity is accomplished through the ego’s capacity to integrate skills, beliefs and identifications of childhood in a new configuration that takes into account not only idiosyncratic factors, but also the implications of the historical, cultural and social environment in which individual lives and with which he interacts. Identity is configured as a dynamic synthesis of a process of integration between infantile past and the future in which expectations and personal values confront the expectations by society. The result of this synthesis process is expressed precisely in

*the acquisition of a sense of identity to which any experience of self can be reconducted*⁴²

In identity construction “integration” is thus the key word, meant in three levels:

- be integrated as unique and consistent persons despite the multiplicity of roles that one can play in his/her context and with others;
- be integrated over time, that is to have continuity between what you were, what you are and what you will become;
- be integrated into their social environment and feel the recognition by others of their own identity and continuity⁴³.

Self emerges as a complex object, a kind of coral reef made of the experiences that shape it. Applying this concept to the study that is being presented, we can state that a political or social identity grows and strengthens in the same manner indicated by Phenomenology or through the experience of past, present and future that interact in the construction of a world view as well as, following the above mentioned psychological thread, in the construction of one’s own identity in relation to others.

Once given a “definition” of psychosocial identity as long as this study is regarded, I will try now to decline it in matters concerning the identity or identities on the Net.

As suggested by the authors of *Collective Ippolita*, the first thing that we share in Facebook is in fact our identity, represented there by name and photo. The photo is not really a requirement but real name is highly required as a guarantee of total transparency. The reason stated by Facebook is that if you use your own name other people can easily find you, because Facebook allows you to “connect with friends and the world around you”⁴⁴. Date of birth and gender are required to prevent subscription by less than thirteen years old. Virtually nickname matches real name and surname⁴⁵.

According to Cavallo and Spadoni the profile corresponds to digital identity⁴⁶, and digital access in a Social Network is possible only through a process of self-observation and self-representation. From a psychological point of view, this process has three components:

- the first infos required on a Social Network are categories such as physical appearance, interests, values, etc. This causes people to use the same categories for themselves, thus fragmenting personality into different parts;
- the second element is exhibition. People share public information about themselves. Private self is transformed into a public performance;

- subjectivity is transformed into a text / video / picture, which are codes by which users perform themselves.⁴⁷

In fact, people can easily not fill out all the information that the Social Network requires. They can also lie and hide their true identity⁴⁸.

The same authors speak of “multiple identities”. This concept does not mean necessarily that people are lying in a Social Network, rather that many elements of our life and identity can be represented in the same space. Cavallo and Spadoni argue that on the Net people are much more real than in real life, just because they show more facets of their character⁴⁹.

Nowadays you can also share on a Social Network a profile opened on another platform, making your identity still more complete⁵⁰. For example, you can share on Facebook your profile on Anobii or Couchsurfing and, in this way, you can share with the community of Couchsurfing what you do and with the community of Anobii what you read.

The profile photo is very important. Usually people choose to insert a picture where they appear likeable or in a sexy pose, something that will attract the attention of people. Do not forget that Facebook originated as a “speed dating” platform, giving chances to meet someone in the broadest possible circuit. In order to date more, people show what they believe is the best of themselves.⁵¹

According to Cavallo and Spadoni, “despite disembodiment, beauty and body are always present in the Social Network through the use of profile photo and albums, where people fix their image, but identity is the result of negotiation between our choices and interaction with others⁵². “It’s amazing how many details of their lives people are willing to tell in order to be the center of attention”⁵³, a kind of emotional pornography that responds to the ideal of absolute transparency stated by Facebook.

“What’s on your mind?”, “Add your relationship? Are you married? Are you single?”. But the most curious fact is the blog-style Diary of Facebook. Information posted yesterday is no longer relevant today and you are forced to post soome new if you want to be active, as in an eternal present.⁵⁴

According Collective Ippolita, Facebook feeds an illusory world where there are only friends and no enemies, and the worst is that, in order to keep friends, instead of meeting them, you need to spend as much time as possible to manage your profile, in a spiral of real addiction (FB addicted).⁵⁵

In this regard they coined the concept of “pancake people”:

*“Today I see among all of us (including me) the replacement of the inner complexity with a new type of self-evolution, which occurs under the pressure of the excess of information and the technology of the “immediately available”. A new self that needs less a robust cultural heritage, given that we are becoming “pancake people” more and more, wide and flat, connecting with that vast network of information we access simply by pressing a button”.*⁵⁶

Collective Ippolita recognize also a form of peculiar self-control in people who constantly examine their digital existence, check their board of Facebook, their Twitter followers, their phone, their e-mail, their Skype profile and continually update their profiles in order to be always up to the digital world.⁵⁷

*“When the group identity is built on the basis of sentiments as elementary as a “Like”, on the one hand it is necessary to continuously repeat what you like and what you don’t, on the other hand it is equally necessary to know in real time what the others like, in order to avoid unpleasant deviations from the identity that reinforces our sense of belonging. Cement the identity implies the control of others and self-control”*⁵⁸

Be careful, though. On Facebook it is not possible to say that you “don’t like” something: according to the authors of Collective Ippolita, disagreement is not formalized by the Facebook system. As you “connect with friends and the world around you”, as facebook’s motto tells, so everything can only please us. The group of friends and acquaintances of life offline is thus repropounded, and the possibility to say “I don’t like” is not provided, in a social bubble that tends to recur continually.

Returning to identity, this is not just a psychological or sociological concept, on the Internet it is also a technical issue. In relation to this issue, other reflections emerge from the interview with one of the two witnesses of this work, MT, media activist and computer technician. These are not only very interesting but allow, through this hybridization approach, to have a more wide perspective.

MT talks about two types of identity on the web. One is active, the other passive. Speaking of the first he states that:

“You build actively [your identity, Author’s Note] because when you’re on Facebook there are a number of interests that must be certified. You go on Facebook and it asks you, “what are your favorite books? Your favorite movies? Your favorite quotes? Your favorite shows?” More, “what are your favorite products?” For example, the page of Nutella is one of the most clicked. In an active way you do so. You give Facebook a lot of information about yourself and your interests.⁵⁹

MT is here referring to a public identity built by actively providing information to the host system. Pointing to what we like and what pertains to our personal data, we provide the system an “about us” that will be translated in terms of sales through advertising offers that are based precisely on the data and preferences that we give. In this case, the construction of identity is considered “active” by virtue of our own communication to the system. Through this active profiling Facebook, Google and others can work on “sentiment analysis” and on “opinion mining” in order to best identify the categories of goods that users want.⁶⁰

With regard to the passive way in which we construct our identity on the Net in MT says:

Google is a monopolist in the field of search engines: now when someone says: “I made a search on the Internet”, it is obvious that he has done it with Google, even though Google is not the only search engine but it’s what we all use because it is the easiest and the most complete. At Google they have realized a fact that speaks volumes about our perception of reality: that we look for things that people who have our same interests look for (...). In the mid-2000s Google began to think about the custom searches and profiling of people to make sure that the service is cut out on you like a dress. (...) When you go to Google and click an item and you go to see and maybe it’s not the one you’re interested in, and you go back, they know that that item was not in your interests, and the next time they discard it. (...)

You build your identity passively according to your searches on Google and the things you choose. [In this way, Author’s Note] we are losing a human aspect, which is that of “waste” and “serendipity” (...) We are at the mercy of algorithms that decide for us (...). We will conform to the majority of people who have your same interests (...) This is the internet bubble.⁶¹

This is pivotal. Being on the Net, each of us run a high risk of living in a “bubble” that again and again suggests to us our interests and tastes, which aligns us to others on the basis of

consumption and searches, proposing even pages and sites that we “could like” (as stated in Facebook) as well as people we “might know” because they have our own interests (as derived from the research done on the Net) or live in the same city or have studied in the same school and so on. If on the one hand this can reassure us about the outcomes of our researches, on the other hand it is alarming because it erases any possibility of encountering something different with which to compare, in a continuous proposition of our world, unique and impenetrable if you do not know deeply the system and you don’t have the tools to allow yourself an opening to the other and different. This is an identity that is constructed “passively” as MT puts it, meaning that we do not directly provide the information but Google retrieves it by recording every movement in the Net, in a process that gives us a world that is always equal to itself.

There is another very interesting excerpt in the interview to M.T., about the identity we build on the Net posting specific materials, links, cartoons, articles, videos, photos, in our profile on a Social Network, building our “environment”, our “space”. It’s a way to show others who we are, at our best or sometimes, as a joke, at our worst.

In this sense, the primary election of the “Grillini”⁶² movement is interesting. What do they do? Five minutes of video very often constructed with a video camera pointed at themselves, where they should theoretically respond to questions, which means you for one that is called Gemma del Sud, that was a girl who took any piece of news and commented on for ten minutes in the Net often also talking nonsense (...) This girl was just talking to her friends, but other people began to see this video and (...) began to answer and comment, (...) and she replied, (...) also had fans. (...) Trhn suddenly the girl disappears from the Net (...): probably did not support the pressure or, more properly speaking some adult came and closed everything.⁶³

“Virality” is another factor to be taken into account. As explained by several authors (Cavallo and Spadoni, 2010; Hine 2000) the message we put on the Net is modified independently from us. What we write can be, and often is, interpreted in a different way from our intentions, can be amended, revised, reposted and, at that point, we are no longer “owners” of it, even if, as happened to the girl above, the sender can receive even aggressive reactions.

As do this whole information – pedagogical, philosophical, and sociological – in the work that I’m presenting? In the same complex and intricate manner as they occur in the phenomenon we are trying to understand. Identity that is constructed in the Net is a public identity that comes from life

experiences, past and present, from a vision of the world that we report in our digital profiles. Identity is no longer just a socio-psychological concept that relates to us and to our environment, but is confronted to a global market of profiling and viral bubbles that are likely to leave us naked in a place where we do not have the tools and skills to a conscious use of the medium. Identity is also the socio-political identity that, in 10 subjects, has been formed over the years acquiring its own meaning, a meaning that drives activity not only online but also offline... An articulated plot that can not be ignored when studying a phenomenon as articulated as the media activism of young people, while recognizing that the answers can be neither exhaustive nor objective, but that they will rather give birth to more questions.

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- ¹ Bertolini P., (1988) *L'esistere pedagogico. Ragioni e limiti di una pedagogia come scienza fenomenologicamente fondata*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia; (2001) *Pedagogia fenomenologica. Genesi, sviluppo, orizzonti*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia.
- ² Bertolini P., (2001), *Pedagogia Fenomenologica. Genesi, sviluppo, orizzonti*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, p. 13.
- ³ *Ivi*, p. 14.
- ⁴ *Ivi*, p. 18.
- ⁵ *Ivi*, pp. 103-105.
- ⁶ Cavallo M, Spadoni F., (2010), *I Social Network. Come internet cambia la comunicazione*, Milano, Franco Angeli, p.50.
- ⁷ In this work I refer to "Social Network" as to a network of relationship which do not have nothing to do with the web and "Social Network", using capital letters, to intend the network we can find in the Internet.
- ⁸ Cavallo M, Spadoni F., (2010), *I Social Network. Come internet cambia la comunicazione*, Milano, Franco Angeli, p. 12.
- ⁹ Collettivo Ippolita, (2012), *Nell'acquario di Facebook, la resistibile ascesa dell'anarco-capitalismo*, Milano, Ledizioni, p. 15.
- ¹⁰ Cavallo M, Spadoni F., (2010), *I Social Network. Come internet cambia la comunicazione*, Milano, Franco Angeli, p. 13-14.
- ¹¹ *Ivi*, p.14.
- ¹² "Friends" on a Social Network like Facebook is an extremely relative concept. They are called "friends" but the points of separation between the owner of the profile and these people can be so many: from simple acquaintances, to co-workers, to those who are interested in an activity, to others who collect "friends" on Facebook. Many studies show that for hundreds of contacts that people has on a Social Network they actually connect only to a few dozens.
- ¹³ Cavallo M, Spadoni F., (2010), *I Social Network. Come internet cambia la comunicazione*, Milano, Franco Angeli, p. p.75.
- ¹⁴ Castells M., (2001), *The Internet Galaxy, Reflection on the Internet, Business and Society*, New York, Oxford University Press, p. 1.
- ¹⁵ Cavallo M, Spadoni F., (2010), *I Social Network. Come internet cambia la comunicazione*, Milano, Franco Angeli, p.18.
- ¹⁶ *Ivi*, p.56.
- ¹⁷ *Ivi*, p.51.
- ¹⁸ *Ivi*, p.56.
- ¹⁹ *Ivi*, p.58.
- ²⁰ *Ivi*, p.69.
- ²¹ *Ivi*, p.69
- ²² Bertolini P., (2001), *Pedagogia Fenomenologica. Genesi, sviluppo, orizzonti*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, p. 32.
- ²³ Cavallo M, Spadoni F., (2010), *I Social Network. Come internet cambia la comunicazione*, Milano, Franco Angeli, p. 64-65.
- ²⁴ *Ivi*, p. 69.
- ²⁵ Collettivo Ippolita, (2012), *Nell'acquario di Facebook, la resistibile ascesa dell'anarco-capitalismo*, Milano, Ledizioni, p. 24-25.
- ²⁶ *Ivi*, p. 40.
- ²⁷ Cavallo M, Spadoni F., (2010), *I Social Network. Come internet cambia la comunicazione*, Milano, Franco Angeli, p. 99.
- ²⁸ *Ivi*, p. 99-105.
- ²⁹ *Ivi*, p. 105-107.
- ³⁰ *Ivi*, p. 127.
- ³¹ *Ivi*, p. 106
- ³² When we talk about the time we wait for when we are opening the home page of a web site, we have to consider two types of definitions: *page load time* for the effective time that system needs to charge a page; and *responsiveness time* that is the perception of time that the user has. There are some tricks to distract the user with other information while the system is working
- ³³ Cavallo M, Spadoni F., (2010), *I Social Network. Come internet cambia la comunicazione*, Milano, Franco Angeli, p. 155.
- ³⁴ Collettivo Ippolita, (2012), *Nell'acquario di Facebook, la resistibile ascesa dell'anarco-capitalismo*, Milano, Ledizioni, p. 66.
- ³⁵ Cavallo M, Spadoni F., (2010), *I Social Network. Come internet cambia la comunicazione*, Milano, Franco Angeli, p. 90.
- ³⁶ Collettivo Ippolita, (2012), *Nell'acquario di Facebook, la resistibile ascesa dell'anarco-capitalismo*, Milano, Ledizioni. www.ippolita.net The word "Collettivo" suggest that this book is a common writing.
- ³⁷ *Ivi*, p.11.
- ³⁸ *Ivi*, p. 23.

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- ³⁹ *Ivi*, p. 13.
- ⁴⁰ *Ivi*, p. 13.
- ⁴¹ Hine C., (2000), *Virtual Ethnography*, London, Sage, p. 20.
- ⁴² Mancini T., (2010), *Psicologia dell'identità*, Bologna, Il Mulino, p. 26.
- ⁴³ *Ibidem*.
- ⁴⁴ Homepage www.facebook.com
- ⁴⁵ Collettivo Ippolita, (2012), *Nell'acquario di Facebook, la resistibile ascesa dell'anarco-capitalismo*, Milano, Ledizioni, p. 29.
- ⁴⁶ Cavallo M, Spadoni F., (2010), *I Social Network. Come internet cambia la comunicazione*, Milano, Franco Angeli, p. 77.
- ⁴⁷ *Ivi*, p. 78.
- ⁴⁸ *Ivi*, p. 79.
- ⁴⁹ *Ivi*, p. 80.
- ⁵⁰ *Ivi*, p. 98.
- ⁵¹ Collettivo Ippolita, (2012), *Nell'acquario di Facebook, la resistibile ascesa dell'anarco-capitalismo*, Milano, Ledizioni, p. 31.
- ⁵² Cavallo M, Spadoni F., (2010), *I Social Network. Come internet cambia la comunicazione*, Milano, Franco Angeli, p. 81.
- ⁵³ Collettivo Ippolita, (2012), *Nell'acquario di Facebook, la resistibile ascesa dell'anarco-capitalismo*, Milano, Ledizioni, p. 31.
- ⁵⁴ *Ivi*, p. 33-34.
- ⁵⁵ *Ivi*, p.46.
- ⁵⁶ *Ivi*, p. 37.
- ⁵⁷ *Ivi*, p. 38.
- ⁵⁸ *Ivi*, p. 28.
- ⁵⁹ Interview to M. T., media activist and computer scientist, *Appendages*, p. XXIV
- ⁶⁰ Collettivo Ippolita, (2012), *Nell'acquario di Facebook, la resistibile ascesa dell'anarco-capitalismo*, Milano, Ledizioni, p. 114.
- ⁶¹ *Interview to M. T., media activist and computer scientist, Appendages, p. XXI-XXII*. For more information, Collettivo Ippolita, (2012), *Nell'acquario di Facebook, la resistibile ascesa dell'anarco-capitalismo*, Milano, Ledizioni, and, Collettivo Ippolita (2007) *Luci e ombre di Google*, Milano, Feltrinelli
- ⁶² Members or supporters of Movimento 5 Stelle led by Beppe Grillo, which achieved circa the 25% of votes in last Italian Election.
- ⁶³ Interview to M. T., media activist and computer scientist, *Appendages*, p. XXV-XXVI

Chapter 2 Methodology

Foreword

For a study like this, that intends to investigate some of the many aspects involved in media activism, such as media literacy, communication, public identity, the use of Social Networks, etc., it is not only necessary to refer to several approaches but also to various investigation and data analysis instruments.

1. Media Ethnography

The methodological approach is the ethnographic one which, in this case, applies to new media. The participant observation planned by this method implies that the researcher should enter the context in depth, the environment where the observed subject lives, being well aware of the influence that he/she him/herself can exercise on the observed subject's behavior. (Bailey, 2006; Bryman, 2012; Corbetta, 2003).

In my personal opinion, ethnography is the best method, to combine with the phenomenological theoretic approach that is at the base of this work. Phenomenology considers the participants of the study, the researcher and the subject of the research, as debating subjects who try to build together a common path aimed at understanding the meanings and values that a context, actions and situations of the environment which is being studied take on for the observed subject (Bertolini, 1988, 2001; Caronia, 1997).

Geerts (1973) states that:

*“man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning”.*¹

Geertz again, talking about the ethnographic method, asserts that:

“doing ethnography is establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on. But it is not these things,

techniques and received procedures, that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, «thick description»”²

Geertz used to distinguish between two types of description, “thin description”, which is a mere description of a fact, and “thick description”, which represents the object of ethnography; a deep reflection and interpretation of a fact, of its meaning and its value³ with “thick description” it is possible to achieve one of the goals of anthropology, the expansion of human discourse. “Thick description” allows a better understanding of the context where human symbols operate⁴. Precisely by virtue of this approach to the research of the meaning and the value gained by an object or a situation in a given context or for a given subject, I’ve decided to add this methodological approach to the theoretical one of phenomenology.

Now the question is to apply ethnography to new digital communication media.

The Internet is considered a “cultural object” and, as such, something existing, recognizable and investigable. What makes the Internet a cultural object are, as it always happens, the talks made about it (Beneito-Montagut, 2011; Bryman, 2012; Caronia, 2010; Hine, 2000). When people, the users, the media talk about the Internet, about its speed, its costs, its applications, about the sharing of videos, pictures and links, about the social issues related to it, the symbols linked to it, they are recognizing it as a “cultural object”. As Hine states (2000), one of the reference scholars for media ethnography, the same technology can have many different cultural meanings in different contexts and, at the same time, can be seen as created by a cultural context. The perception of what’s the use of a media and what it does symbolize has an influence in determining its use. Hine also says that web users are themselves involved in the construction of technologies, and this happens in two ways: through the practice by means of which they understand the web and through the contents they actually produce⁵. Not only Hine, but also Tufte (2001) states about this that *“Identifying and analyzing ritualized media use in everyday life provides the key to a deeper understanding of contemporary everyday cultures and the role of the media in these”⁶*.

The use of ethnography to investigate the web has been widely discussed in the last 15-20 years. In 2006, Wilson was speaking about the “paradox of conducting a non-traditional ethnography in a non-traditional non-place, using traditional tools”⁷. Since then, several things can

be and are considered in a very different way. Today we work, study, play with web 2.0 that allows the user to have a productive role, not only a consumer role anymore. What's more, since 2005 Social Networks have spread over, further increasing the availability of communication media. Not only this, but we've also stopped using such terms as "virtual reality" or "non-place", considering this spaces as new spaces of reality that get connected to offline life within one flow, as Castells states in his many works. Today, an important issue on the use of ethnography on the Internet concerns the matter that we must forget the dichotomy "virtual world"/"real world", "online"/"offline"; since the mid-Nineties, researchers have been speaking of a *state of suspension* between these conditions⁸. The cyber-space through which the users move does not imitate the real world, but rather creates a quick, new, immediate, multi-levelled world also thanks to the websites' structure⁹.

What happens when there is a connection between an online and an offline place? According to Hine (2010), the space of the offline place reaffirms itself online¹⁰. The Internet presents a multi-temporal and multi-spatial order¹¹.

*"This is particularly apparent in the use of time and space to insert the online world of the Internet into offline context, and vice versa. It is through these processes that offline events are portrayed meaningfully on the Internet, and events on the Internet are portrayed offline, for example in the media."*¹²

Sociologists M. Cavallo and F. Spadoni (2010), state that cyber-space is a new forum where reality and virtuality do meet, and when users enter with a login, they don't get disconnected from society, which actually accompanies them in their relationships, in the experiences that they live, in their goals¹³. According to the same authors, that's not a "virtual reality" but a "real virtuality" in the sense that these occurrences are not fictitious or potential in the future. They do belong to and have effect in reality¹⁴. Beneito-Montagut (2011) shares the same opinion, and even rejects the definition of "Virtual Ethnography" unless the research work is only limited to such contexts as Second life or World of Warcraft¹⁵. As a consequence, in our society we should consider the Internet as a real social dimension, which is to say an expression of what we are¹⁶. Actually, it's all part of daily life, therefore a re-examination of the ethnographic field of work is necessary¹⁷.

2. Space and time in Media Ethnography

The main issue in the application of ethnography to the web is the re-definition of the concepts of space and time. What is it that makes any old space an ethnographic space? In which way can we consider time on the Internet?

In her book, Hine (2000) explicates the concept of *place*, from classic ethnography to its application on the Internet. A characteristic of the classic ethnographic method was travel. The ethnographer used to physically move to another region and to spend a sufficiently long time with the subjects of his/her research. It was something important, especially in the case of tribes where people used to hunt or were head-hunters or even used to perform particular sacred rites. Going on site, the ethnographer could “breathe” the context, observe, ask questions, interview people, take pictures of them, in short, live with them.

What’s more, there was a contract between the ethnographer as author of a story and the reader, who actually trusted him/her precisely because of her/him being an eyewitness of what he/she was writing. In the course of time, this kind of travelling has totally disappeared. Ethnography has been used by anthropologists in order to investigate local groups of people. In particular, small groups inserted into a bigger one, for example the college girl students or the inhabitants of a suburban area of a big city. The travelling has been limited as for the mileage, but it still requires the physical presence of the researcher.

Therefore, the question for an ethnographic study of the Internet is: how is it possible to live in an online setting? For how long? 24 hours a day? Is it possible to analyze an object, a website for example, without participating in it and call it an “ethnographic” work? ¹⁸

What makes the Internet a cultural place? According to Hine (2000) the answers are two characteristics that we find in the web: the presence of relationships between the users and the texts they produce. The Internet was already considered a place of relationships when the first online chat, the first forums, and the first discussion groups appeared. The same scholar states that: *“Between the poster of one newsgroup message and the author of a response, a space opened, and that space was a cultural context”*¹⁹

and the texts become new ethnographic material available for analysis by the researcher. Texts are an important part of life and it isn’t possible to ignore them. Hine again (2000) pays

attention to the context in which the texts are inserted. It is particularly important to know the situation in which a text is added in order to judge its meaning.

Another important issue concerns the authenticity of the data published online. Virtually any person can lie on the web about his/her gender, age, job, political or religious views. According to Hine (2000) this is not so important. It is true that people can lie and probably do it, but what counts is *“how a culture is organised and experienced”*²⁰

Hine wrote all this before the rise of Social Networks which have had their main diffusion since 2005. This lying is likely to happen on a Social Network, but it's a datum that the policy of a space such as Facebook tends to remove by applying the concept of total transparency; in the case of this study, gender identity or the truthfulness of religious statements or other is not important, while the correspondence of socio-political activities carried on online and offline actually is.

Again according to Hine (2000) another important step for the ethnographer is to be experienced of what it means to be a user of a specific media²¹. Therefore in this study, my personal experience as a Facebook user is also important, what are my skills regarding this Social Network and how aware I myself am of the negotiation of my identity, particularly in the relationship with the subjects of the research.

As Hine (2000) states again,

*An ethnography of the Internet can look in detail at the ways in which the technology is experienced in use. In its basic form ethnography consists of a researcher spending an extended period of time immersed in a field setting, taking account of the relationships, activities and understandings of those in the setting and participating in those processes. (...) The aim is to study how the status of the Internet is negotiated in the local context of its use*²².

3. To write in Ethnography

One of the main characteristics of the ethnographic method is writing, which is the result of the interpretations made by the researcher, criticized by quantitative scholars for its hybrid nature with narration (Bailey, 2006; Bryman, 2012; Caronia, 1997; Corbetta, 2003; Hine, 2000). The

ethnographer writes his/her personal interpretation of the environment and this is influenced by the culture, the values and the meaning given to it by the researcher him/herself. The cultural background of the researcher affects the relationships he/she establishes with the subjects of the research and his/her interpretation of the historic-social-economic situation he/she finds in a particular moment, in a particular place²³.

Therefore, as Geertz states, an ethnographic description is interpretative²⁴. It gives information from another Country, another context, and with the material that is produced in an extended time, especially of a qualitative kind and with a high participation, we:

“can be given the sort of sensible actuality that makes it possible to think not only realistically and concretely about them”²⁵

Several authors have wondered how an observation taking place on the web can be participant. What does the relationship between the researcher and the observed subjects look like? The first one watches from the distance what the second one writes and produces²⁶. To observe a website does not require its maker to know that he/she's being observed. The website is public and access is free; in this case the relationship researcher-subject changes in an important way, as the direct interaction and the consciousness of being observed that can cause a change in the subject's behavior are missing.

The launch of a Social Network such as Facebook in 2005 has confused the issue further because, in order to be able to follow a person and access his/her contents, the researcher must be a “friend” of his/hers. This has led back to the awareness of the presence of a different individual who, in that moment, is observing. This way we go back to the issue of the influence exercised by the researcher on the subject or the context.

4. The use of Ethnographic methods on the web

The use of ethnographic methods with the purpose of investigating the Internet phenomenon is quite recent, and this is because in the Nineties the researchers made the mistake to think that youth activism had radically decreased, compared to the previous decades. But they actually were not looking there where activism had moved, that is in the new electronic and digital communication media that one by one were being made available to users²⁷.

Several issues must be kept in mind when we use ethnographic tools on the web:

- Ethnographers who study the web, usually try to adjust classic methodological tools to this context and speak of the web as an environment based on connections, differences, heterogeneities e inconsistencies and space, made of flows, has a role in the organization of social relationships (Castells, 2001). Global and local are interconnected²⁸ and create what Morin calls a “glocal” world²⁹.
- The Internet transforms the act of writing into “speaking”³⁰ and this kind of communication implies two important factors to be taken into account: the first one is the lack of a face-to-face relationship that makes the non-verbal body language unavailable; the second one has to do with the time needed to process a thought into a word, which is different in the face-to-face relationship and in the thinking-writing relationship of web communication. As a consequence, the result of the communication itself is different, because the second one is more organized³¹.
- The Internet is a huge data bank, even though they’re not tangible data, they’re not on paper, they’re not a book. It’s a data bank that, on Facebook or Twitter, users modify every time they update their profiles³². An additional difference lies in the fact that the user posts on Facebook a “diary” that works like a blog, which is to say a scrolling diary. Thanks to this characteristic it is also possible to look up very old posts.
- Qualitative researches need to be made on shared texts; in particular, in the case of my research I will refer to articles, events, videos, personal notes, images, etc. that represent a way to build up a social reality and express oneself³³.

In the specific case of my study, how can I use ethnography for the Social Networks? What is true for one website, that has an only author who doesn’t immediately compares his/her idea with other people’s, is not true for a Social Network where people are linked in a community of hundreds of people. How many “friends” does one have on a Social Network? How many of them is he/she really in contact with? How many of them do interact with the observed subject and how? These and other questions have accompanied the construction of the various tools used for this work, which I will explain by dealing with them individually.

A further clarification. This is a work of a basically qualitative kind that analyses the activity of ten active subjects. The qualitative tools used are in-depth interviews and the participant observation of online and offline activities. Given this starting point, some quantitative tools have become necessary during the work, such as a closed question questionnaire and the use of an evaluation form of the online observation, trying to quantify communication, which we'll see in detail in the paragraphs devoted to them.

5. Resolution of the methodological issues

So, the observation on the web makes some methodological issues arise about the level of involvement of the researcher. The ethnographic method implies an involvement, a participation between the researcher and the subject of the research, but as we saw, the use of this method with digital media confuses the issue. For example, it is very different to observe a website, a Blog or a profile on a Social Network; and it can also be very different to observe activities on different Social Networks such as Facebook or Twitter due to the specific characteristics of each one of the two platforms. The observation of a website or a Blog can allow the researcher to remain very distant from the people he/she is observing, who can even not know that they are under observation, when or why³⁴.

The situation is different if the researcher observes a profile on a Social Network. In the case of Facebook, which is the case of this research, the researcher must be a "friend" of the subject's if willing to read the materials published by the subject on his/her wall. This means that the subject of the research knows that somebody is observing him/her and his/her activities and this brings back up the usual problem of the ethnographic method: the subject can change his/her behavior. At the same time, there's another issue: the observed subject can enter the researcher's profile, because a relationship on Facebook is mutual, and access his/her wall. This means that the researcher can in turn be observed, perhaps more than the traditional researcher used to be. The materials posted by the researcher can be downloaded or shared by the subject and, last but not least, the researcher can influence the subject of the research with his/her posts, such as videos, links, photos or other.

Another question, in the case of this kind of observation, is what is the best choice between showing the real personal profile, that the researcher habitually uses on the Social Network, or showing a fake profile, especially created for the research work, as it sometimes happens. What can

the reaction of the subject of the research be, in front of an especially created profile that shows no previous history, that appears to be measured and calculated as for what is published? The subject could refuse to be in contact with a profile of this kind. In the period of my search for the subjects, a girl refused to participate in the study, explaining her choice with the impression of being under the Big Brother's lens, while she didn't want to be "watched". This is a question of great importance, because you go and ask to strangers, active citizens making political or social choices of a certain kind to share their experience with someone "studying them". I was asking some adolescents and young adults to let me read their posts, watch their videos and photos. The only solution I could adopt to show my "good intentions" as a researcher who would have respected their privacy, used their materials only anonymously, only selecting materials regarding political or social activities, never letting be known matters of a personal kind, was to play "on the same level". I should create a confidence relationship with the subjects I was trying to involve in my research (Orgad, 2005)³⁵. For this reason, I decided to open my personal Facebook profile to the research and to stay in touch with the ten subjects.

In my personal attitude towards the media, this has led me to two choices: first, there are groups of young activists clearly known, also to the Police, for violent acts, where some people have been reported or even arrested. For my personal safety, I've decided not to get in touch with these groups³⁶. Second, I've reinforced my habit, already put into practice before, not to post pictures of minors nor to "like" the pictures of minors that my Facebook "friends" publish on their walls, in order to prevent the Social Network system from taking the said minor's picture on my personal wall.

Hine (2000) speaks of a researcher's proficiency in using a certain media. It's always difficult to self-evaluate one's own skills, and to do so one should move on an objectivity level. I am a Facebook user since 2008, which implies, at the beginning of the research work, 4 years of experience on the Social Network. I use the platform to share any possible kind of communication, links to newspaper/magazine articles, videos, images. I know the basic communicative possibilities such as posting a status, sharing other people's materials, tagging friends, deciding who can access my posts individually, as a group or totally excluding the "public" function. I do carefully inform myself every time the System changes its privacy settings, I have informed my contacts that I do not wish to be tagged in the pictures that portray me and I periodically check the availability of images of me with Google web search in order to make sure there are no pictures coming from the Social

Network. I have chosen a profile only open to “friends”, and drastically limited the pages which I “like” in order to minimize the circulation of my materials. My use of Facebook, independently from the present research, regards the integration of communication with far-away friends and relatives, the sharing of materials with political, social contents or that I find interesting. It’s also a recreational instrument, of free sharing of funny materials or, on the contrary, of drama plays with my favorite actors.

So, the ten subjects have had access to part of my private life, to my political, religious, social views, and to recreational materials. Our exchange has been total. I won’t deny that, in the beginning, the idea of having granted access to ten young strangers has caused some embarrassment. However, the observation has actually lasted almost two years, from the moment of the first contact with each one of them to the end of the research. During this time, some “familiarity” has grown with some subjects, a mutual recognition that has tempered the embarrassment. This element has also been related by the subjects interviewed in depth at the end of the work, to whom I’ve asked how had it felt to be observed.

A Social Network like Facebook, with its “diary”, represents a precious data bank. At any moment it is possible to access the posts of the subjects of the research, even the oldest ones. This characteristic of this platform gives a valid solution to the issue of “time” on the web. The researcher doesn’t need any more to be present 24 hours a day on the subjects’ page or to download everything right away. Facebook stores all data, proving to be a precious resource.

6. Mixed methodology, online and offline

As we will see at the end of this chapter, the investigation tools used for this study are of different kinds; it’s an observation of the subjects’ online production evaluated through a quantitative collection of data, a closed question questionnaire, some in-depth semi-structured interviews, the participant observation of some offline activities. A crucial issue in choosing these tools is not only the fact that some of them pertain to qualitative research and others to quantitative research, although the whole work actually maintains a qualitative approach, but also and especially the fact that the use of these tools implies a constant passage from the researcher-subject online relationship to their offline relationship. The relationship established between me as a researcher and the subjects has constantly moved from this side to the other side of the screen³⁷. Face-to-face

encounters have intersected with communications via Facebook mail and the observation of online activity. Being invited, I've attended some offline activities organized by the subjects, and then again the questionnaire was sent via Facebook. At the end, there has been one more offline meeting with some of them for the in-depth interview.

If the triangulation of qualitative-quantitative and online-offline investigation tools offers a larger quantity of data on one hand (Hine, 2000), on the other hand, how to manage this relationship on the two sides of the screen has been one of the important issues of the methodological aspect of this study. What approach to follow? What "language" to speak? How much can the fact that I'm exactly twice the age of these subjects and that I belong to an Institution such as the University of Bologna matter? How much to leave to a more "relaxed" relationship given by the greater spontaneity of relationships among young people and the communication on a Social Network and how much to keep a more "professional" attitude given by my role that also implies my ethical responsibility as a researcher? The solution was to choose a linguistic attitude and a relationship-wise approach that would keep these two elements together as much as possible. On one hand, to maintain a professionalism that would assure the subjects about the use of their data, about the seriousness of my research work and, on the other hand, to keep an attitude not too far from the simplicity and linearity offered by the Facebook media, through which we've mainly been in touch. In fact, in every communication having as a goal a further contact (in the case of the request for completing the questionnaire or the request for the in-depth interviews or the invitations to events organized by them), although using friendly informal communicational ways, also with the use of emoticons, by means of the tools made available by the Social Network, it has always been fundamental to clarify the purpose of the new investigation form, the respect for privacy, the way in which they would have happened, the fact that the material was at their complete disposal at any time, should they be willing to look at it, in addition to the availability of the complete text at the end of the work.

I've registered some of the most interesting reactions in relation to my presence at the subjects' offline activities. With one of the subjects, called Giacomo in this work, it was easy to see each other in local demonstrations and at public meetings of the Party. In these cases the greetings were spontaneous and also accompanied by the ritual physical contact that usually accompany a greeting in Italy (a handshake or a kiss on the cheek). On the contrary, in two occasions I was "erroneously" invited by Giacomo to two appointments with his group of high-school students at

the Union's headquarters. I'm saying "erroneously" because he had included me in a sort of mailing list on Facebook that informed me of his union activities. During the first one of these appointments, Giacomo made it openly clear to me that my presence was useless in that occasion. He thought that what I was going to see wouldn't be of any use for my research. I did not insist and left. It is part of the choices related to the methodology of this study not to be insistent or intrusive there where an unclear reaction to my physical presence was envisaged. During a second meeting, again with the same purpose, namely the communication to high-school students, in the hall made available by the Union, Giacomo allowed me to stay but introduced me as a friend from University, "something too long to explain" and moved on.

Given the amount of his political and trade-unionist activities and of his online presence, Giacomo was selected for an in-depth interview. Which never took place. The appointment was postponed several times due to his study and activism engagements and once because some communication was not read in time. As previously chosen, on a methodological level, I decided not to ask any further, passing the request to another subject.

On the contrary, Francesco invited me to the booths of his Party and to the presentation of his motion in favor of the candidate he was supporting. Once we met in person, his attitude was very welcoming and smiling, he greeted me with cordiality, happily accepted the in-depth interview also leaving room for a further dialogue between us and he made his pieces of writing regarding the motion available to me for my research work.

Similarly Elena, whom I met for the first time in a café in the university area, devoted much time to me telling me about her political and voluntary activities and making her contacts available to me. Not only this, but she invited me to an event she had organized in the section of the Party she collaborates with, using it as a meeting place for me and Dimitri. She said yes to the in-depth interview and revealed to me that she had followed my activities abroad related to this study.

So, different reactions that put me from time to time in the condition to keep a "friendly" attitude but with the firm intention to maintain a confidence relationship based on their tranquility about the use of their data, of their profiles, of their images. Considering that during two actual years of contact both on Facebook and in everyday life, nobody have quit research, all 10 of them have completed the questionnaire, 4 out of 5 have allowed me to interview them with no problems and no one has ever asked to look at the material while in progress, given the opening of my

personal Facebook page for the use of this research that has also lead to comments and to the sharing of materials, I think I've succeeded in establishing a confidence relationship with the subjects.

7. The creation of the sample. Criteria

The object of this study is “Media activism among Italian adolescents and young adults and its repercussion on offline life”, therefore I needed to observe the activities of active citizens using web 2.0 to share their commitment, living in Italy and being within a specific age range (16-21). People able to use all kinds of tools made available by the web such as websites, Blogs, Social Networks... My job was to follow them wherever they moved on the web. Therefore, the subjects suitable for my sample had to meet these particular requirements:

- ✓ being between 16 and 21 years old at the moment of the recruitment;
- ✓ living in Italy, in order to delimit my research work to the situation of this country;
- ✓ being committed in activities of a social or political kind as volunteers in Associations, Institutions, NGOs, Political Parties, Unions or the like;
- ✓ using the web to communicate their activities and their commitment.

By convention, we consider adolescence to start at age 13. Starting from this age, I've decided to work with adolescents aged 16 and older, because several studies show that at this age the use of the web starts to be more significant in terms of time devoted to it, skills, and the firm belief of being more skilled than one's parents³⁸.

I have made reference to “young adults”. Who are the “young adults” in Italy? They're people from 18 to 21 who are protected by Italian law in terms of welfare, in case of civil or penal crimes, in a very similar way to minors. It's a particular age range during which the passage from minor to legal age is accompanied gradually³⁹.

The choice of this kind of sample meets the need of having subjects:

- ✓ active on the web because already having the necessary skills,
- ✓ with a profile on a Social Network or authors on a website or a Blog;
- ✓ with experiences of online activism;
- ✓ old enough to vote, at least for the Chamber of Deputies;

✓ old enough to have a subscription to a Union or a political Party.

In order to create the group of subjects of the research for this study, I've worked on the Bologna territory. This city in the North of Italy has the most ancient University in Europe, which is a reference point for students from all Italy and for many foreign students. The Alma Mater has about 87,000 Italian students for the academic year 2011/2012 and about 6000 foreign students divided into the 5 campuses of the Emilia Romagna Region⁴⁰.

At the same time, Bologna is a city with a high percentage of immigrants from Southern Italy, from the Mediterranean area and from Eastern Europe. In this city you can have, in the research sample, boys and girls from the North and South of Italy and the first generation of immigrants born in Italy⁴¹.

What's more, Bologna is historically a reference point for social and political issues of the country.

As in many other Italian cities, here are the offices of the main political Parties, Unions and Associations of a social kind and No-Profit groups.

According to Hine (2000), it's not so important for the ethnographer to share the same time or the same offline space of the subjects of the research, what's important is how the ethnographic project is conceived and that the researcher pay attention, when registering the material, to the specific moment and context in which the text itself is produced⁴². Being technology, the Internet is not always the same in the course of time, it's a process in progress and the negotiation of what it is, of what we can do with it and of how to understand it is also in constant progress⁴³.

This is one of the reasons why this study can be considered as "temporary", (Caronia, 1997) related to a specific time and place that might be different tomorrow. Other reasons for the uncertainty and singularity of this study are related to the fact that this sample includes ten young people, therefore a non-statistically relevant number, who live in the same city but were born in different places, who attend University, who have been living for twenty years under a mainly right-wing government, who have been contacted and observed in a period of world financial crisis, who are activists and who use a certain media that, in this specific case, is a Social Network, Facebook, as it appears, regarding its communicative possibilities but also as for its privacy settings, in 2012/2013. It's all temporary, provisional. That's actually the reason why, as suggested by several authors (Bailey, 2006; Bryman, 2012), I'm specifying the passages made in this study in a detailed way so as to allow a deeper understanding and a possible repetition of them, also indicating the critical points.

From January to May 2012, I attended the public assemblies of political parties and contacted their offices in the city to ask for an appointment in order to explain my research and its objectives and get an authorization to contact young members. All the political and union⁴⁴ offices received two official documents on headed paper of the Department of Education of the University of Bologna with the references of the Tutor and Co-Tutor of my work. One of this documents was describing the research project, while the second one was a copy of the letter that I would have given the young members to invite them to participate in this work. In the same way, I contacted the main Associations present in the city: Emergency⁴⁵, Telefono Azzurro⁴⁶, Amnesty International⁴⁷, Green Peace⁴⁸ and the Scouts. I've had replies from: Partito Democratico⁴⁹, SEL⁵⁰, Movimento 5 Stelle⁵¹. The first two Parties belong to the Left-wing Coalition; Movimento 5 Stelle is a movement born on the web, whose leader is a comedian⁵². This Movement is very well known for collecting the protest votes. I've had no replies from the right-wing Parties Popolo della Libertà⁵³ and Lega Nord⁵⁴. I've also had a reply from Cgil Union⁵⁵.

In this way, in about 3 months I contacted a boy and a girl. An interesting datum is that, when I presented my research project, I found much caution among young people engaged in the political field and it was very difficult to find people willing to participate in the work. Given the difficulty in finding subjects in this context, I decided to opt for the method of *a snowballing sampling*⁵⁶. According to this method, that more strictly belongs to quantitative research, it is possible to contact one first subject of the research within the private sphere of the researcher. Then the first subject creates the conditions for the researcher to meet his/her acquaintances interested in the same themes. If this method, on one hand, can make the mechanism of "recruiting" of new subjects easier, on the other hand it limits the very extension of the research territory of the subjects, as it ties them to the relationship network of the first subject. However, the choice to adopt this method was forced by the difficulty to find political activists willing to be approached without somebody else's intercession. Therefore I decided to choose this system in favor of a wider number of political activists to observe during my work. After picking out the first two subjects, one within a Union, the other within the Sel Party, I've asked them to introduce me to other young people, colleagues or acquaintances, meeting the sample criteria. Only one of the two subjects, the one belonging to the Sel Party, introduced me to two more subjects.

The response from the Amnesty International youth group was completely different. They replied to me in a very short time and 5 girls, including the Regional Manager of the Youth Group, decided to participate in the research during our first meeting. The youth's behavior in the social field has been completely different⁵⁷.

In the month of June I also got a reply from the Emergency group, but the recruiting of subjects was already finished. I already had the 10 subjects I needed for my work. Other Associations never replied to my letters.

All of the reached subjects have a Facebook profile and, from the third subject on, they've actually all been contacted, as suggested by the second one, via email on this Social Network, indicated by the subjects themselves as the easiest and most immediate way to reach people.

During my first email contact on Facebook:

- ✓ I didn't immediately ask for their "friendship" on the Social Network so as not to be considered invasive or indiscreet in asking access right away to the materials published on their personal page and to avoid giving the subjects I was contacting the idea of being watched by the "Big Brother", actually the impression indicated by those who refused to participate in the work;
- ✓ I introduced myself as a PhD student in pedagogy, I explained how I had got their name and who was the contact source. The source him/herself was included in the email for reference;
- ✓ I briefly explained to the potential new subject of the research my goals and their role;
- ✓ I asked for their age because, in case of underage subjects, I should have asked by Law for their parents' authorization to participate in the work;
- ✓ I asked them for an appointment to introduce each other face to face and present the research in detail.

During the face-to-face appointment,

- ✓ I asked them if they were interested in being part of this work;
- ✓ I asked them to become "friends" on Facebook and/or tell me a Blog or website where to follow their activities, in case they had one;

- ✓ At the end of the appointment, I asked them to introduce me to a friend engaged in the same kind of activities.

During a students' protest organized by Cgil, the main Italian trade union, I met the first subject who decided to participate in the work. For privacy reasons, he will only be called by his given name, Giacomo. During an assembly of Sel Party, I met the second subject, Elena. She introduced me to the third and fourth subjects, Dimitri and Francesco. Francesco introduced me to Elia. Rossella, Eliana, Sabrina, Naissa, Luisa are friends and colleagues at Amnesty International.

The criterion of this work is to follow the subjects wherever they move on the web. In this case:

10 of them have a Facebook profile,

3 out of 10 have a Twitter profile, but don't use it a lot,

1 of them has a Blog, but doesn't use it a lot,

For all of them, the communication activity is concentrated on Facebook and that's where the observation was carried out.

8. Who are the boys and the girls of the sample?

The sample is composed of 6 girls and 4 boys whom I am going to call by their given name to protect their privacy. All 4 males are engaged in political activities, 1 girl is engaged in political activities, 5 girls are engaged in social activities.

Three subjects have an institutional mandate, they are Giacomo, Elena and Rossella, in particular:

Giacomo was 18 years old when he accepted the invitation to participate in this work. He was born in Bologna (North of Italy). He's a high-school student. He has an institutional mandate as Provincial Coordinator of the Network of Secondary-school Students in Bologna for the Cgil union. During the occupation of his school, a Humanities High School, in autumn 2012 he invited Maurizio Landini, the General Secretary of Fiom⁵⁸, which belongs to Cgil, to speak to the students. Giacomo is also engaged in the Sel Party.

Elena was 20 years old when she accepted to participate in this work. She was born in Bologna, too. She studies Law and she has a Humanities High School diploma. While attending high school, she organized an event and invited G. A., one of the key informants of this research, a journalist who writes against the mafia, to talk about mafia with her classmates.

Elena has an institutional mandate as Representative for the Sel Party, Bologna City Center Section. She is also a volunteer in the prison of the same city. She has a profile on Facebook and Twitter, but the second is much less used than the first one.

Rossella was 21 years old when she accepted to participate in this work. She was born in Naples (South-West of Italy). She has an education in Liberal Arts and she studies International Development and Cooperation at the University of Bologna. She has an institutional mandate as Regional Manager of the Amnesty International Youth Group. She has a Facebook profile.

The other subjects do not have an institutional mandate but they are volunteers or members of political parties.

Only one subject, during the year of observation, hasn't done any offline political activities because he says he does not identify himself in any Party or subject among those in the current Italian panorama. It's Elia. However, I decided to keep him in the group for two reasons: the first one is the quantity and the quality of the comments and the publications concerning the political events which took place in Italy in this period; the second one is that he is also the only one in the group who has declared to vote for a Right-wing Party. His relationship with Francesco, a member of the Democratic Party, and with Elena, a member of Sel, both parties of the Left-wing coalition, could presuppose a contradictory debate between the three of them on political issues. In a context such as that of Facebook which only envisages relationships with "friends", with no comparison at all with those who don't fall within your bubble (Collettivo Ippolita, 2012), this becomes an interesting element.

Francesco was 20 years old when he accepted to participate in this work. He was born in Bologna. He attended a Humanities High School and now he studies Political Science at the University of Bologna. He is a member of the youth section of the Democratic Party. He has a profile on Facebook, on Twitter and a Blog. Only the first one is used with regularity, while he has not developed the other two, as he will explain in the in-depth interview.

Dimitri was 19 years old when he accepted to participate in this work. He was born in Trapani (Sicily). He attended a Humanities High School and now he studies at DAMS⁵⁹ at the University of Bologna. He follows the youth movements present in Bologna. He has a profile on Facebook and on Twitter.

Eliana was 20 years old when she accepted to participate in this work. She was born in Campobasso (Center-South of Italy). She attended a Teachers' Secondary School and now she studies Philosophy at the University of Bologna. She is a member of the Amnesty International Youth Group. She has a Facebook profile.

Naissa was 20 years old when she accepted to participate in this work. She was born in Bologna. She attended a Science High School. She studies International Development and Cooperation at the University of Bologna. She is a member of the Amnesty International Youth Group. She has a Facebook profile.

Luisa was 20 years old when she accepted to participate in this work. She was born in Potenza (South of Italy). She attended a Humanities High School. She studies Law at the University of Bologna. She is a member of the Amnesty International Youth Group. She has a Facebook profile.

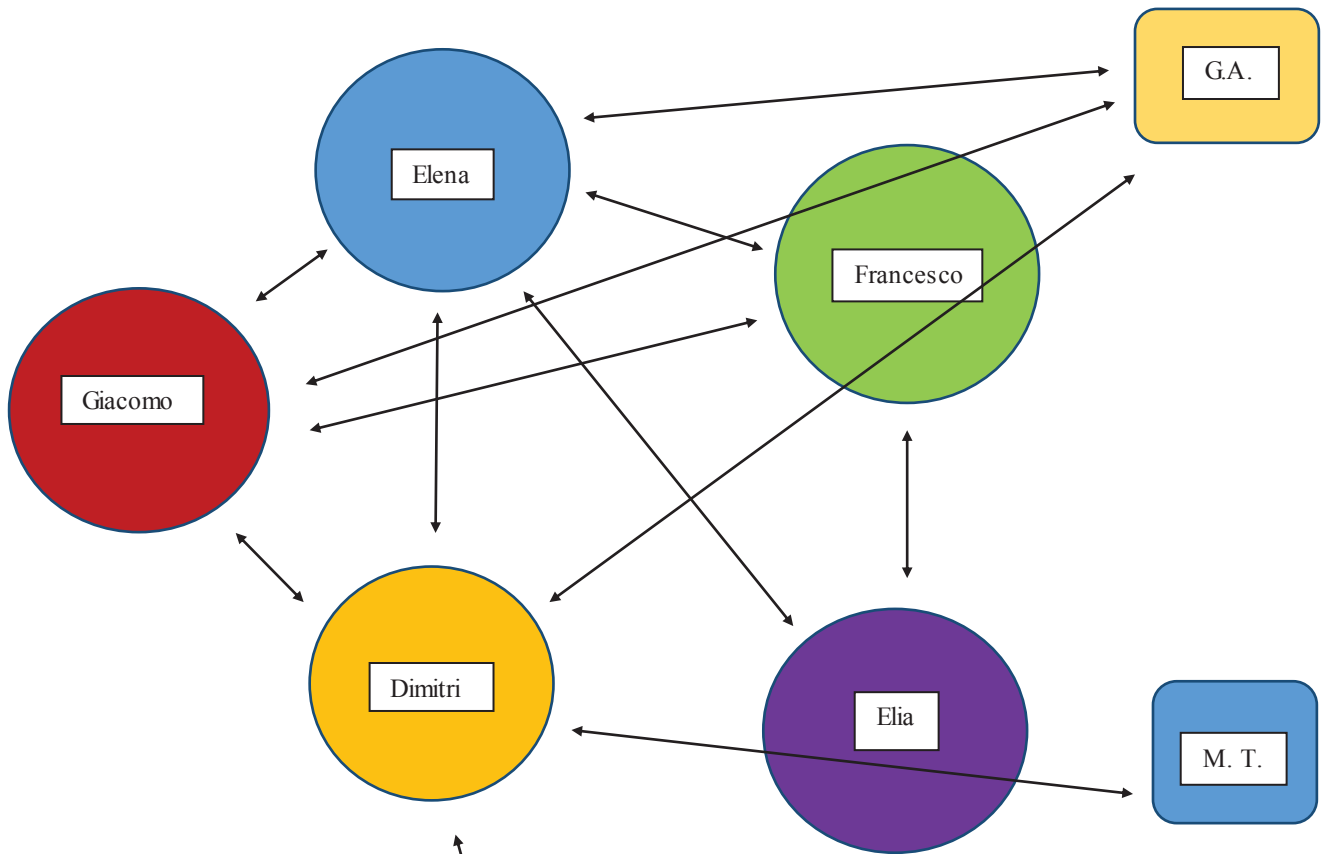
Sabrina was 20 years old when she accepted to participate in this work. She was born in Cesena (North of Italy). She attended a Humanities High School. Now she studies Philosophy at the University of Bologna. She is a member of the Amnesty International Youth Group. She has a Facebook profile.

Elia was 20 years old when he accepted to participate in this work. He was born in Bologna (North of Italy). He attended a Humanities High School. He studies Philosophy at the University of Bologna. He has a Facebook profile.

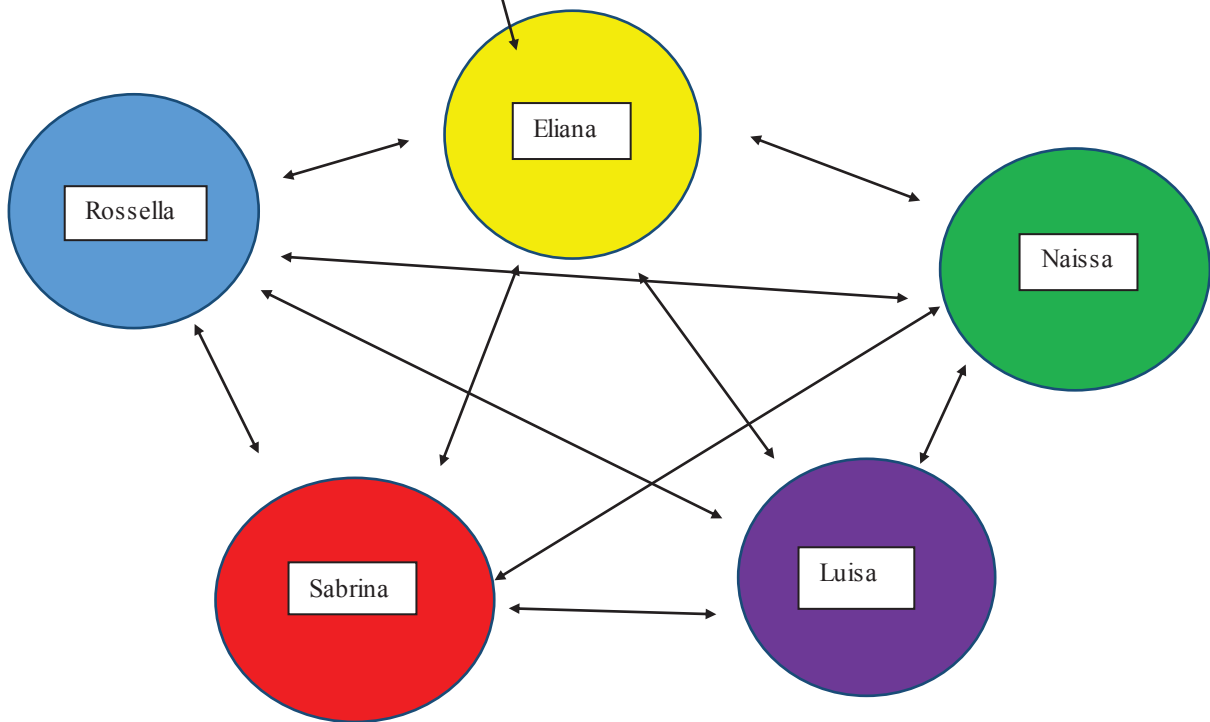
On Facebook:

- ✓ Giacomo is a friend of Elena's, Francesco's and Dimitri's. He has among his friends one of the key informants of this research, G. A.;
- ✓ Elena is a friend of Giacomo's, Francesco's, Dimitri's and Elia's. She has among her friends one of the key informants of this research, G. A.;
- ✓ Francesco is a friend of Giacomo's, Elena's and Elia's;
- ✓ Dimitri is a friend of Giacomo's and Elena's. He has among his friends both the key informants of this research, G. A. and M. T.;
- ✓ Elia is a friend of Elena's and Francesco's;
- ✓ Rossella, Eliana, Naissa, Luisa and Sabrina are friends.

Relationships between the young people engaged in political activities



Relationships between the young people engaged in social activities



While in the Amnesty International group all the girls are reciprocally related, among the people engaged in political activities the relationships are fragmented even if Elena often represents a point in common. Among the politically engaged young people, 2 out of 5 have, among their friends, one of the key informants of this research and 1 has both of them. This can involve the fact that these adults might influence the context of their young friends.

Subject	Age	Origin	High School	University	Activity	Profile on FB	Profile on Twitter	Blog	Relationships with the key informants
Giacomo	19	Bologna	Humanities	No	Political	Yes	No	No	G.A
Elena	19	Bologna	Humanities	Law	Political	Yes	Yes	No	G.A
Francesco	20	Bologna	Humanities	Political Science	Political	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Dimitri	19	Trapani	Humanities	DAMS	Political	Yes	Yes	No	G.A. & M.T.
Rossella	20	Napoli	Humanities	International Development and Cooperation	Social	Yes	Yes	No	
Eliana	20	Campobasso	Teachers' training	Philosophy	Social	Yes	No	No	
Naissa	20	Bologna	Science	International Development and Cooperation	Social	Yes	No	No	
Luisa	20	Potenza	Humanities	Law	Social	Yes	No	No	
Sabrina	20	Cesena	Arts	International Development and Cooperation	Social	Yes	No	No	
Elia	20	Bologna	Humanities	Philosophy	Political	Yes	No	No	

9. The interviews to the key informants

Simultaneously with the creation of the sample of the research subjects, I chose two key informants who could introduce me to the world of media activism in Italy in order to take the first steps into it in a more informed way.

The choice of these two men in particular is due to different reasons. One is the capillarity of their activities in the Bologna area which could result, as it actually was, in the fact that the subjects of the research would know them. One in particular, G.A. is “friend” of some of them on Facebook, as it is illustrated in the diagram above. Elena even invited him to her High School to talk to the students about mafia as he’s a journalist who’s been dealing with this issue for about 20 years. The other informant is M. T., a computer technician, a witness to the events of Genoa (see chapter 3), particularly known as media activist in the area.

The two interviews are semi-structured, in order to give them the freedom to talk about their experience in the way they thought appropriate and to have as much information as possible about a context which I know very little of. Even for the interviews, I decided to keep a phenomenological approach in order to try to understand the meaning and the value that the interviewees attribute to their activity, as also Bryman asserts:

“(…) social reality has a specific meaning and relevance structure for the beings living, acting and thinking within it. By a series of common-sense constructs [people] have pre-selected and pre-interpreted this world which they experience as the reality of their daily lives. It is these thought objects of theirs which determine their behavior by motivating it. [Researchers] in order to grasp this social reality, have to be founded upon the thought objects constructed by common-sense thinking of men and women, living their daily life within the social world”⁶⁰

The interview can be considered as one of the best ways to look inside a world of meanings. As Kyle states:

“Conversation is a basic mode of human interaction (...) The research interview is an inter-view where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee”⁶¹

The instrument of the interview allows an exchange of points of view on specific topics, which helps to achieve the goals of the phenomenological approach. However, we must take into account an asymmetry in the relationship. The interviewer takes the role of leader of the communication. He/she decides the issues of discussion, records the conversation, asks the

questions and the in-depth explanations. For these reasons the methodological and ethical issues are important. The researcher has to protect the privacy of his/her subjects and informants and to avoid adding those elements that can lead to their identification (Kvale, 2007).

Specifically in this work, the place for the interview was agreed with the interviewee, as well as the date. With both the interviewees the goals of the research were explicit and the presence of the recorder was made known (Corbetta, 2003; Kvale, 2007).

Seven questions represented the outline of the work but the interviewees were free to deal with new issues. More than that, this was encouraged, in order to better understand their experience in media activism.

The main questions were:

1. Do you consider yourself a media activist?
2. What is media activism for you?
3. What is your history as media activist?
4. How do you use the media?
5. Is it possible to create an identity on the internet?
6. What is media activism today and what role can young people have?
7. What is the meaning and the value that you ascribe to your activism?

To be a media activist may have different meanings for different people. It can have a certain meaning for a hacker and a different one for a computer technician, or again a completely different one for a journalist. This is the reason why I began the interview with questions 1 and 2. Questions 3 and 7 have the purpose to try to understand the experience of these two men, in order to share the meaning of their work during our meeting. Question 4 has the purpose to understand which role a specific media has for these media activists: why they did choose to use the Internet, what were their goals in this choice. Questions 5 and 6 have the purpose to open a free debate about media activism, what are the ideas of a man who, being a “friend” of many subjects on the Social Network, has the potential power to influence them in their activism (Bailey, 2006; Corbetta, 2003; Herbert & Schober, 1992).

Given that the interviews were semi-structured and partially free, the order of the questions was modified, by moving up or postponing some questions or by opening new issues depending on

the evolution of the conversation. During the interviews, I also asked for further information and clarifications.

The purpose of these questions was to try to understand an environment but also the personal experiences and the goals of these media activists. What meaning their activism does take on in their life, what are the motivations, the most important experiences of their life as activists. What are their points of view and the meaning they give to their actions.

The analysis of the interviews is thematic (Bryman 2012, Kendall e Markham, 2013). The data which came to light from the interviews were divided by topic. Partially, these results allowed me to better understand the environment, but they also gave me some starting points for in-depth analysis in the work of observation of the ten subjects.

10. The observation on the web

The observation of the ten subjects on the web lasted, in fact, about two years but the period of particular interest for this work went from September 2012 to September 2013. During this year, three months were analyzed in depth, characterized by some peculiarities.

The month of October 2013, that has seen many student demonstrations, sometimes related to political parties, sometimes to trade unions, sometimes independent. The students have demonstrated against the cuts of the Government to school and research, against the transformation into law of the Aprea Decree which granted private companies to get into school boards and condition the programs. They also demonstrated against the physical degradation of the school buildings.

The second month selected for data analysis was October 2012, characterized by the political campaign for the Centre-Left Primary Elections. Five of the ten subjects of the research are engaged in political activities, four of them with parties related to the Italian Left wing. Some of them actively participated in the campaign.

The third month is February 2013, characterized by the political campaign and by the Political Elections.

I have not pinpointed specific periods related to the social activity of the five young people engaged in this field. Their activism and participation appeared more linear and well spread, depending on the awareness campaigns of Amnesty International.

The observation on the web caused, first of all, some ethical issues to arise (Bailey, 2006; Bryman, 2012; Corbetta, 2003). The materials published by each subject were not only political and social but also private, belonging to the family and friends sphere. I made an “arrangement” with the subjects about the material that I was going to use for the research and this excluded any reference to their private life and that of their contacts. Therefore:

- ✓ I did not collect any photos of friends/relatives as they do not participate in the research;
- ✓ I only used for the research photos with public subjects/objects, cartoons, memes or other images related to political and social posts;
- ✓ I did not take into consideration any photos shared by others on the subject’s profile that were of a personal nature and not meaningful of a social-political activity (such as sports, school or academic activities, free time in general...)
- ✓ The names of “friends” who have posted or commented political or social material on the subject’s wall have been reduced to the initials to avoid a possible identification;
- ✓ When a post or comment on a subject of the research’s wall was done by another subject of the research who is in touch with him/her, I kept the given name of the second subject;
- ✓ I deleted the profile images in the comments, both of the friends and of the subjects;
- ✓ The material has always been at the subjects’ disposal.

After the identification of the three months most rich with posts related to political or social issues, the available material was collected and copied to file. Each linked article was opened and copied completely, each video was viewed, each cartoon or image was analyzed, each personal status was recorded, as well as the statuses of political or socially important figures that the subjects decided to share. All the material consists of several hundreds of pages and the data have been divided by thematic fields and by the quantity of contacts and comments.

The purpose of this observation was to record a communication activity. Which tools made available by the Facebook platform have been used; how extended is the network of contacts of the single subjects, and with how many are they really in touch; how many comments does each theme draw; what are the subjects’ main references, including public figures in general (but always related to social or political activism), or information sources.

The collected material has undergone a quantitative treatment that is visible in the following evaluation form:

Evaluation form of online observation

Subject: _____

Number of friends on the Social Network _____

Preference to which pages with social or political contents (Like)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. ...

Number of links to articles _____

Month of October 2012 _____

Month of November 2012 _____

Month of February 2013 _____

Article sources

- | | | | |
|----|-------|--|-------|
| 1. | _____ | No. of articles from this source during the 3 months | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | No. of articles from this source during the 3 months | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | No. of articles from this source during the 3 months | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | No. of articles from this source during the 3 months | _____ |
| 5. | _____ | No. of articles from this source during the 3 months | _____ |
| 6. | ... | | |

Number of videos posted during the three months _____

Number of images/photos/memes posted during the three months _____

Number of personal statuses posted during the three months _____

Number of statuses of the reference public figures (politicians, journalists, authors...) posted during the three months _____

Who are the reference public figures (politicians, journalists, authors...)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

10. _____
11. ...

Type of topic debated

- | | | | |
|----|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | _____ debated | No. of times _____ | No. of comments _____ |
| 2. | _____ debated | No. of times _____ | No. of comments _____ |
| 3. | _____ debated | No. of times _____ | No. of comments _____ |
| 4. | _____ debated | No. of times _____ | No. of comments _____ |
| 5. | _____ debated | No. of times _____ | No. of comments _____ |
| 6. | ... | | |

Initials of the commenting “friends” and number of comments by each of them

- | | | |
|----|-------|-----------------------|
| 1. | _____ | No. of comments _____ |
| 2. | _____ | No. of comments _____ |
| 3. | _____ | No. of comments _____ |
| 4. | _____ | No. of comments _____ |
| 5. | _____ | No. of comments _____ |
| 6. | ... | |

The kind of topics treated have been grouped by specific themes; for each one of the 10 subjects both posts with political contents and posts with social contents have been recovered independently from the subject’s main activity; peaks of posts on particular subjects such as Center-Left Primary Elections or Political Elections in 2013 have been analyzed; there have been no cases of coincidence of names among the friends who have “commented” on the posts.

11. In-depth interviews

Of the 10 subjects of the research, 5 have been picked out for an in-depth interview about their social or political activity and the use they make of communication media. The 5 subjects have been chosen among those who had an institutional mandate and a certain abundance (in quantitative terms) of material published on their Facebook page.

In this case I chose to work on an interview of a structured kind (Bailey, 2006; Bryman, 2012; Corbetta, 2003) whose protocol implied 5 questions and a series of sub-questions. The interviews lasted about 1 hour for each one of the interviewees, were always made in the same setting, as agreed with the interviewees. The setting was made as welcoming and informal as possible in order to make the subjects feel comfortable. Each interview was made individually and recorded as agreed with the interviewee. At the end of the interview, the subjects were asked whether they thought it might be important to discuss further issues in order to explain their activity

or position towards the media and, in the end, they were asked to make a comment on the interview itself.

The protocol implied the following questions:

1. How does your experience as a socio-political activist originate?

Sub-questions

Where does your activity originate?

How did you politically/socially shape yourself?

What is your goal?

What does your activity mean to you?

What importance do you give to your activity?

2. In your opinion, what is a media activist?

Sub-questions

Do you consider yourself a media activist?

What is the role of Facebook in your activity?

How useful is it to you?

Why did you actually choose Facebook?

What relationship do you have with your network of contacts, regarding political issues?

3. Have you had any education about the media?

Sub-questions

Where?

By whom?

What was the weight of school/family/group of peers/other reference points?

Do you know what “profiling” and the “Internet bubble” are?”

4. What was the role of school/family/group of peers/other reference points in your political/social development?
5. What is the relationship between your offline and online activity?

In detail: question 1 was intended to be of a biographical kind and to get to know the social or political experience of the subjects keeping out, at first, the media element. Question 2, “Do you consider yourself a media activist?” comes from the consciousness deriving from studying the available literature and the data from the in-depth interviews carried out with the key informants, of the fact that “to be a media activist” doesn’t have the same meaning for all the categories of subjects, being them communicators, hackers, computer scientists, mere active citizens. The sub-questions have the purpose to investigate what use they do make of the Facebook media. Questions 3 and 4 investigate the received education regarding the media and the political and social awareness. The last question tries to investigate the relationship between offline activism/communication and online activism/communication as it is experienced by the subjects.

The analysis of the material was carried out choosing the method of thematic analysis (Kendall, Markham, 2013)⁶².

12. The questionnaire

The 10 subjects were given a closed question questionnaire (Bailey, 2006; Bryman, 2012; Corbetta, 2003). The purpose of the questionnaire was to compare the data regarding the 10 subjects of this research and the data of national researches about the relationship between young people, education, culture and the use of the media. The questionnaire partly recalled the same questions of the national statistical researches and partly included questions specifically useful for this work. The idea was to check correspondences and differences between 10 active citizens and the national picture of youth.

The questionnaire, which was tested on 5 young people of the same age range as the subjects of the research, was organized as follows.

Questionnaire

The purpose of this Questionnaire is to compare the data regarding the 10 subjects of this research with the data emerged from a number of national and international statistics that have “captured” young Italians in their relationship with the media and some cultural activities (Istati, Isfol, Telefono Azzurro, EuKids Online...). In considering these data, those researches also take into account, among other things, age, gender, educational qualification and family background.

The data you will provide will be processed anonymously and only for statistical purposes.

For all information, don't hesitate to contact me:

amelia.capobianco2@unibo.it

Your personal details

Age _____

Sex _____

Birthplace _____

Year of birth _____

Marital status married unmarried divorced cohabiting

Do you live on your own or with your parents?

I live on my own

I live with my parents

I live with my partner

I am a student/worker from another city, I live on my own part of the week and part of the week with my parents

Do you have any brothers or sisters? Yes No

Your activity/ies

Study

High school

University What major? _____

Work What kind of work? _____

None of the above

What is your current educational qualification? _____

Have you ever had any educational debts? Yes No

Have you ever failed a year? Yes No

A few data about your family

Parents' native language

Mother _____ Father _____

Father's job

- unemployed
- on redundancy payment
- workman
- artisan
- clerk
- instructor/teacher
- serviceman
- professor
- businessman
- manager
- don't know
- other _____

Father's type of contract

- fixed-term contract
- open-ended contract
- uncharacteristic contract
- freelance professional
- don't know
- other _____

Father's educational qualification

- elementary school diploma
- secondary school diploma
- high school diploma
- university degree
- post-graduate course
- PhD
- don't know
- other _____

Mother's job

- unemployed
- on redundancy payment
- worker
- artisan
- clerk
- instructor/teacher
- servicewoman
- professor
- businesswoman
- manager
- housewife
- don't know
- other _____

Mother's type of contract

- fixed-term contract
- open-ended contract
- uncharacteristic contract
- freelance professional
- don't know
- other _____

Mother's educational qualification

- elementary school diploma
- secondary school diploma
- high school diploma
- university degree
- post-graduate course
- PhD
- don't know
- other _____

In 2013, has your father been involved in political activities or social no-profit activities?

- yes no
- social what? _____
- political what? _____

In 2013, has your mother been involved in political activities or social no-profit activities?

yes no

social what? _____

political what? _____

Some information about your relationship with the mass media

If you live with your parents, which ones of these media are present in your house, including those used by your family? (you can check more than one entry)

Computers, No. ____

Web connection

Mobile phones, No. ____

Smartphones, No. ____

Tablets, No. ____

TV sets, No. ____

Radios, No. ____

Books

Recently purchased (within two months) Newspapers/Magazines

Other (specify) _____

I don't live with my parents

Which ones of these media are present in your room for your personal use? (you can check more than one entry)

Computers, No. ____

Web connection

Mobile phones, No. ____

Smartphones, No. ____

Tablets, No. ____

TV sets, No. ____

Radios, No. ____

Books

Recently purchased (within two months) Newspapers/Magazines

Other (specify) _____

How many hours a day do you spend on the Internet?

Less than 2 hours

Between 2 and 5 hours

More than 5 hours

**Please write the 5 websites/blogs that you visit the most, specifying the topics treated
(including service websites such as online dictionaries or websites for purchasing/selling; except search engines)**

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

How many times a year do you go to the movies?

- Never
- Less than twice
- Between 2 and 5 times
- Between 5 and 10 times
- More than 10 times
- Don't know

How many times a year do you go to a theater?

- Never
- Less than twice
- Between 2 and 5 times
- Between 5 and 10 times
- More than 10 times
- Don't know

How many exhibitions do you visit in a year?

- None
- Less than 2
- Between 2 and 5
- Between 5 and 10
- More than 10
- Don't know

The questionnaire is finished, thanks a lot, your participation is very important.

13. Observation of the offline activity

A further step in this research was the observation of the offline activity of some of the subjects involved in the research. The activity was only followed upon invitation by the subjects themselves in order to avoid being considered indiscreet or intrusive. In some cases it's out-and-out activities carried out in public, such as speeches during demonstrations, flash mobs organized in the city, participation to the public assemblies of Parties, presentations of political motions. In other cases the activity was not performed "in public" but anyway for an audience, as for the articles written by the subjects for some newspapers or the interviews granted by them.

In order to analyze the events ascribable to the first case, I used a diary (Kendall, Markham, 2013), while the analysis of the documents was of a thematic kind.

The diary was used to collect the data regarding

- ✓ Who?
- ✓ Where?
- ✓ When?
- ✓ Why?
- ✓ How?
- ✓ Who else is present?
- ✓ How was it communicated on the web?

and registered the offline activity and the communications about it on the Facebook profile.

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- ¹ Geertz C., (1973), *The Interpretation of Cultures*, USA, BasicBooks, p. 5, Italian translation (1988), *Interpretazione di culture*, Bologna, Il Mulino, p. 11
- ² *Ivi*, p. 6, Italian translation (1988), *Ivi*, p. 12
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Chapter 3

Young people in search of new perspectives. Change the world and make it better.

A very short excursus on Italian youth movements and definition of media activism and media Activists

1. The post-war period, the 50s and 60s

In order to better contextualize my work on young Italians' media activism, it could be helpful to make a quick survey of the history of youth movements in our country, and, not to go too far back in time, I will move from soon after the first World War. This overview, it is worth to tell in advance, is not exhaustive and neither claims to be, particularly in light of the richness and complexity of the history of Italian youth movements. My intent is only to trace a path that allows to contextualize contemporary movements in the light of past events. For convenience only those events that are considered to be prominent in our history were selected: 1968 protest movement, for example, and the 1977 one, that both helped to change the legal framework of our country; Red Brigades movement, which had a profound impact on society; La Pantera movement, which marks the first step of social networks employment in politics and the G8 summit in Genoa that symbolizes the passage, as long as Italy is concerned, to the new media for communication and social policy, 5 Stelle movement and Casa Pound which has the merit of having made the jump to political institutions. What I want to highlight out is the interplay between the wish for change among young people, the use of the available means of communication according to the historical period and the effects of the protests on civil society (which I will define later in deeper detail).

Already in the 50s young working class generations, moving from the expectations aroused by the end of Second World War, showed disappointment towards the choices of political parties and also towards Unions as long as the work in factories was concerned. While on the one hand the development of technologies made their work more simple and rapid, on the other skilled workers were losing ground in favour of masses of unskilled workers, basically poor and with low levels of education, who arrived in the industries of the North migrating from the South in search for "luck". This composite situation stimulates the first protests of events both in the factories and in the streets, and the formation of organized groups of young people who meet the workers in the factories to join their forces and to better understand what are the problems and issues at stake. Over the years, they will be joined by students, university but also high school students: they study Marx, how to fight capitalism; their means of communication is the print media, reviews are born in order to analyse and share issues. One of these issues is the reform of secondary school: secondary

unified school project is completed in 1963¹ and will allow, for the first time, access to all the high schools. The goal was to give access to high education to the children of the lower classes who, until then but also later in spite of the reform, were cut out of the school system from the so-called “Vestals of the Soudary School”, the teachers, mostly women, who stopped the education path of working and middle classes children (to an extent of 50-60%), allowing to continue their studies only to kids of the upper classes (Balestrini, Moroni, 2007).

These youth movements will result in generational breakings finding their representations in the songs of some songwriters of the 60s and 70s (and also later) who begin to produce texts alternative to the “Sanremo” ones, initially unpopular and poorly distributed: authors like Francesco Guccini, who in time will remain a reference point for young people, Nomadi and Fabrizio De André, who will tell in his songs the movements and events of those years, particularly in “Storia di un impiegato”. Music, then, joins press as a tool to share values and the meaning of utopias and riots.

Contemporary youth movements have three shared characteristics: the wish for “a better world”, one that guarantees the rights of all; the use of the media available from time to time to spread and share information and reflections on the issues, and state action through police. Clashes between students, workers and policemen made dozens of dead and wounded on both sides .

2. Italian '68 movement

Under the pressure of protests and riots in the 50s and 60s Italy became along with France one of the European countries in which the movement was felt with greater vehemence. In the same years in the United States, a constants reference point for our young people, boys and girls were professing peace and protesting against Vietnam War, the Black Movement was putting an end to the factual exclusion of blacks from voting, under the influence of Martin Luther King with his anti-war movement on the one hand and Malcolm X's Black Panthers on the other. Meanwhile, in Bolivia, Che Guevara, a symbol of the struggle against oppression, was killed . In Italy, '68 is referred to as the peak year of youth movements and clashes but, as is always the case, facts and situations have their gestation period. The most important preconditions that lead to the '68 events date back to '66 and are namely the occupation of universities such as Catholic University of Sacro Cuore in Milan and the State University of Turin. This was due to the increase of tuition fees and the displacement of the Faculties in decentralized locations difficult to reach in order, according to the protesters, to maintain a neat separation of class in our country, through

access to education. That access to education for all social classes is one of the main themes of youth protests and is fully part in the project of a “better world”, in a society that no longer wants the centrality of work but of man in his relationship to institutions and work.

In the same year, 1966, another event helped at strengthening the bond among young people, the floods that affected Val d’Arno, in particular the city of Florence. The flood made more than 30 victims as well as severe damage to the city and cultural heritage. Boys and girls were mobilized from all over Italy and abroad, to help the population and to save the artwork in danger of destruction.



Note 2 The flood of '66 in Florence²

In 1966, a parish priest in a small village of the Tuscan Apennines wrote a booklet that starting from its publication until 1972 sold more than a million copies. Described as “Chinese book” for its revolutionary content³, the book became the manifesto of the ideal of an open and egalitarian school for the children of the poor people, those who had not grown up in an educated family but who tilled the soil for a living. In “Lettera a una professoressa” (Letter to a teacher) Don Milani criticize the “knowledge of the masters” and the insensitivity of teachers, both testified, according to the priest, by the statistical data of the Istat yearbooks. In subsequent years, with “L’obbedienza non è più una virtù” (Obedience is no longer a virtue), Don Milani railed against compulsory military service by promoting conscientious objection.

In 1966, moreover, the first Italian Faculty of Sociology was established in Trento:

“Sociology until then were scarcely widespread in Italy. The books of Edizioni di Comunità promoted by Adriano Olivetti (...) circulated among a few insiders. The

books of philosophers and sociologists such as Weber and Mannheim, the great schools of thought as the Frankfurt one (...) were in fact mostly excluded from the Italian cultural scene. Sociology, like psychoanalysis, was viewed with suspicion by the orthodox Left which considered them internal to bourgeois culture”⁴

The great element of innovation at the University of Trento was not only having opened a Faculty of Sociology but having also given access to students from technical schools. The young people came from all over Italy to this University that offered an utterly new approach to study, ideal for students tired of an old way of teaching. Non-resident students were so many that after a few years they exceeded $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total number. Of course, students occupied the University of Trento and the Faculty of Sociology in the coming months, and two of the founders of the Red Brigades, Renato Curcio and Margherita Cagol, studied at the Faculty of Sociology.

After years of “preparation”, study, reflection, meetings, demonstrations, occupations, young people revolt against the institutions will reach its peak in '68, the year not only of long occupations of universities, but of self-organization of teaching, of internal meetings and plans for the future that held together left- and right-wing young people, workers, women, homosexuals. '68 is the year of the great clashes against police during the demonstrations that will result often with tear gas, stone throwing, injuries and deaths.

In '68, as already mentioned, together with the students even the workers took to the streets demanding the renewal of their contracts, the wage increase, reduction of working hours, retirement, housing, services and in general demanding companies to put at the centre of their interest the worker and not to the capital. One of the most striking events of that period was the sabotage of assembly lines at Fiat in Turin, with destruction of several thousand new cars, to which the company responded with the suspension of 25,000 workers. The dispute that followed was very harsh and although, in the end, it ended with the acceptance of all the workers' demands, three month of dispute had exhausted the city and pockets of workers.⁵ A feature of the '68 was thus to unify instances of different social crises. The uprisings raged all over the nation, affecting the larger cities but also smaller towns. (Balestrini, Moroni, 2007)

In time the attacks of protesters, students and workers together, became more subtle in the light of the increasingly violent response of the police. One example of this is the “Battle of Valle Giulia”. Students believed that official press was denigrating the movement and manipulating information about it. They decided then to stop the release of the «Corriere della Sera», a

newspaper perceived as close to the government's positions, and surrounded the headquarters of the newspaper organizing real barricades made of cars chained to each other in rows, setting fire between rows in order to slow the onslaught of the police, throwing marbles to halt the march and hit the officers. The protesters were able only to delay the release of 4 hours, but got to be received by some members of the Parliament. The attack to the headquarters of the «Corriere» was the last occasion in which left- and right-wing students fought in the same side. After that, the right-wing protesters came off and form their specific groups.

«Corriere della Sera» was only one of the newspapers accused of being the voice of the party or state and in the light of this, students decided that to convey the meaning and values of their revolts different media should have been brought into the field, not related to system, such as self-published journals, radio as well as physically moving from town to town, coming together to bring their voices around the country. It emerges, here, the attempt to escape from official communication forms in favour of alternative forms, more modern and fast-spreading but also more “distant” in generational terms by their opponents. This need is to be found consistently in youth movements to come.



Students' demonstrations in '68⁶

Homosexual and women movements

The '68 also gave a new push to feminism and the wish to overthrow authoritarian relationships in the work place, academy and family. Young women begin to protest against society and against their own mothers, guilty of having accepted a male-dominated society and having sacrificed themselves⁷. '68 women demanded what they will get only a few years later: divorce, abortion, childcare, sexual freedom. Even today, those same women along with the younger generation call for “equal opportunity” that does not result in adapting to the male model, and the

failure to acknowledge a female identity, but that takes into account the very nature of woman. In '68 girls participated in the occupation of the University along with boys, but their role was still a subordinate one: writing bills, cooking, taking care care of children. The treatment given to them by men even in these situations persuaded them to move in autonomous organizations.

Even the gay liberation movement participated in the riots of '68 in an attempt to be recognized with same rights as heterosexual couples and to “de-pathologize” homosexuality. Despite this, while all over Europe today gays people have the rights of any other couples, including marriage, Italy is the only European Union country in which these couples are still not recognized. This has happened and happens also because of a sharp opposition by the Vatican, that still in 1986 under the papacy of John Paul II, in the paper “The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons” signed by J. Ratzinger, future Pope Benedict XVI, says:

“Instead it is worth to point out how the particular inclination of the homosexual person, although it is not a sin in itself, constitutes nonetheless a more or less strong tendency toward an intrinsically evil behaviour from the moral point of view. For this reason, the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder”⁸

The moral and juridical legacy of '68. Changing Italian family

'68 has been defined in many ways: for some, particularly who took part in it, it was a great moment for the democratization of our country. For others, it was just a great utopia whose pursuit clashed with the extremely closed Italian political system. In her *Il sessantotto, breve storia*, Marica Tolomelli (2008) reports a remark by American sociologist T. Gitlin:

“As an impossible revolution [the movement, author’s note] failed – and how could it succeed? But as a combination of pressures to renewal, especially in civil rights [...] women’s rights, environment, anti-war, it was a terrific success”⁹

In fact, in our country, 68 and 77 movements led to major changes at the legislative level. The movement of 77 was an all-Italian phenomenon that led to a rupture between youth movement, political parties and trade unions. The break involved mostly the Communist Party and CGIL, the largest Italian trade union, who were now accused of being organically participating in the system, and thus enemies. At a meeting with Luciano Lama at the University La Sapienza in Rome, the

contestation by students and the response by the union service order were strong enough to suspend the rally. Later the Rector entrusted the university to police. The protesters' demands ranged from the occupation of abandoned or vacant houses, popular expropriation to autonomous reductions of bills and services and new policies that would support working class. In front of these new revolts institutions reacted with armoured vehicles and military occupation of strategic points of the city of Rome. Two other cities were involved to a significant extent in the clashes; it is the case of Bologna and Turin. These clashes too resulted in deaths and injuries. One of the events which characterized this new wave of protest was the *Conference against repression* held in Bologna, which was attended by 70,000 people including intellectuals and artists like Dario Fo and Franca Rame.¹⁰ In the years immediately following the riots came the reform of labour laws¹¹ and the ones on divorce and abortion, laws that overcame the various referenda that, over time, seek to abolish them.

And in those same years the law on nursery school¹² became a reality, establishing the principle that State had to guarantee the precondition for an easier access of women to the labour market. Only a few regions in our country, where even individual municipalities took charge of education 0-3, however implemented this law. Unfortunately nurseries are still only very irregularly widespread. The Law 517/77 will open school integration to children with disabilities supported by a dedicated teacher.¹³

Family Law was also being re-written. It was a pivotal fact for our society, one able to dramatically change the face of Italian family. It is worth reminding that, until then, the law did not punish so-called "crimes of passion" committed by husbands who discovered their wife's adultery, although already then this was much less tolerated than in the past. Moreover the father-master who abused, even sexually, of his wife and children, could still not be pursued provided it did not arouse scandal in the community. With the introduction of the new book of the family many things did change: legitimate and illegitimate¹⁴ children were equalize, and also adoption was reformed, putting the child's right to a family before the adult's need to fill a void, usually to have someone to leave a legacy to. Instead rape continued to be considered as a trespass against morality and not against the person. This had to wait much longer. The Family Law was so profoundly changed in the early 70s that, at the moment of ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991, our legislators had to change very little (Moro, 1996).

3. The 70s - 80s of the Red Brigades

The 70s and 80s in Italy were marked by the presence of the Red Brigades that arose from the extreme areas of those same student protest movement and that decided to respond with the

violence to the State massacres, as the one of Piazza Fontana was immediately defined also by foreign press (Tolomelli M., 2008). As mentioned above, two of the founders Renato Curcio and Margherita Cagol studied at the Faculty of Sociology of Trento in the years of occupation. The Red Brigades were defined by the State and by media as a “terrorist group” while the members called themselves “rebels” with the aim to complete the partisan action which, after having fought the Nazi-Fascism, should now fight the power of multinational corporations and by the U.S. government. The activity of the BR initially moved from kidnappings of businessmen and magistrates and demonstrative attacks in the factories, but over the years their level of violence rose and led to the killing of several persons such as journalists, judges and agents until the murder that was the most famous and striking, that of Aldo Moro, politician, lawyer and five-time President of the Council, in May 1978.



Margherita Cagol and Renato Curcio, among the BR founders¹⁵



The discovery of Aldo Moro's corpse¹⁶

The BR will be almost completely disintegrated towards the end of the 90s, due in particular to repentant who got reduced sentences in return for confessions, information and names of other members.

Actually in the following decades the “New Red Brigades” appeared on the political and social scene making two other famous victims, two technicians for as many governments: Massimo D’Antona in 1999, who worked for the D’Alema government, and Marco Biagi in 2002, who worked for the Berlusconi government. In 2007 15 activists of the New BR were arrested, 7 of

which belonged to the largest Italian union, the CGIL. Throughout their history the BR and the New BR have killed about 70 people and injured many others, in particular through the technique of kneecapping.

The reasons for the new group of young people born in the early 80s are surely linked to historical roots the group, but in a modern way responsive to the new reality. Issue at stake were the war to globalization (understood more as a form of American invasion) and fight against the precariousness in the working situation of many contemporaries¹⁷.

4. What about the '90s?

Except for the New Red Brigades, in the 90s there is a “disappearance” of young people and square movement from the scene. Several observers argue that a generation grown up with *Italia da bere*¹⁸, trash television and video games has no interest in politics and social life and simply do not practice it, but in reality young people just moved, and scholars are still unaware of it.¹⁹

The 90s are, in fact, the years of the early rudimentary Internet and the first signs are already visible in 1989 with the occupation of Palermo University by “La Pantera”: a group of young people opposing the privatization of the universities and the entrance into them of companies, as provided for the Ruberti Reform. Students of La Pantera, when they occupied the University, wanted the keys as a symbolic gesture and even the fax to communicate. The Movement developed a network of faxes which they kept in touch with the students of various faculties and at the same time instituted Okkupanet, an early form of inter-university Social Network that finally came to nothing but that represented a sign of the changes that we would see soon. This was the first Social Network used for political purposes. An interesting detail was that in the same period in China, the students rebelled against the government preparing the way to the Tiananmen Square facts. The Chinese government was not yet aware of this new system of communication among young people and left the lines open. This allowed the young Chinese's to communicate with young people involved in the Italian movement La Pantera, from China to Italy through a rudimentary Social Network used for political purposes.

Some short excerpt from an interview with M. T., a key informant, media activist and computer expert, can help you to better understand what was born in that period:

“(...) The Internet as we know it now did not exist; it was essentially made up of email and some very poor web page. Who was operating at that time, however, sensed a potential, but it involved above all technicians that very often accessed the Internet at

work or school because the costs were still high. (...) You could make web pages, websites, mailing lists, organize mailing lists of people who send periodic communications to, subscribe to newsletters to receive or broadcast news that you would not have received or broadcasted otherwise. This is basically the origin”.

And:

It sounds prehistoric; an email took just little less than a letter on paper with the Italian Post Office, and however it was the first way of communicating. The X-Link Network used this system because during the first Iraq war pacifists used the first technology that was available at that time, and that was the fax, that in the early 90s had so much a good spread that during Tangentopoli «La Repubblica» came out with the term “the people of the fax”. People expressed their outrage at the news of corrupt and prosecuted people by sending faxes to newspapers, while media activists who opposed the wars in Iraq and Kuwait used the fax until it X-Link was born.

He continues:

(...) In the 60s, with the birth of the first cell of what later became the Internet and the spread of computer geeks, people who participated in the 60s protest movement came out with the idea that computers could be used to change the world (...)

(...) There is an anecdote in this book [Steven Levy, (2002), Hackers. Heroes of the computer revolution] which explains how they came to a more expanded vision of the use of computer: when a computer does the calculations there are a lot of electromagnetic interference, so if you approach a box to a computer you hear interference in the chest. One of these computer experts find out that doing certain calculations he is able to get all the 7 musical notes. Then he makes up a sequence of calculations that results in a Beatles song, because at that time you were listening to the Beatles and these early computers occupied entire floors of buildings and were available to the university. For the first time someone thought that through computer you could do virtually anything. Imagine the vision of that people, including Bill Gates and Steve Jobs who come from that environment.²⁰

Young people happen thus to combine the interest in politics and social issues with the development, although still in its infancy, of computer technology. This will blatantly manifest itself during the Genoa G8 in 2001.

Media activism meets Microsoft XP at the G8 summit in Genoa, the 2000s and the new “formats” of the protest

Although media-activism as it is understood today, namely tied to information technology, begun at least 10 years before, the G8 summit in Genoa is considered by media activists the most symbolic date to place the beginning of media activism in Italy. What happened? Why is it considered a hub?

From 19 to 22 July 2001, the delegates of G8 met in Genoa. There had already been the Seattle demonstrations of the Black Bloc and, indeed, the people of Seattle, which put in serious alarm Italian government, and therefore the police. It was created a red zone which did not allow the transit of protesters in the area of the summit. The young protesters organized a series of alternative meetings in which to discuss the topics of global significance that in their opinion were not sufficiently discussed by the “big ones” as the effects of globalization and the global environmental condition. The tension was high during the preparatory stage for the main event, the summit. Even in the news it was possible to perceive a state of tension.²¹

While further details can be found in a large existing literature, here I will report only the two most striking facts of those days: Carlo Giuliani’s killing and the assault on the Diaz School. There were thousands of protesters in Genoa, youth groups, scouts, nuns, students, families and workers and, according to the police, even infiltrated violent people such as the Black Bloc. During the protest the police charged the demonstrators and, on July 20, twenty years old protester Carlo Giuliani was killed by a policeman the same age, while threatening the officers with a fire extinguisher. The police referred the presence of Black Bloc among protesters, the destruction of cars, the use of weapons including Molotov cocktails.

On the evening of July 21, almost at the end of the summit, the police raided the Armando Diaz school where young people who had participated in the initiatives were staying. The school and the near institute had been made available to accommodate both the demonstrators and the journalists of the Genoa Social Forum. M. T., a key informant interviewed for this job, was in the school Pertini among journalists and activists from the Genoa Social Forum.

During the night a group of police officers entered by force in the Diaz school to commit what later was described by Amnesty International as the most serious case of cancellation of human rights in a Western country since World War II.²² Injuries and wounds to Italians and foreign protesters were so serious as to require in many cases the urgent transport to the city hospital. The guys who did not require urgent care were taken to Bolzaneto where they were isolated and subjected to psychological torture²³. A nurse on call made the first complaint of ill

treatment. Due to those events, Italy got a mention both on by Europe and by Amnesty International.



The school Diaz soon after the violence²⁴



Demonstrators setting fire to cars²⁵



Carlo Giuliani while threatening the police with a fire extinguisher²⁷



The lifeless body of Carlo Giuliani²⁶

M. T. explained to me how media activism fits into this fact:

“In fact what we know today as media activism begins at the summit in Genoa because (...) up to then people had possessed computer with a computing power such that you could look at some Internet page and the mail and nothing more than that.

In 2001 Windows XP was released, where XP stands for Experience (...); this is a paradigm invented by Microsoft who drew on the spirit of the times: computer no longer had to be the tool for moving your desk into the machine, XP means that a computer needs to bring in experience and in the experience there are personal things (...); with XP you could begin to see the video with a certain quality, you begin to see

images with a certain quality (...). Between the late 90s and 2000 these early data compression algorithms began to spread that allowed later the birth of the MP3 and JPG.

So the relevance with the G8 is because (...) the concept of media that lies at the basis of media-activism is the ability to use these tools to disseminate information to a certain level. We are, and not since then, a society based on image and having the tools to broadcast images and sound at low cost became essential if you wanted to tell something about reality.

In addition between at the end of the 90s and early 2000, mobile technologies start to spread, mobile phones that allow independent radio to be able to do live commentary calling someone who is on the spot and put it on the radio. For example, at the G8 summit in Genoa there was Radio Gap, which is a network of independent radios which basically collect reports from the demonstrations calling people on the phone. So much so that that they feared the institutions to cut off gsm connections, which however did not happen because we all were using the cell phone.”²⁸

Computer technology in other terms develops new “lighter” formats that can more easily be shared on the Net. Governments and police are not prepared for this new element in the generational gap, one that loops back and becomes the tool in the hands of young people who film, photograph and put on the Net. Not only that. The images thus produced and obtained become the objective evidence in judicial proceedings against the police and lead to the conviction of 28 agents and the then Chief of Police. The problem is that the final judgement came 10 years too late, the facts statute-barred and the defendants are not only free but they have, in some cases, made a career. A second no less important issue is absence in Italian case law the crime of torture; this allowed the Diaz massacre to be punished in a lighter way.

The G8 then is the symbolic date of Italian media activism, the new form of media activism that uses technologies manageable even by non-experts, even those who are not computer technicians, by everyone, “usable”. In short :

“What happens next is like what happened with cars: the early ones were used by people who had been watching at their construction or who had designed them, then was by the mechanics who could get their hands on them. Today people who have no idea of how cars work do drive. With computer the same thing happened: the early ones were used by those who had invented them but today you use it even without knowing how it works”²⁹

5. The post G8 and the first decade of 2000

In the ten years following the G8 facts, many movements have been born and have begun to employ the Net as a means of communication and sharing of information. The most striking case in our country is perhaps the 5 Stelle Movement which was founded under the leadership of a comedian who gathered around him thousands of young people. Beppe Grillo and his Movement put into practice that transition from protest to political action mentioned by Marc Lynch (2011), Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at G. Washington University. Commenting on the Arab revolts of the last few years, he states that simply being in front of a computer communicating with others or participating in ongoing protests in the streets leads to few results if it is not followed by the transformation of the movement into a component of the institutional political debate: “(…) *It could degenerate into constant mobilization against the status quo, remaining outside of political institutions and unable to project pragmatic agendas.*” The 5 Stelle Movement managed to make the jump by standing its candidate and reaching high percentages in the last elections in February 2013, thus earning a position of importance within our Parliament with 25.5 % of votes, totally 108 seats³⁰.

A further movement, born in 2003, succeeded in a few years to turn into civil list and stand for election in 2010 and 2013³¹. It is the movement Casa Pound Italia, CPI, defined by the Naples provincial head, Giuseppe Savuto a “fascist movement of the third millennium”³², while leader Gianluca Iannone defines it as “an ideas factory, a warehouse of dreams, a place of free men and women different and non-compliant”³³. This is a right-wing movement that was named after the poet Ezra Pound and is born from the new vision of right-wing politics made by S. Berlusconi and his party. In December 2003 a group of young people occupied a building in Rome demanding the right to live there. To date 23 families live in that building for a total of more than 80 people. On their website³⁴ you can see their programme that includes reduction of the power of Equitalia company in tax collection, the search of the big tax evaders, the assignment of houses for a fair rent with priority to Italian citizens, coming out from the euro zone, nationalization of the banks, reduction of working times for women with children under the age of 6 years. After the earthquake in Abruzzo in 2009 Casa Pound began collaboration with the Civil Protection in the event of natural disasters such as, later, the earthquake in Emilia. The Movement was involved in several violent acts, especially with the extreme left-wing groups. The leader himself, Gianluca Iannone, was sentenced to 4 years for assaulting a police officer during a celebration in memory of Benito Mussolini in Predappio in 2004³⁵.

Some movements are embodied in the Italian social fabric, such as Libera Movement led by catholic priest Don Ciotti, that has the goal to:

“(...) promote the effective application of the law n. 109/96 about social re-use of goods confiscated from the mafias, which provides for allocation of assets of illicit origin and wealth to those subjects – Associations, Cooperatives, Municipalities, Provinces and Regions – able to return them to citizenship through services, social promotion and work.”³⁶

Along with movements that are institutionalized and recognized, there are others who operate in a grey zone and are often at odds with government and consequently with police. In particular, No-Tav is a movement against the construction of a railway line between Piedmont and France that promises faster trade exchange between the two countries but, according to the movement, not only wouldn't bring any significant improvement but would provoke severe health and environmental damage to the people living around the area.



A No-Tav demonstrator kisses a policeman³⁷



Demonstration in Val di Susa³⁸

With regard to non-institutionalized forms of participation we have several interesting data. These forms are on the rise compared to institutional ones and are featured by: a different level of education and a mix of different age groups and genders. More precisely non-institutionalized forms of participation attract more women, young people and those who have attained a high level of education in comparison to institutional forms, which collect mostly men belonging to a higher age bracket.³⁹

A rapid review of the history of the movements from the Italian post-war until today shows a set of constants: the first is certainly dissatisfaction acting as a spring to protest. Dissatisfaction with regard to employment, social or economic condition, cultural conditions that unite disparate groups

more or less depending on how the instances are shared: this is the case of 60s movements that gathered students, workers, women, gays. They express a request, more or less formally addressed to the institution, to change the system. When this request is frustrated, they switch to a form of action that may be strike, mass demonstration, etc. along with forms of communication and sharing of the reasons and the meaning of the action. Often in our country protesters have been labelled as dangerous dissidents who threatened the status quo and their activism has been fought by violent police actions. The clashes have resulted in injuries and deaths, as we could see. Another recurring feature is the use of media seen as “alternative” to the official ones that normally support the political apparatus. If in the 50s there were leaflets, the mimeographs distributed in factories and among students, in the 60s the independent radios come into play spreading the songs of politically involved songwriters. About radio, there is this interesting excerpt from the interview made to the second key informant of this study, G. A., a journalist committed against Mafia, who says :

(...) We made the first web-radio.

What was its name?

“Ora d’aria” (exercise time) allowed us to avoid the expense of radio on frequency ... Berlusconi was the greatest intelligence of the 90s was because he did not take TV, he took radio because it was a tool of free thought much more dangerous than television. Radio is made by word, enters your heart. Television is made by image, you forget it after 3 seconds. He was a genius. The Law Mammi⁴⁰ was a way to close the radios, only a few figured this out, and the really infuriating thing was that all radio stations were owned by the other political side, that did nothing to avoid it.⁴¹

I will return later on this.

In the following years, as evidenced widely by M. T., the information technology tools begin to lead the way, but one issue in particular is interesting. The main feature that young people look for in a media is not so much (or not always) diffusion speed or width, but rather the distance between the means to reach young people and those within reach of the system. They sneak into the lacks in the communication system taking advantage of the ignorance, of the existence or of operation of certain new methods of communication. The G8 is the most striking example. The system had no idea of how immediate and penetrating the online dissemination of videos and photos of the brutalities committed by the agents in the days of the summit could be. Some cops were even photographed with a cell phone while fidgeting with false evidence against the guys who

spent the night in the Diaz school. Neither they could think that the images taken by their designed victims could represent evidence against them in the trial that followed.

G. A. confirms this detachment, which is necessary for young people, between the means used by the system and those used by dissidents:

“(...) It could be the tablet or the local newspaper which are the oldest thing in the world, or Facebook: it allowed you to run away by the official media, not to mention television stations that have always been at the service of something or someone other than population. (p. xvi)

(...) The free radios of the '70s opened a space of unprecedented freedom

(...) Radio web for examples... they are not able to follow us, because of the means. Now we are helping to create a web radio, which is the natural continuation of the newspaper's blog. They can not keep pace, do not have enthusiasm, ideas... (p. XVIII)

(...) To broad the network, whatever network [of contacts, author's note] (...) the Net is just a means that allows us highlight another model of society. (p. XIX)

(...) We employed the early completely independent programmes because they were cheap. Our choice of media is always non-ideological (p. XX)

(...) Facebook was the way in which we are saved from one of the heaviest economic crises we have had. Allowed us to reach all over the world – especially allowing us to re-connect all the fragments, all those wires that were scattered over the years. We are all migrants [because of threats of revenge by Mafia, author's note]. Away. Devices allow us to be together again, to make a group, to create community. Our strength has always been the fact of being a great community. (p. XX, XXI)

From the G8 summit in Genoa 12 years have passed and institutions have recovered the gap with new communication systems as it happened with the Law Mammi, which reduced the gap with radio as it is evidenced above.

Today, when police holds someone in provisional arrest, first thing they take his cell phone or camera. In addition to that Net control systems control through users profiling and geo-location is established practice, so much so that the veterans of media activist begin to divide between those who believe the network still a place of communication and democratic potential and who now considers is as a large file in which the dissident in turn can be traced at any time. Let's go back to the interview with M. T.:

“(...) Chinese made what they always do in the ever-transforming technology world: they see something they like and copy it for their own purposes. They took Facebook, have changed it into something that is not Facebook but looks like it and they gave it to the Chinese. Their advantage? That if is a dissident is on their Facebook, they know immediately what he says, what he does and what he thinks.

Morozov says that Facebook groups are great for communicating, but there is a practice that is explained in another book called “Nell’acquario di Facebook” (In the Facebook aquarium) by Collettivo Ippolita (...)

Facebook works in radical transparency so that, if you sign up with a name that is not yours, you could virtually be banned because Facebook wants you to be transparent.

XXX [missing in recording, author’s note] says that for dissidents this is deadly, because if you are on the Net with full name and you join a group of dissidents, police doesn’t even need to come into your house and look for a flyer, there is a centralized computer that immediately says that you are a dissident and that you are traceable to the things that you put on the Net and for the things you share. This is tragic in countries where there are dictatorships, but it can have unpleasant even in the West where certain rights are guaranteed. So much so that now (...) in Spain, which is not a dictatorship, the May 15th movement of Occupy is reasoning (...) on the re- twit... what is a re- twit? It is when someone writes something and you spread the message that that person wrote, but by doing so you bear the trace of the source of the message. Spread the source of a potentially explosive message, while there is a demonstration on-going, means to put someone in trouble, and it happened because these tools are monitored.

Some time ago L’Espresso has published the news (that was then denied) that Italian police had an unofficial agreement with Facebook to access the profiles of people without permission of the judiciary. The police later denied but L’Espresso’s journalists have done a survey to say that. Anyway such forms of control do undoubtedly exist.

Anyway, even not talking about this, there are thousands ways to infringe the privacy rights of individuals. Many of the people who employ social networks do not know that third parties can collect and make any use of their contents.

(...) It becomes actually a means of control. I believed that these were means of liberation more than of freedom. The made free a time, the need of media activism at

that moment in history was an independent action and this worked. Now, for example, information is not always independent because maybe you lack the sources.

What then is the interest of a collective such as Ippolita?

It is a collective coming an old tradition of media activism. Now that they put all in the circus and we are not just spectators but we are in the arena with the lions, they say: if you want to be a lion trainer you must be prepared or receive a paw. They wrote these books to explain to people how to be careful on the Net. This is so problematic for adults as for adolescents, for whom it can be devastating.⁴²

What mentioned above and reported in the interviews is also confirmed by S. Harrebye of the Institute for Society and Globalization – Roskilde University, who said that the activists' room for manoeuvre is conditioned by three factors: politics as a structural limit, police as a physical limit and media in their representation of reality.⁴³

6. A Definition of Media Activism Media and Activists

My grandfather used to tell me:

*“I knew that I was born, raised and would die as an illiterate
but I knew that with through my actions
my daughter would have become a teacher
and my niece would have been a free man”.*

Interview with G. A., media activist

At this point it is important to try to define the “Media Activism” and “Media Activist.” Let’s start from Media activism; Harrebye avoid to try to explain media activism based on the concept of activism because this is not bound inevitably to a protest movement. According to the scholar even a vegetarians or religious activists are attempting to peacefully persuade institutions. Therefore he moves the focus on a definition of “civil society” that he sees as a system of compromises between individuals, the state and the market with the goal to promote common interests. Compromise can be made through: collective action within society; voluntary action and association; both within a strategic field of action or deliberation in the public sphere. Again we are faced with the notion that demonstration must be followed commitment within the political establishment in order not to be an end in itself.

The positions of the two media activists interviewed for this study are much more simple and straightforward but can be considered as coherent with the definition of civil society by Harrebye. Both define media activism as a way to “change the world”, to achieve “a better world”, a “better society “. Of course the phrase a "better world" can have many different meanings, as there are people on this planet. Indeed M. T. says:

“(...) The scene of media activism was a scene where your task was not so much for you to gain knowledge, but to help those who can not do so. (p. VII)

(...) The use of new digital media for communication can take various forms. As far as I'm concerned: social communication. (p. ix)

(...) This thing will help change the world. This is discussion, people who use digital technologies in order to communicate something, although we don't know if this something is actually going to change the world. And even if it is going to change it for the better (p. X)

(...) The idea of the global village is very misleading from this point of view. We are very focused on ourselves, on our Western view, but other countries have other attitudes, other interests. (p. xii)

(...) To create awareness that these tools are actually potentially able to harm to people (p. XV)

(...) We click “Like” and we think we have fulfilled our function, our need to say that we are close to a certain cause. This is called Click Activism: people that after having clicked “Like” feel close to a cause but really have not done anything (...) and in any case is very unlikely that clicking “like” you can help change your country's political agenda (p. xvi)

(...) I may make a video of my cat playing the piano and that does a million contacts, something that actually happened, and it is even aired in prime time newscast showing what runs on the Net. You have to call this call media activism, because I used digital technologies with some knowledge.

So you're telling me that media activism in itself, apart from sharing things, is not linked by definition to a social or political objective?

I can tell you that who made my same path and started in the 90s and the 00s maintains that goal. There are others who come on the scene now (p. XXVIII)

What emerges from these excerpts of the interview with M. T. is that you can consider Media Activism everything that has to do with media and with communication and sharing through the media. A literate user who shares a video of a kitten playing with the keys on a piano and makes millions of contacts is technically a to be regarded as a media activist. For the purposes of this study the field of inquiry must be reduced to those who limit their activities to communication and sharing of social policy contents, in order to fit into the concept of civil society seen before. But even then, as stated by M. T., care must be taken to click activism, namely activism made pressing “like” on Facebook under the image of a child in distress (such as during clashes in Syria, Palestine or natural disasters) and thinking that you really made something for him or for his country. In this case one could almost speak of a form of de-empowerment.

Media Activism therefore can be defined as an activity of exchange, communication and sharing of information and materials through the media, within a political or social programme, individual or collective, that is addressed to the improvement, or to a new compromise, of civil society.

I try now to define media activist.

Silas Harrebye (2011) as a result of the Summit of the 15 in Copenhagen, also said COP15, has made a classification of activists in 6 types.

- *The radical activists*: who belong to violent groups that polarize the us-them dichotomy. On the one hand they force political attention onto their acts, on the other they raise the level of tension and violent response by the police. This label can be approached, with due caution, the last No-Tax movement. A part of the Val di Susa activists, in fact, after years of “polite” and peaceful protest, have moved to more extreme actions such as fire and destruction of transportation means in building yards.
- *Provocative – aggressive activists*: who belong to groups devoted to civil disobedience. Extremely concerned about the how they communicate their actions, they use well-known personalities who are openly on their side to publicize their ideas. They confront police and its violence as a kind of “sacrifice” in order to demonstrate what happens if you challenge the system. Divide law from morality, but in demonstrations they accept the punishment from the system. They manage to gather greater consensus among people.
- *Creative activists*: they are those who generally accept the democratic rules and role-playing. They express themselves through hunger strikes and art installations. It is a form of activism used by environmentalists to promote understanding and to draw attention on certain “inconvenient

truths”. They do not suffer police repression or political filters. The reasons as well as the potential of this type of activism are still to verify.

- *Professional activists*: they are qualified stakeholders on the issues debated, who meet in alternative summit considering the official agenda unambitious. They do not seek confrontation but try to become reliable partners in the system. They place themselves between creative and provocative activism and are not considered a danger by the police.
- *Occasional Activists*: they are driven by a moral code, from an idea that leads them to the streets to fill the ranks thinking that this is sufficient for the democratic process.
- *Everyday activists*: are those who apply their credos in every daily action. They differentiate the garbage and recycle every day. They have changed their consumption. Appear to be more engaged and politically aware.

These definitions are useful to identify the activists that adopt a critical position in the context of civil society. They refer to a northern European context, namely that of the Danish COP 15, and do not take into account crime, that has become instead a sad feature of our country. In fact we do not find any reference to protest against entrenched systems such as Mafia and Camorra, which in some Italian areas are considered to coexist or even replace state. It goes without saying that in the case of the activists against Mafia the game is made by four subjects instead of the three identified by Harrebye: the activist (for example, Libera Association), Mafia (or Camorra), the state and the media. In this particular case, when the activist organizes an event, for example, this is not considered hazardous by state (and therefore by police), while Mafia, as a rule, does not come out with overt attacks to not raise the attention, but possibly react later. The game of balance therefore is different and media are generally by the side of the activists. This is not the place to deal with issues such as State - Mafia negotiation or the corruption of politicians by Mafia, so I will stay on this generic plan of the relationships among the four subjects.

It is interesting to see if and how the key informantes of this work consider themselves Media activists. M. T. says: *“Media activism for what concerns my biography is not a practice that I have deliberately pursued. I did the things I did with the tools I was able to use and then I discovered that this was media activism. The first time I used the computer to make a political thing, I was about 13 years old”*.

G. A. says:

“we were a bunch of kids in their early twenties with the great good fortune to have a 83-year female guerrilla commander who showed us the way⁴⁴. So we became media

activists. This wasn't a deliberate choice, it was rather the only way to be free (...) we are the generation of the massacres, we have known Mafia not because someone have told us but because two bombs exploded that took away Falcone and Borsellino⁴⁵ all the escorts. (...) In such condition you have to make a choice, and my choice was to be different, don't ask me the reason (...) I attended Frattocchie school, the schools of the Communist Party. When I was 13 years old, my communist grandfather and my father sent me for some periods to study politics, communication...".⁴⁶

These two statements have in common the fact that they refuse a conscious adhesion to media activism. The two witnesses become media activists for reason as the following:

- ✓ Opportunity presents itself or they are faced with the need to make a lifestyle choice;
- ✓ They have been born in a particular territory or period that puts certain issues ;
- ✓ They have means and knowledge to do so;
- ✓ They have an ethical model such as an old partisan;
- ✓ They have had a political training within the family.

The choice of media is random. Already with G. A. we have seen that the choice falls on the medium which is at the moment the most effective to create a gap between the young and the mafia system; in the case of M. T. the choice fell on what was available at the time within the family: *"Not everyone had those instruments at the time, in my case there were the working tools of my father. But I was quite good at them".⁴⁷*

Being Media Activists therefore is a subjective value, given by the sense that you assign to your activity. In the pages that follow I will try to report and understand the activism of ten young citizens active in political, trade union and social environments: what are their motivations, what the meaning and value given to their acts, the most important learning experience that drove them to activism and how they share it on the new mass communication media.

¹ In 1963 the “Scuola media unificata” (Unified Secondary School) was born in the framework of Law 1859/62, abolishing the previous secondary schools system.

² Source: <http://tg24.sky.it/static/images/sezioni/2009/tg24/cronaca/fotogallery_ottobre_2009/firenze_alluvione/alluvione_firenze_14.jpg> last view 18th November 2013.

³ Balestrini N., Moroni, P., (2007), *L'orda d'oro 1968-1977. La grande ondata rivoluzionaria e creative, politica ed esistenziale*, Milan, Saggi Universale Feltrinelli, p. 180

⁴ *Ivi*, p. 204-205.

⁵ For further information please see the broad literature produced on the history of those years. Some examples are: Balestrini N., Moroni, P., (2007), *L'orda d'oro 1968-1977. La grande ondata rivoluzionaria e creative, politica ed esistenziale*, Milan, Saggi Universale Feltrinelli; Tolomelli M., (2008), *Il sessantotto*, Rome Carocci; Revelli M., *Movimenti sociali e spazio politico*, in *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana, vol. II, La trasformazione dell'Italia: sviluppo e squilibri, t. 2, Istituzioni, movimenti, culture*, Turin, Einaudi, 1995

⁶ Source: < <http://www.frasiaforismi.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/manifestazioni-studentesche-68.jpg>> last view 18th November 2013

⁷ *Il sessantotto femminista, storia del femminismo in Italia*, in “La storia siamo noi” Le teche Rai online, <<http://www.lastoriasiamonoi.rai.it/video/il-sessantotto-femminista/1531/default.aspx>>, last view 10th November, 2013

⁸ Card. J. Ratzinger, A. Bovone, (1986), “Cura pastorale delle persone omosessuali” <http://www.doctrinafidei.va/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19861001_homosexual-persons_it.html > data ultimo accesso. 10. novembre. 2013

⁹ Tolomelli M., (2008), *Il sessantotto, una breve storia*, Rome, Carocci

¹⁰ Balestrini N., Moroni, P., (2007), *L'orda d'oro 1968-1977. La grande ondata rivoluzionaria e creative, politica ed esistenziale*, Milan, Saggi Universale Feltrinelli, 504-574

¹¹ Statuto del Lavoratori, Law 300/70, <<http://www.flcg.it/files/pdf/19700520/rsu-statuto-dei-lavoratori-legge-300-188702.pdf>>, last view 20th November, 2013

¹² Law 1044/71

¹³ From: http://www.edscuola.it/archivio/norme/leggi/1517_77.html, last view 21st November 2013

¹⁴ Moro A. C., (1996), *Manuale di diritto minorile*, Bologna, Zanichelli

¹⁵ Source:

<http://cinquantamila.corriere.it/mediastorage/uploads/admin/Speciali/Brigate_Rosse/cagol_curcio_Podda.jpg> last view 18th November 2013

¹⁶ Source: <http://images.wikia.com/nonciclopedia/images/f/f6/Ritrovamento_di_Aldo_Moro.jpg>, last view 18th November 2013

¹⁷ For further detail: Bocca G., (1978), *Il terrorismo italiano, 1970/1978*, Milan, Rizzoli; Bocca G., (1988), *Gli anni del terrorismo. Storia della violenza politica in Italia dal '70 ad oggi*, Rome, Armando Curcio; Pansa G. (2007), *L'utopia armata*, Milan, Sperling & Kupfer; Zavoli S., (1989) *La notte della repubblica*, Milano, Nuova Eri – Mondadori. The latter is a television broadcast in 20 episodes, a journalistic review of the “anni di piombo” by Sergio Zavoli. It is published on Youtube.it

¹⁸ “Milano da bere is a journalistic expression that defines some social circles of Milan during the Eighties, a time when this city had risen to a power centre governed by the Socialist Party of Bettino Craxi, characterized by a perception of widespread prosperity, the yuppy attitudes of the emerging social classes and great importance given to fashion. Source: http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milano_da_bere, last view, 12th November 2013

¹⁹ Wilson B., *Ethnography, the Internet, and Youth Culture: Strategies for Examining Social Resistance and “Online-Offline Relationship*, in Canadian Journal of Education 29,1 (2006): 307-328

²⁰ Interview to M. T., key informant, Appendix, p. II-IV

²¹ Zamperini A., Menegatto M., (2011), *Cittadinanza ferita e trauma psicopolitico. Dopo il G8 di Genova: il lavoro della memoria e la ricostruzione di relazioni sociali*, Naples, Ed. Liguori

²² “Amnesty International: l'impunità per le violazioni dei diritti umani commesse durante il G8 di Genova del 2001 è “una macchia intollerabile” nella storia dei diritti umani in Italia” Source: <http://www.amnesty.it/impunita-per-violazioni-del-G8-Genova-2001-una-macchia-intollerabile>. Last view 12th November, 2013

²³ On the G8 and the subsequent process much has been written and in 2012, year of the judgment, two movies were distributed on the subject: the documentary *Black Bloc* by Charles A. Bachschmidt for Fandango productions, and *Diaz, don't clean up this blood* by Daniele Vicari produced by Domenico Procacci

²⁴ http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/0/02/Bloodstains_on_Diaz_school_following_police_action_in_July_2001.jpg, last view 18th November 2013

²⁵ Source: <http://www.mentelocale.it/images/articoli/full/33205-1.jpg>, last view 18th November 2013

²⁶ Source: <http://www.altracitta.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/carlo-giuliani.jpg>, <http://www.altracitta.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/carlo-giuliani.jpg>, last view 18th November 2013

²⁷ Source: < <http://www.avvelenata.it/g8/carlo4b.jpg>>, last view 18th November 2013

²⁸ Interview to M. T., key informant, in Appendix, p. IV-V

²⁹ Interview to M. T., key informant, in Appendix, p. VII

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- ³⁰ Source: <http://www.repubblica.it/static/speciale/2013/elezioni/camera/riepilogo_nazionale.html>, last view 20th November 2013
- ³¹ Source: http://casapoundvaldinievole.giovani.it/diari/3123071/intervista_a_gianluca_iannone.html, last view 20th November 2013
- ³² www.casapounditalia.org, last view 20th November 2013
- ³³ Source: < <http://www.ecn.org/antifa/article/2629/predappio-picchi-carabiniere-condannato-iannone>>, last view 20th November 2013
- ³⁴ <http://www.libera.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/8>>, last view 18th November 2013
- ³⁵ Source: < <http://www.ecn.org/antifa/article/2629/predappio-picchi-carabiniere-condannato-iannone>>, last view 20th November 2013
- ³⁶ <<http://www.libera.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/8>>, last view 18th November 2013
- ³⁷ Source: http://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2013/11/17/foto/notav_il_bacio_della_manifestante_all_agente-71200530/#1, last view, 18th November 2013
- ³⁸ Source: <http://www.notav.info/post/la-valle-in-marcia-con-il-suo-diritto-alla-resistenza/>, last view 18th November 2013
- ³⁹ Marien S., Hooghe M., Quintelier E., (2010), *Inequalities in Non-Institutionalised Forms of Political Participation. A Multi-level Analysis of 25 countries*, in *Political Studies*, 58(1), p. 187/213
- ⁴⁰ Law 223/90, <http://www2.agcom.it/L_naz/1223_90.htm>, last view 18th November 2013
- ⁴¹ Interview to G. A., key informant, in Appendix, p. XX
- ⁴² Interview to M. T., key informant, in Appendix, p. XII-XIV
- ⁴³ Harrebye S., (2011), *Global Civil Society and International Summits: New Labels for Different Types of Activism at the Cop15*, *Journal of Civil Society*, 7:4, p. 414
- ⁴⁴ Vittoria Giunti (Florence, 14 dicembre 1917 – Raffadali, 2 giugno 2006) was an Italian partisan, high member of Italian Communist Party and first female mayor in Sicily.
- ⁴⁵ Paolo Falcone and Giovanni Borsellino were two antimafia magistrates active in Palermo, Sicily. Borsellino was the judge who moved the judiciary and detective focus on Mafia's economic businesses. Both were killed through bombs in summer 1992.
- ⁴⁶ Interview to G. A., key informant, in Appendix, p. II
- ⁴⁷ Interview to M. T., key informant, in Appendix, p. I

Chapter 4 - A snapshot of young Italians in their relationship with the media.

Foreword

This step in my work has the purpose of “framing” young Italians in their relationship with the media, as it emerges from the data collected by a series of statistical investigations carried out by the major Italian institutes of statistics: Istat¹, Isfo², Eurispes³-Telefono Azzurro⁴, Istituto degli Innocenti⁵. The result was also contextualized on a European level, thanks to a comparison with the work carried out by Sonia Livingstone⁶ and her collaborators throughout 25 countries, on young people up to 16 years old and, although briefly, on a world level, thanks to the research carried out by Unicef⁷-Istituto degli Innocenti.

Among the data presented by all these investigations, I’ve extrapolated those regarding young people in the category of interest of this study, namely those ranging from 16 to 21 years old as already mentioned and explained in the chapter on methodology.

In particular, we’ll see emerging information about the conditions of adolescent and young Italians in relation to their level of education, to a possible “cultural leap” with respect to the family of origin, to a family’s participation in the process of acquiring skills related to the use of media, to their access to employment, their political and social commitment, their cultural activities, and so on. The purpose of keeping all these variables together, consistently with the questions of this study, is to consider as many elements as possible that could contribute or not to the formation, result into meaningful experiences or not, for an awareness of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the internet as a tool for social and political participation. Does the educational level of the family of origin matter in the individual’s formation? And if so, how much? And in their school choices? In their cultural activities? In their civic commitment? In the kind of use they make of the media? Does a “gap” exist, or may exist, between the activities of children and their parents? How have the young learnt how to use new technologies? Are the parents able, or have been able, to accompany them on this journey? My job will be to cross-check data in an attempt to answer these questions and moreover to compare them with those that will result from the observation of the study group. What’s more, the ten subjects who participated in this research were also given a questionnaire collecting the same data collected by the large national surveys. Since this is a valid number of subjects for a qualitative research, but absolutely insufficient for a quantitative research, these questionnaires have the sole purpose of verifying whether the ten subjects, expressly chosen among

the active citizens, match national characteristics or detach themselves from them and, if so, in what way.

1. A look upon Europe

The first research, a quantitative one, to which I refer, albeit in general terms, was carried out by Unicef and Innocenti Research Centre and has the title “*Child Safety Online. Global challenges and strategies*”, published by Unicef on December 2011. The data to be considered most significant regarding the focus of my research are the following:

- ✓ children and adolescents are more and more present online,
- ✓ with higher and higher numbers in the rich and industrialized countries, but also with a sizable growth for the low and medium-income countries.

With respect to this datum, it's important to keep well in mind that “to access” the web does not only mean “to surf the internet”, but before that it also means to have the economic means to buy a computer, a web subscription and all the devices related to the use of a computer (a printer, a scanner, flash drives, external hard disks, etc.) and to keep them working (printer cartridges, for example) and, again, for the software, for their operation and protection (for example, an antivirus software)⁸.

So, the data related to the access should make us think of a basic minimum economic condition. The Istat Report 2011, *Citizens and new technologies*, shows this datum: 9.2% of Italian families say they do not have internet access because they consider the cost of the connection too high and, in 8.5% of the cases they consider the cost of the instruments needed to get connected too high.

Kids under 18 represent the highest percentage of individuals on the web, of the total online population, and the age of the first access gets lower and lower, even reaching 6 years and with a time of use ranging from 1 to 5 hours. In industrialized countries, the majority of kids have internet access at home⁹ or school, while in low-income countries the connections happen in internet cafés.

In Europe, the number of parents accessing the web is considerably growing, approaching the kids' level of presence online. As a matter of fact, if in 2005 66% of them (average of the European countries) was accessing the web, in 2008 this percentage had risen to 84%.

The most frequently performed activities on the web, on a European level, have to do with gaming, search for information, education, entertainment and communication.

Social networks, text messages, chats and blogs allow the kids to post images, videos, photos in real time: to exchange information, build up a network of contacts and keep a high level of exchange of information on all aspects of daily life. 59% of young Europeans have an account on a Social Network (SN), 26% of whom are aged between 9 and 10, in spite of the limit imposed by the SNs themselves, which is 13-14 depending on the SN's policy, while 82% are aged between 15 and 16.

An element of novelty and change is the use of the mobile phone as a device for connecting to the web. According to the latest Istat data, in Italy (which is still lagging behind the European average in terms of household technologization), counting all connections via phone or smartphone (GPRS + UMTS + HSDPA + WiFi) those who connect through this device amount to about 40% of kids between 15 and 17, and to about 52% of 18 – 19-year olds¹⁰.

2. Italian adolescents

In order to try and “draw” a picture of Italian adolescents and, in particular, of the 16-18 category I will refer to some researches published in the last months, investigating these subjects from multiple points of view, in their relationship with their parents, with school, with culture, with the media, etc.

In particular I'll relate the results of two studies: the first one was carried out by Eurispes¹¹ and Telefono Azzurro¹² and has the title: “*Exploratory survey on the condition of Childhood and Adolescence in Italy, 2011*”¹³; the second one was carried out by Istat¹⁴ and has the title “*Citizens and new technologies, 2011*”. The first research tries to show an image both of the adolescents themselves and of the adolescents in relation with their parents. The “kids” in question range from 12 to 18 years old; for this work I've extracted the data (already separated by the authors) of the 16-18 category. I will only report in detail the data that are most interesting for my research, while for the others please refer to the full text published by Eurispes and Telefono Azzurro (hence TA). The second one is a national survey on a statistical sample group of individuals ranging from 3 to 75 years old and older, and explores their relationship with new technologies. In this second case too I've extrapolated the data of interest for my study.

Parents and electronic devices

An interesting chapter of the Eurispes-TA work concerns the relationship between the adults (the parents) and electronic equipment. This element, which we have already met in reference to the European average in the Unicef-Innocenti research, acquires interest in relation to my study as one

of its objectives is to understand what learning experiences at the bottom of the kids' choice to use the web as an instrument to communicate their activism. Among the questions that I express in this sense I've actually also considered the active role of the family or not.

Let's see what emerges from the Eurispes-TA research:

Parents' ability to use electronic equipment*				
Used media	Very good	Quite good	Not very good	Not very good at all
Mobile phone	43.7%	43.6%		
Game console				73.7%**
Smartphone				62.7%**
Computer	20.4%	44.1%		33.5%**
Internet	20.9%	42%		34.9**

* The datum refers to the total sample of the research carried out by Eurispes-TA, therefore of the parents of kids aged 12 to 18. This datum is also interesting in virtue of a "preparation" to the use of the media by the parents when the children are still in the pre-adolescent age.

** This figure brings together the entries "not very good" e "not very good at all"

These data actually differ according to the geographical zone:

- ✓ 46.9% of southern parents say they don't know how to use these instruments,
- ✓ in central Italy this percentage drops to 39%
- ✓ while in the islands it's 34.8%.

The situation changes in the North, where in the western area 56.7% of parents say they are "very" familiar with the media, while in the eastern area this percentage is 41.6.

It's interesting to compare these results with those obtained by Istat, in whose report we find that families with at least one minor are the most technologic ones, in fact:

- ✓ 84% own a computer,
- ✓ 78.9% have internet access and
- ✓ 68% connect through broadband¹⁵.

The gap between north and south is confirmed:

- ✓ the families in the north-central area having internet access are more than 56% and
- ✓ 49% of them have a broadband connection

against the families in the South where the percentages are, respectively, 48.6% and 37.5%.

The authors of the Eurispes-TA research also investigate the activities carried out online by adults and what emerges is that:

- ✓ they search for information in 80.3% of the cases;
- ✓ they send/receive e-mails in 64.6% of the cases;
- ✓ they read online newspapers in 51.8% of the cases;
- ✓ they watch videos on YouTube in 40.1% of the cases;
- ✓ they use social networks in 35.7% of the cases;
- ✓ they download music/films/games/videos in 26.6% of the cases;
- ✓ they do online shopping in 24.6% of the cases;
- ✓ they play videogames in 14.6% of the cases;
- ✓ they read or write on a forum in 14.3% of the cases;
- ✓ they read or write on a blog in 12.4% of the cases;

47.6% of the parents know Facebook but are not signed up, about 40% have an account but in 12.9% of the cases they do not use it. This datum is important if we consider the presence of kids on this SN, the use they do of it and with what awareness in the management of their personal data. All the studies examined for this research report the same figures on the transmission of knowledge on the use of SNs peer-to-peer.

34% of parents consider the work of school in the education to new technologies significant and 13.9% think that a higher knowledge of the internet on their part is important.

I will add a figure made available on the Istat report, 41.7% of families say they do not have internet access because they don't have the skills to use it: 26.7% consider the internet useless and not interesting¹⁶. In this case, we are facing what the Isfol report, which we'll see later speaking of 21-year olds, calls "relative digital divide" due, that is, to the subjective choice not to use the web despite economic and/or cultural possibilities.

Adolescents and the media

According to the Eurispes-TA research, television continues to have the supremacy as most used media by adolescents from 12 to 18 years old, but they lose interest in it as they grow up.

Specifically:

- ✓ 39.7% of 16-18-year olds watch it from 1 to 2 hours a day,
- ✓ while 3.6% for more than 4 hours.
- ✓ The computer and the internet are used for more than 4 hours a day by 13.3% of the sample of our interest (16-18) and
- ✓ only 3.2% never use the web.
- ✓ 24.8% chat online from 3 to 5 times a day and
- ✓ 27.6% send 1-2 e-mails a day.
- ✓ The mobile phone is used for more than 4 hours a day in 38.3% of the cases and
- ✓ 54.6% of the category of our interest send more than 10 text messages a day.
- ✓ By and large the meeting in person is preferred to talk about important things (81.7% of the cases), especially by girls.
- ✓ iPad and tablets are little used, probably - the researchers think – due to the still high cost of these technologies; radio is found less and less interesting.
- ✓ The habits of media use are quite similar between boys and girls except for game consoles that are an almost all-male preference.

The data from the Eurispes-TA research also show that when adolescents approach the web, their interest for many other activities drops. This happens with watching television, using their mobile phone, going to the movies, reading books, going outdoors, talking to their parents, seeing friends.

Other interesting data tell us that:

- ✓ 36.8% of 16-18-year olds constantly check their e-mail or Facebook;
- ✓ they feel “restless, nervous or sad” when they can’t use the internet in 15.3% of the cases;
- ✓ they confuse reality and imagination in 5% of the cases;
- ✓ they find it difficult to notice the passing of time in 54.5% of the cases.

The percentages related to these aspects for 12-15-year olds are actually all higher with the exception of the datum on the passing of time, which could demonstrate that with maturity you acquire a greater “emotional control” on the media.

Facebook appears to be the social network most loved by adolescents:

- ✓ 85.6% from 12¹⁷ to 18 years old have an account.
- ✓ Among 16-18-year olds this percentage rises to 90.9%.
- ✓ 39.8% of 16-18-year olds only accept friendship requests by people they know, while
- ✓ 7.1% also accept those by unknown people.
- ✓ 37.5% of 16-18-year olds claim to have more than 500 “friends” but admit to only communicate with a small group of friends in 59.8% of the cases; 17.1% with the majority and 3.7% communicate with all of them.
- ✓ The time spent on the social network is 1 to 2 hours in 35.5% of the cases and
- ✓ from 2 to 5 hours in 15.1%.
- ✓ 3.5% spend more than 5 hours a day on Facebook.

Girls are the greatest regulars of this social network and are also the ones who spend more time on it. I’d like to remind that, despite the kids’ great love for this SN, the parents know little or nothing about it.

About the “Social Network” subject, the data provided by Istat are also interesting. They show that:

- ✓ The most active in this area are young people aged 15 to 24.
- ✓ More than 76% of them create a user’s account, send messages or other on Facebook or Twitter,
- ✓ more than 63% consult a wiki and
- ✓ more than 29% read and express opinions about social or political issues through a blog or a social network.

The age category of interest of this study is completely included in this range.

What do adolescents do with their PCs and online?

In order to understand what their skills in the use of a PC are (considered independently from the internet) the Istat data show us that adolescents are able, obviously to a different extent, to perform the operations that we see in the table:

Operations regarding the use of a personal computer	Age	
	15-17	18-19
Copying or moving a file or a folder	94.3%	95.3%
Using “copy and paste” within a document	94.8%	96.0%
Using basic arithmetic formulas in an electronic sheet	64.6%	69.7%
Compressing (or zip files)	54.9%	64.6%
Connecting and installing peripherals (printers, modems, etc.)	68.7%	75.1%
Writing a computer program using a programming language	15.1%	20.3%
Transferring files between computers and from other devices	83.8%	85.3%
Modifying or verifying the configuration parameters of software applications (except browsers)	30.4%	37.4%
Creating presentations with specific software, including charts, images, sounds, videos	52.4%	59.7%
Installing a new operating system or replacing an old one	25.4%	34.3%

Excerpt related to the category “adolescents” from the Istat statement “Persons aged 3 and over who have used a personal computer over the past 12 months by operations they can perform, sex, age class and geographical distribution”, Istat (2011), *Cittadini e nuove tecnologie*, Statistiche e Report, Roma, p. 22.

Istat has analyzed in depth the kind of activities carried out online by adolescents who were divided into two age categories, from 15 to 17 years old and from 18 to 19. Let’s see in detail the data related to the “kind of activity carried out”.

Operations regarding the use of the web	Age categories	
	15-17	18-19
Searching for information on goods and services	44.1%	58.7%
Searching for health information (diseases, nutrition, health improvement, etc.)	21.1%	33.7%
Using services related to trips and stays	22.6%	46.7%
Using internet banking	3.2%	12.5%
Searching for information on educational activities or courses of any kind	35.6%	50.1%
Reading or downloading newspapers, news, magazines	42.4%	48.6%
Taking an online course of any kind	4.3%	7.3%
Downloading software (except games)	36.1%	42.7%
Searching for a job or sending a job application	5.2%	19.5%
Selling goods or services (e.g. online auctions, eBay)	10.7%	13.1%
Making subscriptions to receive news regularly	2.8%	4.7%
Sending or receiving e-mails	78.9%	87.3%
Internet calling	20.0%	22.7%
Making video-calls (via webcam)	27.7%	30.9%

Excerpt related to the category “adolescents” from the Istat statement “Persons aged 6 and over who have used the internet in the last 3 months by kind of activity carried out and age category”, Istat (2011), *Cittadini e nuove tecnologie*, Statistiche e Report, Roma, p. 16.

From this chart we can see how the main activities are: “sending or receiving e-mails” that is close to 80% for 15-17-year olds and well over this percentage for 18-19-year olds; “searching for information on goods and services” that is over 44% for the younger category and 58% for the older one; “searching for information on educational activities or courses of any kind” that are, respectively, over 35 and 50%; then, “reading or downloading newspapers, news, magazines” that is over 42% for 15-17-year olds and 48% for 18-19-year olds. There are other data that are especially interesting if we consider the younger age category, and it’s the data regarding the use of a webcam for video calls (27.7%), the downloading of software other than games (36.1%), the research of health information (21.1%), the search for information about trips and stays (22.6%), and a 10.7% that already sell goods or services using online auctions such as eBay.

About the “operations regarding the use of the internet they can perform”, Istat also says:

Operations regarding the use of the internet	Age	
	15-17	18-19
Using a search engine to find information	93.8%	95.5%
Sending e-mails with attachments (e.g. documents, photos, etc.)	86.6%	90.8%
Posting messages on chats, newsgroups or discussion forums	75.9%	77.0%
Calling via internet	38.9%	45.1%
Using peer-to-peer networks to exchange films, music, etc.	33.4%	40.9%
Creating a web page	23.6%	29.1%
Uploading texts, games, images, films or music (e.g. on social networking sites)	64.5%	70.9%
Modifying the security settings of browsers to access the internet	30.7%	39.8%

Excerpt related to the category “adolescents” from the Istat statement “Persons aged 6 and over who have used the internet in the last 12 months, by operations regarding the use of the internet they can perform, sex and age category”, Istat (2011), *Cittadini e nuove tecnologie*, Statistiche e Report, Roma, p. 23

The most interesting data for the purpose of this study concern the creation of a web page which remains under 30% for both age categories and the uploading of materials which, on the other hand, is over 64% in the first age category and 70% in the second one.

In the following chart we also see a “germ” of some online communication with the Public Administration:

Age	Relationship with the Public Administration		
	Getting information from websites	Downloading forms	Sending filled forms
15-17	6.9%	2.8%	1.6%
18-19	18.2%	12.0%	6.3%

Excerpt related to the category “adolescents” from the Istat statement “Persons aged 6 and over who have used the internet in the last 12 months for interaction with the public administration, by sex, age category and employment status”, Istat (2011), *Cittadini e nuove tecnologie*, Statistiche e Report, Roma, p. 18.

Istat presents another interesting result in the chart regarding “communication activities”

Participation in a Network	Age	
	15-17	18-19
Participating in a social network (creating a user account, posting messages or other on Facebook or Twitter etc.)	81.4%	82.9%
Reading and posting opinions about social or political issues on the web (e.g. through a blog, a social network, etc.)	29.5%	36.3%
Participating in online surveys or polls about social (civic) or political issues (e.g. urban planning, signing a petition)	4.9%	8.7%
Consulting a wiki to get information (e.g. Wikipedia, other online encyclopedias)	67.8%	72.5%
Participating in a professional network (creating an account, posting messages or other contributions on LinkedIn, Xing, etc.)	7.5%	9.9%

Excerpt related to the category “adolescents” from the Istat statement “Persons aged 6 and over who have used the internet in the last 3 months by communication activities performed, sex, age category and geographical area”, Istat (2011), *Cittadini e nuove tecnologie*, Statistiche e Report, Roma, p. 17.

This chart is very interesting. We see that:

- ✓ more than 80% of the kids have an account on a SN,
- ✓ almost 30% of 15-17-year olds and more than 36% of 18-19-year olds post opinions about social or political issues.
- ✓ On the other hand, the participation in online surveys or polls on social or political issues is scarce.

This last figure gets pretty much confirmed with age growing in the offline activities of 21-year olds (doing volunteer work 9.2%; frequent political parties or associations 4.7%), as evidenced by the Isfol data that we’ll see more in detail later.

Adolescents and information

The Eurispes-TA results highlight another datum that is of interest for my research. It actually appears that kids aged 16 to 18 prefer to be informed through television in 51.8% of the

cases, through the internet in 22.4% of the cases, in 7.9% of the cases by speaking with friends and in 7.5% of the cases by speaking with their parents.

3. 21-year olds

As already written above, 21-year olds are the extreme point of the sample group of this study. In December 2011 an interesting research was published, carried out through phone interviews on a sample of 622,515 21-year olds, male and female, on the whole Italian territory, including the islands. The study was carried out by Istituto Isfol (Institute for the development of the professional training of workers) on commission by the European Union, the European Social Fund (national operative programs for training and employment) and the Ministry of Labor and Welfare¹⁸. The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship of young people with ICT and to assess the digital divide, taking into account the education level, the work effort, the family status. According to the authors of this study, the interest for this specific age comes from the fact that age 21 represents a delicate threshold between the end of the school and the beginning of a work or university experience. This research provides a lot of statistical-quantitative data that can help us better understand who constitutes (at least in part) the sample of the study that I'm presenting. Another interesting element about this research is that it was preceded, in 1999, by another almost twin one, and this allows us to check a trend or some changes in the kids' attitudes.

The family

According to the Isfol research, 98.8% of the unmarried 21-year olds still live with their families in a traditional context, although at times with only one parent; 88.5% with father, mother, brother/sister. According to the authors this habit has been reinforced in recent years by the economic crisis and the difficulties in finding a job.

Education

The education level appears generally higher than in 1999:

- ✓ High-school graduates are 87%,
- ✓ Classic high-school graduates go from 20.4% in 1999 to 50.5% in 2011.
- ✓ The percentage of university students reaches 91%¹⁹ while
- ✓ the number of kids who've only attended elementary school decreases from 28.3 to 10.5%.
- ✓ The young people who experience a school failure are 21.3% while

- ✓ school dropouts are 13.5%.

Work

According to Isfol data, 26.3% of the young people are working and the percentage of individuals looking for a job is 9% (compared to 20.4% in 1999). Moreover, while in 1999 only 4.3% of the young people studied and worked at a time, the new figure rises to 10.4%. 52.7% of those who work do manual jobs while clerical workers are 27.1%. Among the workers, 67.6% have a precarious contract.

According to the authors of the research, the approach to work by young people is due to two different attitudes: the first one is “materialistic”, work is a means to earn money and ensure security; the second one is “post-materialistic” and considers work as a means of self-realization. In 71.2% of the cases, young Italians have a post-materialistic attitude, especially high-school students and kids with higher education levels.

Isfol makes an important test, although it almost seems left halfway through. The authors of the research cross-check the data of the father’s education level and job with the children’s education level and job. This is certainly an interesting datum that considers the “cultural capital” of the family. It’s a concept strongly related to social class, that holds to be true that the knowledge available to the parents affects their educational projects for their children in terms of choice of a school with greater resources, of cultural offers, of access to technologies, etc.²⁰, but there is also the children’s ability to make a swerve from their family of origin. What is less clear is the choice to only consider the father’s condition as indicator of the family status while the mother is not taken into consideration at all. The very same research, on the other hand, states (p. 74-75) that historically girls achieve better school results and study longer than their male colleagues. It is then more than probable that a certain number of mothers have an educational qualification higher than the fathers’ and that this may affect the children’s decisions about the attendance and the kind of school, about the use of ICT, about the choice of cultural activities, etc. In the questionnaire given to the ten individuals involved in the study, the datum about the mother’s educational level and work effort have been recovered.

Anyway, by cross-checking fathers’ and children’s data a positive correlation emerges: a young boy with the highest study level and a major use of ICT has a parent with a high educational qualification and a clerical or entrepreneurial job. On the other hand, kids with a bad school

performance and a scarce use of ICT usually have a father with low educational qualification and a manual job.

These data are also confirmed by the Istat survey, *“if we compare the availability of a personal computer, an internet access and a broadband connection, the divide between the family units where the head of the household is a workman and those where he is a manager, a businessman or a freelance professional is of about 24 percentage points in favor of the latter”*²¹.

In numbers, the percentage of kids who only have a secondary school diploma is 1.9% among managers' children and 7% among businessmen and freelance professionals' children, while that rises to 21.4% among workers' children. The percentage of kids with a high-school diploma is 97.1% among those whose father is a manager and 93% among those whose father is a businessman or a freelance professional. This percentage drops to 78.2% among workmen's children (however, it looks like a good percentage thinking about the kids' ability to raise their education level compared to their family status and then there is a doubt about the mother's educational qualification). Also school failures are much less among the children of fathers with high education levels and much more among the children of fathers with a lower education level. A curiosity emerging from the Isfol report: a pretty high percentage of young people don't know their father's educational qualification! This picture, regarding education level, is directly followed by that of the work effort: workmen's children, with a lower education level, are already employed in the world of work in manual activities, and usually with more stable contracts than kids with higher education levels or who are still studying and have uncharacteristic contracts, probably waiting to finish their studies.

Cultural consumption and free time

One could be led to think that a high education level could be linked to a wide range of enjoyed cultural activities. Isfol produces these data relating to cultural consumption and the use of free time by young people in relation to their education level and ability to use ICT. Let's start by seeing, in general and in order by main choice, the main activities chosen by 21-year olds:

- ✓ listening to music (95.1%);
- ✓ meeting friends (88.7%);
- ✓ going to a pub-bar (65.6);
- ✓ seeing their partner (64.2);
- ✓ playing sports (50.6%);
- ✓ reading a newspaper (45.8%);

- ✓ reading a book (38.3%);
- ✓ going to the disco (31.5%);
- ✓ travelling (28.7%);
- ✓ carrying out cultural activities (17.8%);
- ✓ visiting museums and/or exhibitions (9.3%);
- ✓ doing volunteer work (9.2%);
- ✓ frequenting political parties or associations (4.7%);
- ✓ going to the theater (4%).

Regarding the subject of my study, an interesting datum is that 4.7% of kids who frequent political parties or associations and the 9.2% who do volunteer work, therefore do social work. The percentages are clearly too low if we turn them into an interest for the issues of our country. Let's stop briefly on cultural activities: compared to the 1999 research, the percentage of those who read books "a lot or quite a lot" has risen, as well as that of those who read a newspaper. The percentage of those who travel has also risen, going from 39.3% who were doing it "a lot or quite a lot" in 1999 to 74.4% who do it today "often or sometimes"²². Isfol researchers have also investigated the relationship between cultural consumption and free time and the father's status. Some activities are common to all the kids, such as listening to music. Workmen's children, often already working, seem to have less time to devote to social life (both friends and partner). Many activities appear to be evenly common no matter what the father's status is, such as visiting exhibitions or museums, going to discos, doing volunteer work, frequent political associations.

Travelling, performing cultural activities, reading a newspaper or a book, going to the theater are activities more linked to family status. The higher is the father's status, the higher is the children's interest for these activities. We should notice that even though the percentages of those who read are mainly in favor of children of fathers with a high educational qualification, nevertheless the children of fathers with a lower educational qualification also reach 29%.

The use of ICT

94% of young Italians have a PC at home²³, 80.8% use it every day or almost every day. 70.8% of the kids have learnt how to use it on their own while 16,1% have learnt it in school. The percentage of those who use a computer at their workplace gets to 47.5%. Kids use their PC for: surfing (91%); communicating (67.1%); composing documents (52.4%); watching videos, DVDs or

photos (37.6%), storing data (34.7%); burning CDs or DVDs (31.9%); playing (26.2%); doing graphics (19.5%); doing calculations (16.4%).

A father's medium-high cultural level is more frequently associated with the use of a computer. In 90% of the cases, young people using a PC have at least a high-school diploma; those who never use a PC have, in 75% of the cases, a secondary school diploma²⁴. The most assiduous PC users are the less assiduous TV watchers; the situation is reversed for those who don't use a PC who, on the contrary, watch much TV. In general, young people using more a PC (therefore with a higher education level) are also those who read more books and newspapers, play sports more often, visit exhibitions and museums more frequently²⁵.

To be noticed: among the kids using a PC, the percentage of those who frequent political parties or associations is 10.3%.

As above said, the Isfol research shows that 91% of young people (remember, 21-year olds) use a PC to surf the web. 77.5% of them do it almost every day and this happens particularly at home in 76.9% of the cases and with a flat-rate web subscription (82.5%). Only 31% of the young people who work use the web with the same assiduity.

The activities performed online appear to be:

- ✓ using e-mail (90.8%), mainly among those with a high educational qualification;
- ✓ searching for materials for studying or working (83.6%), mainly among those with a high educational qualification;
- ✓ chatting and instant messaging (79.6%), mainly among those with a high educational qualification;
- ✓ file sharing (62.9%);
- ✓ downloading (62.3%);
- ✓ reading online newspapers (53.9%);
- ✓ contributing to a blog (46.8%);
- ✓ participating in a newsgroup (32.4%);
- ✓ playing with faraway partners(28.6%) mainly among those with a lower educational qualification;
- ✓ using Skype (17.1%);
- ✓ e-learning (10.7%).

For my study on the use of 2.0 web by young people for their social and political activities, the interesting data could be “reading online newspapers”, “contributing to a blog” and “participating in a newsgroup”, which can be related to the search for information of a sociopolitical kind due to interest or activities in these fields; however, by reading the Isfol research we can't get to know what kind of contents the subjects follow. For this reason, in the questionnaire given to the ten subjects of my research, I asked them to make a list of their 5 most browsed websites, specifying their contents.

The digital divide

The authors of the Isfol research devote a substantial part of their work to investigating the *digital divide* after identifying it as:

“the divide existing in the population between those who access and fully use, meaning in all their potentialities, the ICT and those who don't do that or do it in small measure compared to other users²⁶”

The same authors also make a distinction between what they define *relative* divide and *absolute* divide. The first one is linked to existing disparities in the society and the world of work that allow social and cultural inequalities to last. The researchers also identify in this kind of divide a *contextual* form, related to specific characteristics of an environment, of a context of origin (school, institution, workplace) that don't invest in technologies and in the knowledge related to them. The second one is linked to subjective choices, to a personal refusal or disinterested attitude towards these technologies. The results of the research show how the digital divide is not strictly connected to a cultural divide; as a matter of fact, a good ability to use a PC and the web can be present where a high education level is missing (for example among children), while an absolute digital divide can exist where the education level is high, due to the choice not to use this specific media. Young people's reasons for not using a computer appear to be: “I don't need it” in 30% of the cases; “economic reasons” in 30%; “I don't have time to use it” in 27.5%; “I'm not able to use it” in 7.5%; a generic “other” in 5% of the cases. The entry “cost” checked by 30% of the sample that don't use a computer can be related to the income disparities that probably led the kids to drop out of school and turn to work²⁷ and include both the cost of a computer and that of a connection. Another datum that shines a light on the absolute divide is the preference for a face-to-face relationship or for using the phone instead of sending e-mails to communicate with others.

Attitude towards the web

61.7% of the interviewees consider the internet an “extraordinary help” for studying and, in 44.8% of the cases, for working. The percentages drop to 38.1% for searching for a job, to 30.2% for free time, to 27.8% for social relationships. As per the activities performed online, the questionnaires given to the sample group do not refer explicitly to a sociopolitical activity but more generically to “participating in a discussion forum/newsgroup”; “reading online newspapers”; “file sharing”; “visiting or updating personal blogs”. There are percentage data available divided by educational qualification of the kids’ fathers, that I’m reporting in the following chart:

Activities performed online	Total %	Father’s education: primary school diploma	Father’s education: secondary school diploma	Father’s education: high-school diploma	Father’s education: degree
Participating in forums, newsgroups	32.4	25	28.5	36.3	38.6
Reading online newspapers	53.9	54.2	51.6	59.3	50.8
File sharing	62.9	66.7	62.8	63.2	69.7
Visiting or updating personal blogs	46.8	40.6	46	50.2	43.2

Chart regarding the activities performed online by young people. Only the activities most closely related to the subject of kids’ sociopolitical activism are taken into consideration.

It is interesting to notice how the data related to online activities are not directly linked with a higher parents’ education but there are visible gaps with the cultural interests that the children fulfill online. For example, 54.2% of the children with fathers with a primary-school diploma and 59% of the children with fathers with a high-school diploma read more online newspapers than graduates’ children. On the other hand, we notice quite some difference in the participation to forums and newsgroups between the children with fathers with a primary-school diploma (25%) and graduates’ children (38.6%). Another interesting datum for the purposes of our study is that the use of a computer is more “masculine”: 86.2 is the percentage of boy users, 74.8 that of girl users.

Moreover, boys go more online “every day” (82.4% vs 72.2%) and for longer: 34.1% of the boys spend “more than three hours a day” online compared to 24.4% of the girls.

Territorial and gender differences

Isfol researchers state that, as far as territoriality is concerned, there are still significant disparities, but they must not be considered as dramatic and there’s a trend process of approach and homologation. Only young Southerners use the web to search for a job in higher percentages compared to the others.

As far as gender is concerned, the datum saying that girls (among which the “housewife” figure has disappeared) achieve better school results is confirmed: less school non-attendance (with school failures at least once in 13.7% of the cases vs 28.1% of the boys); they are more educated (only 5.7% dropped out of school after secondary school diploma vs 14.1% of the boys); they prefer humanities high-school (62.1% of the girls vs 39.9% of the boys); a larger number attend university (98.8% vs 93.2% of the boys); they read “often” in 73.5% of the cases vs 51.1% of the boys. Other data regarding gender show that girls work much less than boys (19.7% vs 32.3% of the boys)²⁸; visit exhibitions and museums in 38.8% of the cases compared to 28.5% of their male peers but play less sports (85.8 of the boys vs 56.4 of their female peers).

4. Conclusions

I will now try to sum up all these information and I will start from the main concepts emerged. *Access* and the *digital divide* are certainly two key issues. As we have had the opportunity to realize, “to access” the web does not only mean “to surf the internet”, which is the last step of a process implying both economic and cultural issues. If it is true, on one hand, that parents with a higher education level tend to give every possible means to their children’s education, it is also true that the purchase of a computer, the subscription to a web connection, the associated devices and their maintenance may represent a not insignificant economic responsibility. This takes us to the second key concept, that of the *digital divide* which, as above said, could be *relative* or *absolute*. It is *relative* where it is linked to issues of economic inequalities, social and cultural disparities. Or even to a refusal by specific contexts to invest in technologies and in the knowledge related to them; in this case the relative digital divide becomes *contextual*. The Istat report says: “The most technologic families are those where the head of the household is a manager, a businessman or a freelance professional and those with a managing, supervising or clerical head of the household. In

particular, 90.4% of families with a head of the household who's a manager, a businessman or a freelance professional own a personal computer, 85.7% an internet access, 76,2% a broadband connection, 60.6% a smartphone and 53.9% a dish antenna. The families with limited access to technologic equipment (not including a TV set) are those where the head of the household is a workman or is unemployed.²⁹ This information is also confirmed by the Isfol report clearly showing the existence of a correlation between the father's educational qualification and profession and the children's educational qualification and consumption both media and cultural in general. Nevertheless, I think it's important to point out that in the last 10 years the percentage of children with a parent without a diploma who have achieved a high-school diploma (unlike the 90% and over of children with parents with a high-school diploma) has reached 78,2%.

The digital divide is also clearly visible on a territorial level from the data of all the research reports taken into consideration. Regions in the South of Italy are those where adults are less familiar with technologic equipment and the number of possible uses they have, and there is also a significant difference between cities and little villages.

The second kind of divide, the *absolute* one, is related to subjective choices, to a personal attitude of refusal or lack of interest. That's the case of those families that, as emerging from Istat data, not having minors at home, do not invest in new technologies, as well as those who, although knowing the social networks and how much their children cherish them, not only have they not an account, but often don't know what they are about although they have the cultural instruments to access them.

At the moment, social networks represent the must of online activity, both for adolescents and for young adults. According to Istat, with reference to the whole sample of the research (therefore individuals between 3 and 75 years old and older) "*Social networks are not only used as an instrument to maintain relationships in one's own network of friends, but also as an instrument of information and communication about social or political issues (22.8%).*" In Italy, more than 80% of the kids have an account on a SN. The data from the Eurispes-TA research also show that when adolescents arrive online their interest for many other activities (watching TV, reading, playing outdoors, etc.) drops. Girls are the greatest regulars of social networks and are also those who spend more time on them. Almost 30% of 15-17-year olds and more than 36% of 18-19-year olds post opinions about social or political issues; on the contrary, the participation in online surveys or polls on the very same issues is scarce. This datum gets pretty much confirmed with age

growing in the offline activities of 21-year olds (doing volunteer work 9.2%; frequenting political parties or associations 4.7%) as proved by Isfol data.

Another key issue in the relationship between kids and new technologies concerns the *skills* both specific and broader *soft skills* (S. Livingstone, 2010), the *taming* they cause to the instrument, the use of the computer exclusively related to the web and the skills regarding software for offline activities.

According to Istat data, the range of activities performed online by adolescents is wide although at times with percentages only showing an early interest for certain activities such as the use of the websites of Public Administrations. Most of the activities are certainly linked to communication and file sharing (the datum referring to file uploading is over 64% among 15-17-year olds and 70% among 18-19-year olds) but we can also notice the purchase of trips and stays as well as the selling of goods in online auctions also among the youngsters.

Social and political commitment, as well as the creation of websites (under 30% for the two age categories taken into consideration by Istat) and blogs still remain basically at the very bottom although being considered very significant activities if seen with the idea of using new technologies as instruments of emancipation and democratization suitable for the masses³⁰. More reassuring data come from “reading newspapers”, “contributing to blogs” and “participating in a newsgroup” even though we don’t know what kind of contents the subjects follow (for example, if politics or entertainment).

The following result leads to a reflection and comes from Isfol data: *“the percentage of kids going online every day is higher among those who “often” read a book (81.2%), go to the theatre (92.2%), visit an exhibition (85.1%), frequent a party or a voluntary association (83.5%), travel (84.3%), perform cultural activities (83.5%). On the contrary this percentage is considerably lower among those who watch much television”*.

Then, by summing up all the information gathered from various reports, the result we get is that kids with a more highly educated father and with a job of great responsibility usually have a higher educational qualification, are less frequently working (and usually with term-contracts during the period of their studies), have access to more cultural activities, perform a higher number of online and offline activities on a computer and, as far as it can be proved, have more social and political interests (let’s think about the 4.7% of kids frequenting political parties or associations and the 9.2% doing volunteer work). But we should also point out that parents are not the first ones to

teach the kids how to use a personal computer and the internet even though, as we've already seen, parents in the North (North-East in particular) are more skilled than others in Italy. Istat tells us that it's mainly through practice that web users have acquired their skills (75.9%), together with the help of colleagues, relatives and friends (68.7%). For adolescents in particular school training is important (16.1% of the cases) but peer-to-peer most of all.

5. The subjects of the research

Foreword

A questionnaire was distributed to the subjects of the research, containing, on one hand, some of the questions placed by national surveys, and on the other hand other questions having the purpose to fill what seems to be an "information gap" in national surveys only about the questions and the goals of this study. The data emerging from these questionnaires have no statistical value, as this is a qualitative study with 10 subjects. The goal, in using this tool, is to compare the analyzed group to the national average. To register correspondences and differences between the picture taken of young Italians on a national level and the one of the 10 active citizens who have decided to take part in this study.

Apart from a short personal section asking for age, sex, place and year of birth, marital status, housing condition, family structure, the questionnaire is made of 22 questions divided into sections: study/work activities, scholastic career, data on the family regarding the parents' educational level and work, information on the possession and use of the media.

I would like to underline, once again, that the subjects chosen for this research are sociopolitical activists, active citizens specifically chosen both for their activities and because they communicate their activism through the web. As a consequence, this specific characteristic of this group must be kept in mind when comparing the results of this questionnaire to the results of national data, given that national data consider "young people" as a general category and not as activists or web users.

The structure of the group of subjects

All 10 subjects involved have completed and returned the questionnaire.

Let's see who are the respondents to the questionnaire. Regarding the personal section, we have the following data:

- ✓ on a total of 10 respondents, 6 are females, 4 are males. Only one girl is engaged in political activities while the other 5 have been involved in this study for their social activities. The 4 boys are engaged in political activities;
- ✓ at the moment of this study, the respondents' age was between 18 and 21 years old, divided as follows: 1 was 18, 2 were 19, 2 were 20 and 5 were 21;
- ✓ their birthplaces cover the North and South of Italy and the islands. As a matter of fact, 3 of the respondents were born in the South, 6 in the North and one in Sicily;
- ✓ 1 out of 10's father is an Arabic mother-tongue speaker;
- ✓ 7 out of 10 have brothers and/or sisters, 3 are single children;
- ✓ 5 of them live on their own, but only one of the latter declares that he/she works, which leads us to think that a student condition forces a situation of economic dependence from the family to last;
- ✓ 3 of them live with their family of origin;
- ✓ only 1 of them declares that he/she is a "off-site student"³¹;
- ✓ 1 of them lives with his/her partner.

As far as the educational level is concerned:

- ✓ 9 out of 10 respondents are students of the University of Bologna, 1 is a high-school student;
- ✓ 8 out of 10's main activity is studying;
- ✓ 2 out of 9 work and study at the same time;
- ✓ the university majors in which the respondents are enrolled are: International Development and Cooperation (1), Political Science (2), Law (2), Political Economy (1), Philosophy (2), Dams³² (1);
- ✓ 6 out of 10 have a diploma from a Humanities High School (Liceo Classico);
- ✓ 2 out of 10 have a diploma from a Language High School;
- ✓ 1 out of 10 does not specify his/her kind of diploma but on his/her Facebook account talks about a diploma from an Arts High School;
- ✓ 6 out of 10 have had educational debts in school;

✓ 3 out of 10 flunked one or more years.

These first data already give us some interesting information that, in part, coincide with the national picture, while in another part contradict it. The binomial high educational level - sociopolitical commitment is confirmed: 9 respondents are university students, almost all of them are in liberal arts majors.

We should notice, in particular, that out of 8 individuals who have specified their kind of diploma, we have 6 activists with a liberal arts education. While analyzing one of the in-depth interviews, we'll see how attending a Humanities high school has influenced Francesco's path as an activist. Scientific and Humanities high schools are usually considered as the schools with the highest cultural level compared to Technical or Professional institutes.

5 of the 10 respondents were born in Bologna or in its province and 4 of them have attended or are attending a Humanities high school of the city which is widely known for being openly left-wing. One of the 4 latter has a school history split, during the years, between the two (public) Humanities high schools of the city.

The percentages of educational debts gained by the respondents are in contradiction with the national data, as 6 out of 10, therefore more than half of them, have had educational debts. What's more, 3 out of 10 have flunked one or more years. I must remind here that the national datum says that people who appear to be interested in sociopolitical activities have a high educational level and a low level of school failures.

The family background

The second section of the questionnaire concerns the family background. In this case, the data regarding the mother's educational level and job that were missing in the national data have also been recovered. Like above, we have some concordant data while other data are contrasting with the national average. With 10 couples of parents, we have 1 Arabic mother-tongue speaker father and 19 Italian mother-tongue speaker parents. On a total of 20 parents, 1 mother is deceased, therefore some percentage data are measured on one subject less. I thought it was important to recover the datum about the parents' mother-tongue language in order to find out whether in the group of subjects there were also children of immigrants on the Bologna territory.

Regarding the father's job, this is the situation:

- ✓ 1 out of 10 is unemployed;
- ✓ 2 are on redundancy payment;
- ✓ 1 is an artisan;
- ✓ 1 is a retailer;
- ✓ 2 are teachers/professors;
- ✓ 1 is a freelance professional;
- ✓ 1 is a manager;
- ✓ 1 is retired.

4 out of 10 have an open-ended contract, which means some economic security given by the income continuity. Let's remember that the national researches also show some economic difficulty in buying a computer and the devices related to it in those families where the father is unemployed or a workman, therefore affecting the digital divide. 3 fathers out of 10 are freelance professionals and 1 has a fixed-term contract.

Regarding educational qualification, this is what results from the questionnaires:

- ✓ 1 father has a secondary school diploma;
- ✓ 5 fathers have a high-school diploma;
- ✓ 2 fathers have a university degree;
- ✓ 1 father attended a post-graduate course;
- ✓ 1 father has a PhD.

These results reflect the national data in relation to the relationship between the parents' educational level and their children's educational level. When the parents have a high educational level, the children appear to have high educational levels too. Please notice that 9 out of 10 respondents have a high-school diploma and currently are university students.

Let's see the data regarding the 9 mothers. As far as their job is concerned, we have:

- ✓ 1 housewife;
- ✓ 1 artisan;
- ✓ 1 freelance professional;
- ✓ 1 bus driver;
- ✓ 3 clerical workers;
- ✓ 2 teachers/professors.

5 out of 8 workers (please notice the presence of 1 housewife who does not have a work contract) have an open-end contract, with a higher percentage than the fathers; 1 has an uncharacteristic contract; 1 is a freelance professional; the datum about the last one was not reported in the questionnaire and is missing.

Let's see the educational qualifications, that here too show a high educational level:

- ✓ 1 has a secondary school diploma;
- ✓ 5 have a high-school diploma;
- ✓ 3 have a university degree;
- ✓ 1 attended a post-graduate course.

This datum confirms a trend registered by Isfol that shows that women have a good educational level, although the researchers of the Institute themselves haven't examined this information in depth. There where both national statistics and S. Livingstone's studies (2009) show a particular attention by parents with a high educational level for their children's education, we can consider this circumstance as reinforced by the presence in the family of two parents with a high educational level. I think it might be also interesting to underline, although it has no statistical value, the swerve made by one of the respondents compared to his/her parents' lower educational level; both parents have a secondary school diploma, but the subject has made a swerve in his/her path and is currently a university student.

An additional datum that we have collected concerns the parents' possible sociopolitical commitment. Among the questions asked there is one on the influence of the family on the choice to be an activist. How much can the presence of a political or social "humus" (environment/background) within the family context matter? This question was also approached in the in-depth interviews, and we'll later see the answers. The results of this questionnaire show 5 active fathers, 3 in politics and 2 both in politics and in social activities. 2 out of 9 are the mothers active in this kind of activities, both in the social field. On a total of 19 parents, we have 7 active subjects, amounting to 37%. I personally think this is a good starting point.

Owning and using the media

The third section of the questionnaire is about owning and using some information/communication media; in detail: computers, web connection, cell-phones, smartphones, tablets, radio, TV, books, newspapers and magazines purchased within the two previous months.

The choice of these media instead of others is due to their widespread presence as shown by national data and by the presence of new instruments, such as the smartphones, that allow you to have a web connection everywhere, like always having the internet in your pocket. “Classic” media such as books, newspapers, radio and TV have been inserted too: TV, as national statistics still show it as the first information media; books, newspapers and radio because we consider them falling into growing disuse due to the transition to digital media. The subjects were asked to consider both the media present in the family (when they still live with it) and those present in their own room; the purpose was both to ascertain a generic availability for the whole family and a totally personal possession and supposed use. 6 subjects state they still live with their families, therefore the following data are relative to the possession of media of 7 family units. We have:

- ✓ 19 computers;
- ✓ 7 web connections;
- ✓ 11 cell-phones;
- ✓ 20 smartphones;
- ✓ 2 tablets;
- ✓ 18 TV sets;
- ✓ 6 radios,
- ✓ the presence of books in 6 families;
- ✓ the presence of newspapers and magazines purchased within the last two months in 7 families.

If TV remains the main information tool for Italian families, in these 7 family units we have an overtaking between the number of TV sets and the number of computers, as well as we notice an overtaking in the TV-smartphone ratio. All 7 families have a web connection; recently purchased books, newspapers and magazines are present in all of them, despite the high presence of digital media. The number of cell-phones is lowered, as they’ve clearly been overtaken by smartphones; 6 out of 7 have a radio, almost all the families, in contrast to what emerges from national data. There are only two tablets, probably, as stated by national statistics, due to the still high price of these products. The presence of 19 computers, 18 TV sets and 20 smartphones clearly leads to presume the use of this media by different members of the family and in different rooms.

Let’s see the data about the presence of these very same media in the subject’s room or in his/her own house, considering all 10 respondents:

- ✓ 9 computers;
- ✓ 7 web connections;
- ✓ 3 cell-phones;
- ✓ 10 smartphones;
- ✓ 1 tablet;
- ✓ 3 TV sets;
- ✓ 2 radios,
- ✓ the presence of books in 10 rooms
- ✓ the presence of newspapers and magazines purchased within the last two months in 7 rooms.

We can read in these data some kind of generational change in the use of the media. 9 computers and 1 tablet cover the use of all 10 respondents; web connections are only 7, but all 10 respondents have a smartphone that allows them to access the internet. TV and radio sets are not very present in the respondents' rooms. All 10 respondents report the presence of books, while 7 of newspapers and magazines. This last datum should be linked to another item in the questionnaire, namely that where subjects are asked to list the websites they look up the most. Among these, newspapers' websites take over, which means that reading a newspaper is not a disappeared activity, but the media has changed. The number of cell-phones has dropped to less than 1/3 of the sample, but we can notice that they are still one phone more with respect to owning a smartphone. The number of radio sets drops to 2, but we should keep in mind the transfer of radio stations on digital media, the use of dedicated platforms for music listening or the use of the smartphone as an MP3 player. In this case too we can speak of a media change, unless we want to suppose that young people don't listen to music anymore.

After analyzing the media they own, let's see how they use them. The subjects were asked how many hours they do spend online and these are the results:

- ✓ 2 subjects spend less than 2 hours a day online;
- ✓ 5 subjects spend between 2 and 5 hours a day online;
- ✓ 3 subjects spend more than 5 hours a day online.

All 10 subjects have a Facebook account, exactly in line with the national data informing us that more than 85% of young people have an account on the Social Network.

The subjects were asked to list the 5 websites they look up the most; in some cases, several websites were "joint winners", which raises considerably the total number of listed websites. We

report the datum anyway, although it wasn't provided in the questionnaire; however, it doesn't have any statistical value but only descriptive of these subjects' traits. Let's see what they are:

Information websites:

- ✓ www.repubblica.it (online center-left-wing-oriented newspaper) listed by 7 subjects out of 10;
- ✓ www.ilfattoquotidiano.it (online center-left-wing-oriented newspaper) listed by 3 subjects out of 10;
- ✓ www.ilgiornale.it (online right-wing newspaper) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.ilrestodelcarlino.it (online center-right-wing-oriented newspaper) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.ilcorriere.it (online newspaper, generally moderate) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.libero.it (online right-wing newspaper) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.theguardian.com, (British online liberal newspaper) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.ilcorsaro.info ("other information" website) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.commonware.org ("general intellect in formation", online newspaper of a student union) listed by 1 subject;

Websites of political interest:

- ✓ www.retedellaconoscenza.it (website run by high-school, university, PhD students and scholars about subjects related to knowledge) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.linkcoordinamentouniversitario.it (network of local university organizations, union-related and political, free, independent and self-financed, with the purpose to promote university students' rights) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.pagellapolitica.it (a project aiming at monitoring statements by the main Italian politicians, in order to judge their truthfulness by means of figures and facts. Website run by a group of young professionals) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.camera.it (website of the Italian Chamber of Deputies) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.ciwati.it (blog of Giuseppe Civati, a candidate to the Italian Democratic Party Primary Elections) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.micromega.net (online political magazine of L'Espresso editorial group) listed by 1 subject;

Websites of social interest:

- ✓ www.amnesty.it (Amnesty International website, Italian section) listed by 2 subjects;

- ✓ www.greenpeace.it (Greenpeace, website, Italian section) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.operazionecolomba.it (website of the non-violent peace corps of the Papa Giovanni XXIII community) listed by 1 subject;

Websites of cultural interest or related to studies:

- ✓ www.unibo.it (University of Bologna website) listed by 5 subjects;
- ✓ www.wikipedia.it (online encyclopedia) listed by 1 subject who is a contributing editor of the website;
- ✓ www.pearsonhighered.com, (e-learning platform) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.wordreference.com (multi-language online dictionary) listed by 1 subject;

Entertainment and service websites:

- ✓ www.trenitalia.it (website of the Italian railways) listed by 2 subjects;
- ✓ www.ondarock.it (website of music information and reviews) listed by 1 subject who publishes articles on the website;
- ✓ www.fantascudetto.it (website of sports information) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.tuttomercatoweb.com, (website of sports information) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.bolognabasket.it, (website of sports information) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.youtube.com (platform for uploading/watching videos) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.amazon.it (website for buying books and other things) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.istagram.com (website for editing pictures) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.yahoomail.com (e-mail server) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.hotmail.it (e-mail server) listed by 1 subject;
- ✓ www.streamingdb.org (website for peer-to-peer downloading) listed by 1 subject.

The presence of 9 newspaper websites, one of which listed by 7 out of 10 subjects and one listed by 3 out of 10 subjects validates the theory of a transfer to reading information on new media and underlines the still great role of official press. The presence of politically-oriented newspapers, both right-wing and left-wing, of a self-defining “alternative press”, of newspapers realized by student unions and of foreign newspapers shows the subjects’ ability and desire to get information from a wider range of sources. In this sense I also find very interesting the use of the websites of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, of Rete della Conoscenza (Knowledge Network), of the web page of political candidates, which shows a search for information directly at its source. As for the websites

of social interest, we notice the presence of 2 subjects on the Amnesty International page, despite the presence of 5 activists in the group of subjects of the research; we also see the presence of other websites of social interest, such as those of Greenpeace and Operazione Colomba (Operation Dove), the sign of an opening to the projects of associations other than the membership association.

We should also notice the role of 2 subjects as editors: one of them writes on Wikipedia, and therefore has been confirmed by the website as a source, while the other, a musician, publishes articles on an online music magazine. The proof of particular skills not only as users searching for information but also as contributors of contents.

Cultural consumption

Let's get to the cultural consumption approached in the last part of the questionnaire. National data inform us that the children of parents with a high educational level and a high work profile are the ones who mainly use the web and are also those with greater cultural interests. The questions in this last part of the questionnaire were about the attendance of cinemas, theatres and exhibitions. As for the movies:

- 1 subject goes to the movies less than twice a year;
- 1 subject goes to the movies between 2 and 5 times a year;
- 1 subject goes to the movies between 5 and 10 times a year;
- 7 subjects go to the movies more than 10 times a year.

None of the subjects selected the entries "never" or "don't know". This high attendance could be due to the fact that several cinemas in the city offer a half-price admission twice a week.

As for the theater:

- 1 subject never goes to a theater in a year;
- 5 subjects go to a theater less than twice a year;
- 4 subjects go to a theater between 2 and 5 times a year;
- 1 subject goes to a theater between 5 and 10 times a year.

None of the subjects selected the entries "more than 10 times" and "don't know".

As for the exhibitions:

- 4 subjects visit exhibitions less than twice a year;
- 3 subjects visit exhibitions between 2 and 5 times a year;

- 3 subjects visit exhibitions between 5 and 10 times a year.

None of the subjects selected the entries “never” and “don’t know”.

6. Conclusions

I will now try to sum up these data.

A first interesting datum is a sort of gender characterization of the activities. If we consider all 10 subjects involved in the work, we have 4 politically-active boys, only one girl active in the same field and 5 socially-active girls. Gender characterization is not one of the subjects approached in this study, but I found it an interesting datum to underline anyway.

No one in the group is aged between 16 and 17, all 10 subjects were older at the moment of their adhesion to this work. However, in the 5 in-depth interviews to the subjects and in the 2 interviews to the key informants, it emerges that their interest for politics or for social issues is anyway previous; from activist informant M. T., 13 years old, to G. A., about 16 when the blast of the bombs that killed magistrates Falcone and Borsellino brought him and his friends together around partisan Vittoria Giunti, to Francesco, Dimitri, Rossella and Elena, subjects of the research, who started their respective activities around 15-16 during the last three years in high school. Being it a group of subjects with specific characteristics, this datum cannot be compared to the available national data, but it’s indicative of the fact that an interest for sociopolitical activities can actually start at a young age.

This sample confirms the national statistical data concerning the relationship between the parents’ educational level and their work qualification and the children’s educational level and their interest for politics and social activism. What should be noticed here in particular, is that all the respondents come from liberal arts schools, with a great prevalence of Humanities high school, confirmed by the enrollment in university majors, again liberal arts majors. Less corresponding to national data, actually almost showing an opposing trend, is the percentage of educational debts present in this group. Of the 10 subjects who have completed the questionnaire, 6 have or have had educational debts, 60% of them, while 4 of them have flunked one or more years. This datum informs us that a school failure is not in itself indicative of a lack of interest for sociopolitical issues. Another interesting datum is that about the respondents coming from Humanities high schools. I will bring along with this information in the line of reasoning of this study together with that 37% of parents who are politically or socially active. As I’ve already said before, one of the purposes of this study is to try to understand where the most important educational experiences for

the subjects do take place, whether in the family, or at school or among peers. The liberal arts imprint, and in the case of 5 subjects out of 10 the attendance of one specific Humanities high school in Bologna, the presence of a good percentage of parents active citizens as well, are data that already allow us to outline some theories that I will sum up at the end of this study.

Let's get to the relationship with the media, both digital and not. An interesting datum is certainly the possession of a high number of media by the families. We have seen 19 computers, 20 smartphones, 18 TV sets, the presence of web connections, the purchase of books, newspapers and magazines in 7 family units (the other 3 respondents state that they live on their own). Thinking about what we've already discussed while analyzing national statistical data, it's easy to link the parents' high educational level and medium-high work profile with their investment in communication/educational media. Here we don't have any digital divide, neither the economic nor the cultural one. On the contrary, here we have some abundance of devices. It's also interesting to see what, of the family possessions, is in the children's rooms or personal apartments. All 10 of them have a PC or a tablet, all of them have a smartphone, all of them have books, only 3 of them have a TV set, only 2 have a radio. The data regarding TV and radio shouldn't forcedly lead us to think that these media are not used. We know that it's possible to watch or listen to many programs via streaming media. Likewise, one of the respondents states not to have any newspapers or magazines at home, but then lists 6 of them, all ranking second in his/her personal list of most looked-up websites. In my opinion, this is a sign that older media have not disappeared from young people's interests, they have simply transferred to another media.

Let's see the hours of connection: 5 out of 10 say that they spend between 2 and 5 hours a day online; 2 less than two hours; 3 more than 5 hours a day. What do they do? All 10 have a Facebook account, confirming the national datum about the presence of young people on this Social Network. Moreover, we know that the subjects of the research also use it to communicate their activism.

All 10 respondents read information websites. 8 out of 9 read online institutional newspapers, above all the website of *La Repubblica*, followed by *Il fatto quotidiano*, both left-wing oriented newspapers, but there are also right-wing oriented newspapers and, in one case, a foreign newspaper. This is proof of the will to vary the quality of information. Then there are websites of "alternative information" or of student unions. The subjects also go directly to the information source, by looking up the web pages of Italian Chamber of Deputies, of specific political candidates, of Associations of voluntary social work. In two cases we also have contributors to the

websites, as in the case of the Wikipedia editor. While analyzing the in-depth interviews, we'll find out that there are other contributors to websites, writing for student unions and the websites of alternative, independent information. The 10 subjects also look up service websites, websites useful for their studies, and entertainment websites.

The last datum taken into consideration concerns cultural consumption by these 10 young people. In general, data show us a good attendance of cultural activities, none of them claims to "never" perform all of the activities. Cinema attendance is quite high and represents the first cultural activity among those listed in the questionnaire, perhaps also because of its cheap price. 7 out of 10 respondents go to the movies more than 10 times a year; in one case, a subject specified that he/she goes even more than 20 times. 1 subject goes to the movies between 5 and 10 times a year, only one goes less than twice a year. I'd like to mention that in Bologna, admission to the cinema is half price twice a week. Attendance to the theater is a little weaker despite the presence in the city of a large number of lyric and drama theaters. 1 of the subjects claims he/she "never" goes to the theater during the year, 5 of them go less than twice a year, 4 between 2 and 5 times, only 1 between 5 and 10, none more than 10. Talking about visiting exhibitions, 3 subjects answered that they do that "less than twice a year", 4 do that "between 2 and 5 times a year", 3 answered "between 5 and 10 times a year". None answered "more than 10 times". By summing up all the data, we have a total attendance of cinema, theater and exhibitions going from only 1 "never" to 7 out of 10 who perform these activities more than 10 times a year. This datum confirms the national information showing that the subjects with a high educational level and web users are also those with a high attendance of cultural activities.

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- ¹ Istat, National Institute of Statistics, <www.istat.it>
- ² Isfol, Institute for the development of the workers' professional training, <www.isfol.it>
- ³ Eurispes, Institute for Political, Economic and Social Studies, <www.eurispes.it>
- ⁴ Telefono Azzurro (Blue Phone), helpline for minors, <www.azzurro.it>
- ⁵ Istituto degli Innocenti, active in favor of childhood since mid-1400, <www.istitutodeglinnocenti.it>
- ⁶ EuKids Online, <<http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/Home.aspx>>
- ⁷ Unicef Italy, <www.unicef.it>
- ⁸ Livingstone, S. (2010), *Ragazzi online, crescere con internet nella società digitale*, Milano, Vita & Pensiero, p. 60.
- ⁹ *Ivi*, p. 3. 57% of European young people from 15 to 16 years old connect to the web directly from their room.
- ¹⁰ Istat (2011), *Cittadini e nuove tecnologie*, Statistiche e Report, Roma, p. 11.
- ¹¹ Institute for Political, Economic and Social Studies
- ¹² Telefono Azzurro Onlus: born as a helpline for abused children, it now works to promote the UNO Convention on the Rights of the Child, <http://www.azzurro.it/index.php/it/>
- ¹³ The survey was carried out on a probabilistic sample, the authors have considered the following variables: sex, age, geographical area, type of school or institute, year attended. Two kinds of questionnaires were given to the sample group: one for the kids, aged from 12 to 18, attending the second and third year of secondary school or one of the five years of high school; and one for the parents. 21 schools of all kinds were involved for a total of 1496 questionnaires for the kids and 1266 for the parents. The questionnaires were semi-structured.
- ¹⁴ National Institute of Statistics, public research authority, it's the main producer of official statistics in Italy. www.istat.it
- ¹⁵ Istat (2011), *Cittadini e nuove tecnologie*, Statistiche e Report, Roma, p. I.
- ¹⁶ *Ibidem*.
- ¹⁷ This datum is interesting if we think that it is forbidden to under 14-year olds to sign up, which means that, when creating an account, young kids lie about their age. This circumstance is so highly widespread that Facebook's legal offices are working on the opening to this age target taking into account the legal aspects related to minor age. For further details see http://www.lastampa.it/cmstp/rubriche/girata.asp?ID_articolo=10485&ID_blog=30&ID_sezione=38 last access 02.07.12 and <http://cm.regione.emiliaromagna.it/assemblealegislativa/assemblealegislativa/strutturaorganizzativa/corecom/12019educazione-ai-media/08NordSudOvestWebxweb.pdf> pages 43-63, last access 12.11.12.
- ¹⁸ Isfol (2011) *Il divario digitale nel mondo giovanile, il rapporto dei giovani con le ICT*. I libri del Fondo sociale europeo, Roma
- ¹⁹ In this sense we can suppose that the change in the university system, becoming 3+2 year system has influenced the kids' choice about the continuation of their studies because this offers the opportunity to get an intermediate qualification with a professionally spendable level: it is higher than a diploma but does not require the same number of years of study as the old system.
- ²⁰ Livingstone, S. (2010) *Ragazzi online, crescere con internet nella società digitale*, Milano, Vita & Pensiero, p. 76.
- ²¹ Istat (2011), *Cittadini e nuove tecnologie*, Statistiche e Report, Roma, p. I
- ²² The authors of the research explain this figure with higher economic resources and a popular curiosity for new realities and new worlds by more educated young people. Please allow me to add another datum: the advent and massive and widespread diffusion of low-cost airlines in Italy. Actually, as of today, Irish Ryanair alone departs and arrives in 17 airports, British easyJet in 18, German Germanwings in 20. The destinations cover all Western Europe and are spreading to the neighboring states such as Turkey, the Maghreb area and Eastern Europe. Low-cost airlines allow to easily book flights online and also check in online. Travelling by plane has definitely become easier and cheaper in the last years.
- ²³ An interesting interpretation of the presence of a PC in every house comes from S. Livingstone who, although explicitly referring to the "aspirational" English culture, states that the idea that a PC could facilitate study and therefore bring a status enhancement has convinced many parents to – literally – open the door of their house to this new technology. Livingstone S. (2010), *Ragazzi online, crescere con internet nella società digitale*, Milano, Vita & Pensiero, p. 85.
- ²⁴ During the research "UK Children Go Online" Sonia Livingstone and her collaborators have examined the use of the web both by working-class and middle-class kids and they have noticed how similar this is provided they have internet access at home. The presence of a computer with web connection at home seems to cancel, in this milieu, social differences. Livingstone S. (2010), *Ragazzi online, crescere con internet nella società digitale*, Milano, Vita & Pensiero, p.77. But farther on in the same text (p. 106) they refer to the fact that parents with higher education tend to encourage their children to a use of the web related to study and participation, while parents with a lower education level tend to use the web for entertainment.

²⁵ Isfol (2011) *Il divario digitale nel mondo giovanile, il rapporto dei giovani con le ICT*. I libri del Fondo sociale europeo, Roma, p. 47.

²⁶ *Ivi*, p. 9.

²⁷ *Ivi*, p. 61.

²⁸ As far as work is concerned, girls appear to do more “typically feminine” jobs such as shop assistant, waitress, or clerical jobs, compared to boys who work as ordinary workmen (unskilled workmen or day laborers) and specialized workmen. Another interesting datum about work is that a higher number of boys have a long-term contract (27.8% of the boys compared to 23.6% of the girls).

²⁹ Istat (2011), *Cittadini e nuove tecnologie*, Statistiche e Report, Roma, p. 3.

³⁰ Livingstone, S. (2010), *Ragazzi online, crescere con internet nella società digitale*, Milano, Vita & Pensiero.

³¹ Student who studies far from his/her city of origin

³² School of Performing Arts.

Chapter 5, Data analysis, first part. The observation on Facebook

Foreword

This study has three aims:

1. Through observation of the profiles on social networks of ten research subjects, try to understand what kind of social and political activity young people practice online and in which way their network of contacts is structured;
2. Observe and try to understand the flow between socio-political activities online and offline, by the 10 subjects of the research;
3. Try to understand what have been the most significant learning experiences that have led the subjects of the research to appreciate the potential of the web as a tool for sharing information related to their commitment, and what the learning experience that allowed them to develop their active citizenship (School? Family? The peer group? Something else?) and what the meaning, phenomenologically speaking, that this same activity takes for them.

By virtue of which, I will now analyze the data emerged from this work.

For each of the 10 subjects involved I collected the data for the three months that have been picked out for the intensity of the production, in particular October 2012 for the student demonstrations, November 2012 for the Centre-Left Primary Elections and February 2013 for the General Elections. In addition to this, five of the ten subjects were interviewed in depth, they are the five most active online, divided into those engaged in political activities (Francesco, Dimitri and Elena) and those engaged in social activities (Rossella and Eliana) and five of the ten were followed in their offline socio-political activities when they invited me to their events (Giacomo, Francesco, Elena, Dimitri, Rossella).

1. Evaluation of the online activity on Facebook

The online activity on the Social Network was evaluated on the base of the form “Evaluation of the online activity” which is available in chapter 2 of this work.

The first step of this analysis is to evaluate the structure of the network of contacts of the subjects. How large is the network of contacts of the subjects? How frequently do they communicate?

For this work carried out on Facebook I had to take into account some different situations which turned out to be methodological critical issues.

One of the most important issues concerns the categorization of the posts published by the subjects. The communicative opportunities on the Social Network are many, it is possible to post links to articles, pictures, videos, personal posts, etc. It happens that the articles can be accompanied by pictures. The pictures, even if they can only circulate as such, can include, and often they do, an accompanying text. Also, a video can be accompanied by a text, and so on. What can be categorized as a text and what as an image? The choice, therefore, was to refer to the categorization made by the Social Network itself, probably based on the computer format of these data. So, when the indication given by the Facebook System was “X shared a link”, this was considered as a text, an article. When the indication given by the Facebook System was “X shared a photo”, this was considered as a picture even when both the objects appeared as hybridized.

Another issue. During the election campaigns, both for the Center-Left Primary Elections and the General Elections in 2013, the candidates presented their electoral playbooks. This means that they talked about different topics, from the environment legislative changes and the clampdown on tax evasion to the excess of taxes at the expense of taxpayers. The aggregates concerning the issues debated by the subjects refer to multiple entries: “Communications of the X Party during the campaign for the Primary/Elections 2013”, but also “Laws”, “Environment”, etc. My methodological choice was to separate electoral propaganda, by including it in the entry “Communications of the Party”, from the personal intervention of the research subject who decides to deal independently with one of these issues. It follows that under the entry “Communications of the Party” are considered articles and interviews to political leaders, personal statuses of the leaders dealing with the different topics debated during the election campaign, whereas in the entries “Laws” or “Environment” are considered personal posts by the subjects.

What’s more, in this work I preferred not to take into account the “Likes”. In many cases the posts and the comments of the subjects and of their contacts were accompanied by a “Like”; the reasons in support of this choice are many. The first one is that within a post, whether it is a personal status, a video or a linked article, the debated aspects can be many and different. So, what does a “Like” refer to? To the content? To which part of a content? To a tone? To the fact of being ironic rather than critical? When a subject links an article of 3 or 4 pages, what does the “Like” refer to, exactly? The second reason is that the “Like” concerns the pragmatics of communication¹ and, regarding the purposes of this research, maybe it is not the case to analyze so in depth the issue, for which we can find references in a possible different research².

In the light of these reasons I decided not to take into account the many “Likes” in posts and comments while I preferred to concentrate on the issues and on the debates.

Some others methodological strategies: as already indicated in “Methodology”, I protected the privacy of the subjects and of their friends when they posted some materials or they published comments on the subject’s timeline. To do this, I reduced to the initials the names of the friends who commented. During the analysis of the data obtained by the web, the names of the friends were recorded separately and, next to each name, the initials resulting from the first and last name were indicated. When the initials were the same for more than one friend, I added a number. Then I counted the comments published by each friend. By graphically illustrating the number of contacts, I decided to indicate in principle: a) the highest values related to comments posted by individuals or small groups of commentators, b) the value lower than 10 and c) the value equal to 1. This in a general way. Of course the 10 subjects do not all have the same structure of relationships. Some of them use Facebook to communicate their activities or their thoughts in an assiduous way. Others showed to only use this tool in a negligible way. In this latter case, I decided to also keep the specific data lower than 10 in order to document the network of relationships anyway.

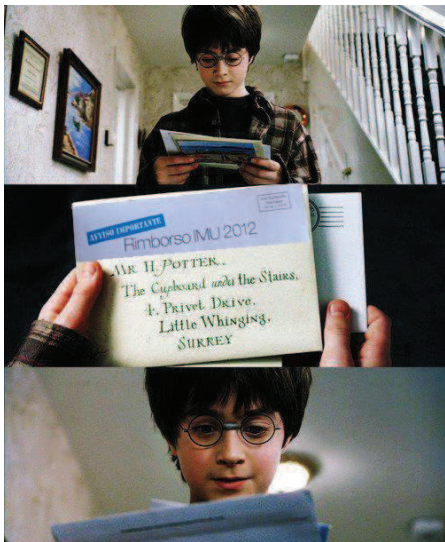
2. Communicative forms of the web

The use of certain communicative forms by the research subjects is allowed and, at the same time, limited by the possibilities offered in this sense by the Social Network Facebook. Actually this Social Network offers a wide range of expressive forms: it is possible to share personal statuses, statuses of public figures, links to articles, personal notes, pictures of many kinds such as photos, cartoons, memes, links to videos, and it allows to communicate via private chat through which it is possible to exchange files, etc.

In particular I find it interesting to reflect on the quite recent form of image that has an important diffusion on the web and, therefore, also on Facebook. It’s the *memes*. The meme belongs to the culture of Remix, the web phenomenon that allows to mix in the same context different communicative forms that are not only used as already given but that can be created by the users themselves. In regards to this Markham (2013) writes:

“(...) remix is not something we do in addition to our everyday lives, it is the way we make sense of our world, by transforming the bombardment of stimuli into a seamless experience. If we take seriously the idea that everything we take to be real is a constant negotiation of relationship between people and things, and that culture is habit writ large, remix as a form of sense-making embraces this framework”³

To simplify, I'll try to analyze a meme. What we see in this image is an assemblage of some scenes from the movie "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone", film adaptation of the editorial success of the same name by J. K. Rowling. The first characteristic of a meme is to refer to a story very well known by the public (some other examples are *Star Wars* or *Back to the Future*). In this case we have a blockbuster movie which comes from a book that has made its author one of the world's richest women. The scene is famous, little Harry, orphan of both parents, is tormented by



his perfidious aunt and uncle who force him to sleep below stairs and have never mentioned the belonging of his parents to the world of magicians. Harry is the victim of pranks and injustices on the part of this adoptive family. At his eleventh birthday, the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry sends him a letter of admission that allows him to join a magical world, the same that belonged to his parents. His aunt and uncle intercept the letter and tear it up. A second one arrives and it ends up like the first one and so on, several times. Suddenly a rainfall of letters arrives from Hogwarts that squeeze in each crack of the house, from the letterbox to

the fireplace. It is a part of the narration that is rich in pathos, the moment when Harry can escape from the cruelties of his adoptive family and release himself in a world of magic. The scene is well made, accompanied by a nice soundtrack, the aunt and uncle give in to the wave of letters and finally Harry grabs one and opens it. Thus he discovers to be "special". The crucial passage of every story for children. What happens in the meme that we see here? It recalls a clearly recognizable scene from the movie, that evokes the emotion of the little boy, happy for a magic event, and with a rosy future ahead. In the images of this section of the film an alien element was inserted. The letter in which the leader of the PdL Party, Silvio Berlusconi, promises to the Italians, during the electoral campaign, not only to abolish the tax on the first house, but also to return the amount already paid the previous year. Not satisfied, Berlusconi says that in the event that the State funds were not enough, he is willing to refund the amount out of his pockets. The connection of the refund letter with the Hogwarts magic letter has a clear intent of parody. This is the formula of a meme, given a story, this is "broken" with a topical element, with an intent of parody.

In regards to this, Markham (2013) writes:

"(...) remix relies on sampling, borrowing, and creatively reassembling units of cultural information to create something that is used to move or persuade others. (...) Remix is about working in the liminal space to create a particular way of connecting the familiar

with the unfamiliar, or the original elements and the remixed. (...) remix always occurs as part of a larger community of remix. It is a process of creating temporary assemblages that change almost immediately after initial production. The very power of remix relies on the participation of others as “producers or collaborative remixes. (...) A meme might appear to have a life of its own as it morphs and changes. But it is negotiated, interactive. It is transformed and it transforms its users and creators”⁴

This is another example of a meme that cyclically appears on the web, this time the reference is to the movie “Back to the Future”:



- Doc, why that face?
- We need to go back to 1936 and prevent Berlusconi's mother from getting pregnant...

Actually the meme is not a “new” element of communication but it refers to rhetoric and to parody. By referring back to the classics for more details about the concept of rhetoric, here I will limit myself to one of its definitions as the art of “well speaking”. Rhetoric is a discipline that studies the composition method of speeches, its aim is the persuasion of the audience in terms of both emotional and psychological assent whereas parody is described as: “*Burlesque disguise of an artwork, for a satirical, humorous or even critic aim, that consists in (...) falsifying the verses while preserving the cadence, the rhymes, the syntactic fabric and some words or, with some little variations, the pattern. With a more generic accepted meaning, it is a deliberate imitation with a more or less ridiculous aim*”⁵ and we see that the meme applies in a very effective way in both these senses.

A further communicative form used by many research subjects is an Italian creation, the Amaca (*Hammock*) by Michele Serra published daily on the newspaper *La Repubblica* and available in .jpg

format in the online version. An image, therefore, easy to share and that is actually shared a lot. The Amaca by Michele Serra is a short text, a satirical piece (*corsivo*⁶ in Italian) that discusses many issues but that focuses on politics, society and the category of “Italian spirit”.

You can see an example of it in the image here attached.

Michele Serra is an admittedly left-wing journalist who writes for a left-wing newspaper and,



cyclically, collects his “Hammocks” in books. It is, therefore, a product easy to adapt to different communicative contexts, from the newspaper to the web in .jpg format, to a book. The author is among the “reference” figures of people connected with the Left-wing world, and therefore also of some of the subjects of this research, but he is also appreciated in an across-the-board way.

During the campaign for the Center-Left Primary Elections, also another kind of image spread over, this time related to the Hashtag, the

symbol that characterizes the communication on Twitter. The Hashtag marks a discussion topic. This communicative form was particularly used by the Sel Party with the formula #OppureVendola (#*OtherwiseVendola*) which candidate itself as a political alternative to the other Parties. This kind of communication was also used during the General Elections campaign in 2013.

Here are some examples:



The usual Italy. Otherwise Vendola



The Diaz School massacre. Otherwise Vendola



Prohibition. Otherwise Vendola



Only X% of public money for education
Otherwise Vendola

The subjects who decided to participate in this research mostly belong to Left-wing movements and, therefore, it is normal that there is a great majority of posts in favor of this coalition and against Right-wing Parties such as PdL with S. Berlusconi. Following the former Prime Minister's promise to return the tax on the first house to the Italians, a series of images with the title "Berlusconi returns things" spread over the web and on the subjects' profiles.

Here are some examples:



I will return the academic fees of your useless degrees.



I will return the acorn to Scrat.



I will return the straightforward pathway to Dante Alighieri.



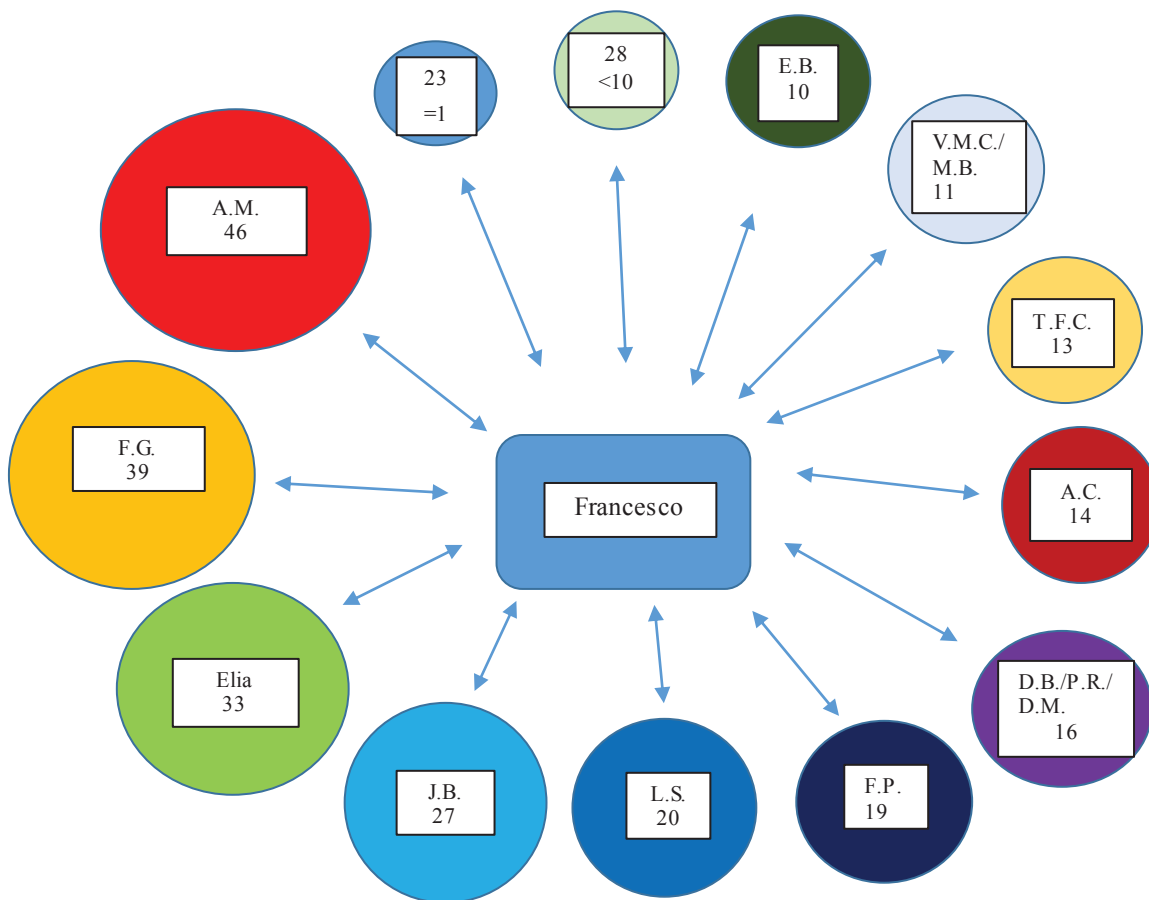
I will return the library to Alexandria.

3. Structure of the personal networks

Francesco, network structure

Let's take Francesco. This young member of the Democratic Party has 1020 contacts on Facebook. 65 of them have commented on his posts with political or social contents; 6.4% of the total number of friends who have participated in the sharing of materials with 424 comments. Not all friends have commented with the same frequency, as we can see in the following diagram:

Structure of Francesco's relationships, initials of the commentators and number of comments for each of them or by quantity of comments



Acknowledgement of the subject's sociopolitical activity by his contacts

On Facebook, a discussion doesn't only start with an impulse given by the subject, but it can start thanks to the posts published on the subject's page by his contacts, his friends. Francesco has 19 friends of a sociopolitical nature. This exchange is certainly due to the fact that they acknowledge an interest of the subject towards a certain topic; we might assume that a political competence be recognized to him, for which a dialogue is sought for, but also that a role may be recognized, as a Party member who makes motions to support candidates and organizes events.

Discussed topics

50 different topics have been discussed on Francesco's timeline, by means of "personal statuses", "links to articles", "images", "videos", "posts published by friends", "personal statuses of public figures", commented 597 times, also considering in the discussion the subject's interventions, that have been grouped as follows:

Politics, with a total of 224 posts and 499 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ General Elections of February 2013, discussed 98 times, with 263 comments;
- ✓ Center-Left Primary Elections 2012, discussed 38 times, with 157 comments;
- ✓ Criticism/satires towards the PdL Party and its leader S. Berlusconi, discussed 22 times, with 21 comments;
- ✓ Activities of Movimento 5 Stelle, discussed 16 times, with 9 comments;
- ✓ Communication of Sel Party for the Center-Left Primary Elections, discussed 12 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Electoral communications and activities of Lega Nord Party, discussed 1 time with 5 comments;
- ✓ Electoral program of P. Bersani, discussed 8 times, with 2 comments;
- ✓ European politics, discussed 5 times, with 7 comments;
- ✓ World politics, discussed 4 times, with 7 comments;
- ✓ Democratic Party assembly, discussed 2 times, with 5 comments;
- ✓ Regional Elections in Sicily, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Regional Elections in Lazio, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Primary Elections and program of the Center-Right, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Politics and bad behavior, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Justices' investigations on the Democratic Party, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Fall of the leader of the Democratic Party, discussed 1 time, with 1 comment;
- ✓ Defense of the Democratic Party, discussed 1 time, with 11 comments;
- ✓ State-Mafia negotiation, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Relationship between media and democracy, discussed 1 time, with 1 comment;
- ✓ Totalitarian regimes, discussed 1 time, with 1 comment;
- ✓ Italian citizenship to foreigners, discussed 1 time, with 1 comment
- ✓ Fascism, discussed 4 times, with 9 comments.

Laws, with a total of 9 posts and 8 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Electoral Law, discussed 5 times, with 8 comments;
- ✓ Stability Law, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Law against torture, Amnesty International campaign, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ *Ad personam* laws, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;

- ✓ Decree Law on Growth, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Economy, work and trade unions with a total of 22 posts and 5 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Italian economy, discussed 12 times, with 2 comments;
- ✓ European economy, discussed 4 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Tax evasion, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Fiat Pomigliano, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Work and youth work, discussed 3 times, with 3 comments.

Violence against women, with a total of 6 posts e 0 comments:

- ✓ Violence against women, discussed 6 times, with 0 comments.

Bio-ethics, with a total of 5 posts and 24 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Catholic morals and Welby and Englaro cases, discussed 5 times, with 24 comments.

Racism, with a total of 4 posts and 27 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion

- ✓ Racism, discussed 4 times, with 27 comments.

Sexuality, with a total of 4 posts and 20 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion

- ✓ Homosexuality, discussed 4 times, with 20 comments.

Education, with a total of 7 posts and 0 comments:

- ✓ School and University, discussed 7 times, with 0 comments.

Law enforcement, with a total of 2 posts and 1 comment, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

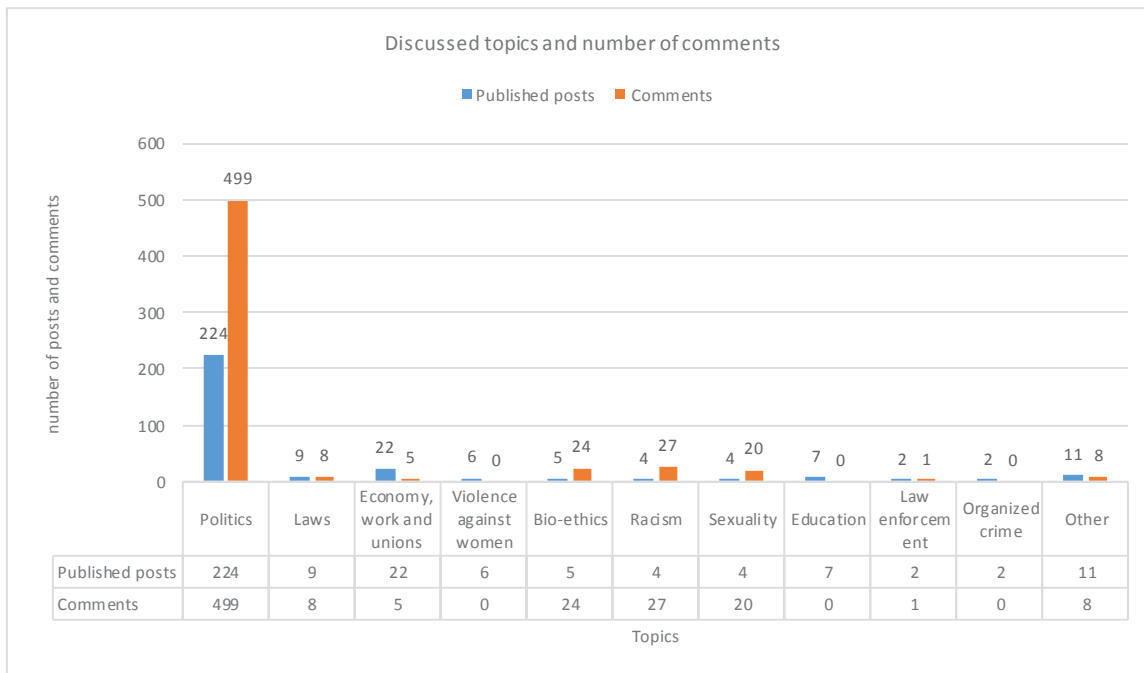
- ✓ Police and identification codes, discussed 2 times, with 1 comment;

Organized crime, with a total of 2 posts and 0 comments:

- ✓ Mafia, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments.

Other, with a total of 11 posts and 8 comments, including the subject’s comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Profit vs humanity, discussed 6 times, with 7 comments;
- ✓ Earthquake in Emilia Romagna, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Death of Eric Hobsbaum, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Anniversary of G. Bruno’s death, discussed 1 time, with 1 comment;
- ✓ Generic medicines, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.



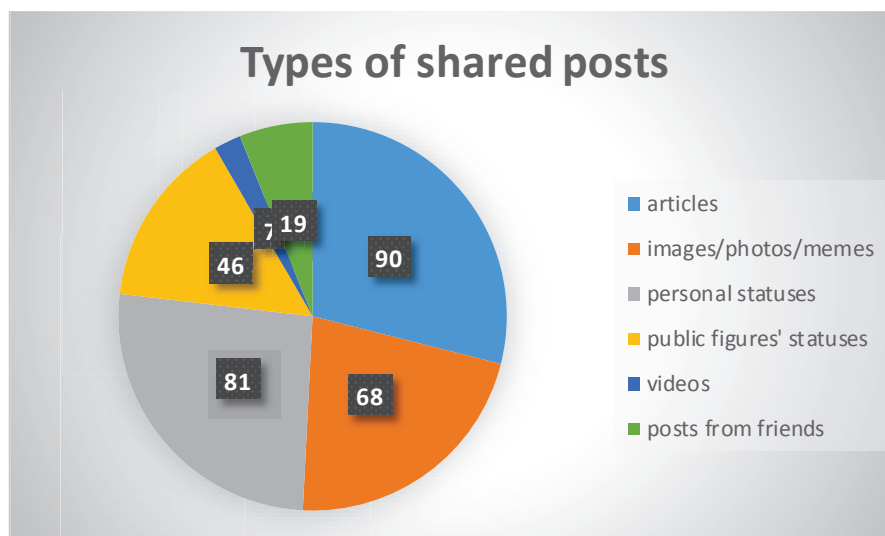
We register in one case, during a discussion, a moment of discord between Francesco and one of his contacts; a high-pitched discussion that almost became a fight, with Francesco threatening to cancel the commentator from his Facebook friends. I will deal with this element further in detail in the data analysis and interpretation that I’m presenting.

The timeline environment

By watching further this subject’s page we see that the System shows him in contact with 112 Facebook pages of sociopolitical nature and of journalistic analysis with the “Like” function, which means that he sees their contents on his Home. Here are some examples of these pages: “I giovani democratici” (*Young Democrats*), “Ansa”, “Internazionale.it”, “Debating Europe”, “European initiative for media pluralism”, “Sel Circle”, “PD Circle”, “Studenti universitari per Civati” (*University students for Civati*), etc.

Moreover, he shares the personal statuses of 24 public figures – with a total of 46 statuses – such as politicians and journalists, among which stand out as shared on his Timeline, Roberto Saviano (journalist and author of books about Camorra), Nichi Vendola (Secretary of Sel Party), PierLuigi Bersani (former Secretary of the Democratic Party) and other politicians afferent to the Democratic Party.

His posts are divided as follows: during the three months he has shared 90 articles, 81 personal statuses, 68 images/photos/memes, 46 statuses of public figures and 7 videos, to which to add the 19 contributions of his contacts. If we add up the 90 articles and the 81 personal statuses, his preference for sharing text materials appears clear.



At the same time we can notice a scarce attention for videos, while images/photos/memes occupy another good segment.

Among the sources that he uses for sharing posts on his timeline, the online newspaper “La Repubblica” stands out, used 25 times for this purpose, to be added to “La Repubblica, Napoli” and “La Repubblica, Palermo”, used 1 time each. Other newspaper sources are “Huffington Post” used 3 times, “Corriere della Sera”, “Il Fatto Quotidiano”, “L’Unità” and “La Stampa” that were used 2 times. This datum about Francesco confirms what emerged in Chapter 4 about the use of online institutional journalistic sources.

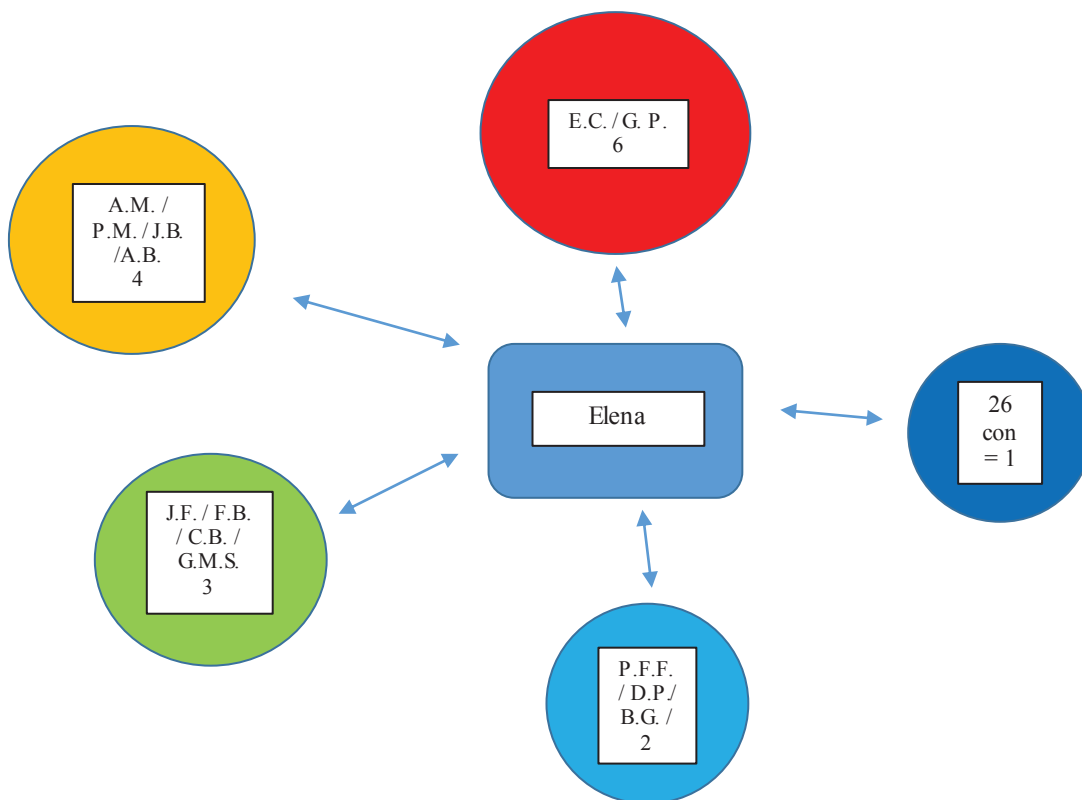
Sources of a political kind are Beppe Grillo’s website (the leader of Movimento 5 Stelle) and the website of the Democratic Party, Bologna section.

Elena, network structure

Let's see Elena. The girl, who supports the Sel Party, Left, Ecology and Freedom, has 707 friends on Facebook; 39 of them have commented on her posts with sociopolitical contents, which means 5.5% of her contacts with a total of 70 comments in the three months.

Elena's network of contacts can be represented as follows:

Structure of Elena's relationships, initials of the commentators and number of comments for each of them or by quantity of comments



Acknowledgement of the subject's sociopolitical activity by her contacts

Among the contacts of this subject we register the presence of active adult members of the Sel Party such as P.D. and E.T. who debate with her. 13 of her contacts have posted contributions on her page. Also in this case we can assume that an interest and a political role be recognized to her within the Party of which she is an active member by virtue of her institutional role as Manager of the Center Section of Sel Party.

Discussed topics

20 different topics have been discussed on Elena's timeline in these 3 months, by means of "personal statuses", "links to articles", "images", "videos", "posts published by friends", "personal statuses of public figures", commented 86 times, also considering in the discussion the subject's interventions, that have been grouped as follows:

Politics, with a total of 35 posts and 79 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Communication of Sel Party for the Center-Left Primary Elections, discussed 6 times, with 7 comments;
- ✓ Activity of the Sel Party Circle where the subject has the role of Manager, discussed 2 times, with 8 comments;
- ✓ Communications on the Center-Left Primary Elections by the Democratic Party, discussed 1 time, with 2 comments;
- ✓ Generic communications on the Center-Left Primary Elections, discussed 3 times, with 1 comment;
- ✓ Communications of Sel Party for the General Elections 2013, discussed 9 times, with 14 comments;
- ✓ Personal support to Sel Party leader, N. Vendola, discussed 2 times, with 13 comments;
- ✓ Support by intellectuals to Sel Party leader, N. Vendola, discussed 3 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Satire against PdL Party leader, S. Berlusconi, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ General Elections 2013, discussed 6 times, with 22 comments;
- ✓ Acquittal from the bribery charge of Sel Party leader, N. Vendola, discussed 1 time, with 12 comments;
- ✓ Publication of a text by A. Gramsci, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Socialism, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;

Laws, with a total of 1 post and 3 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

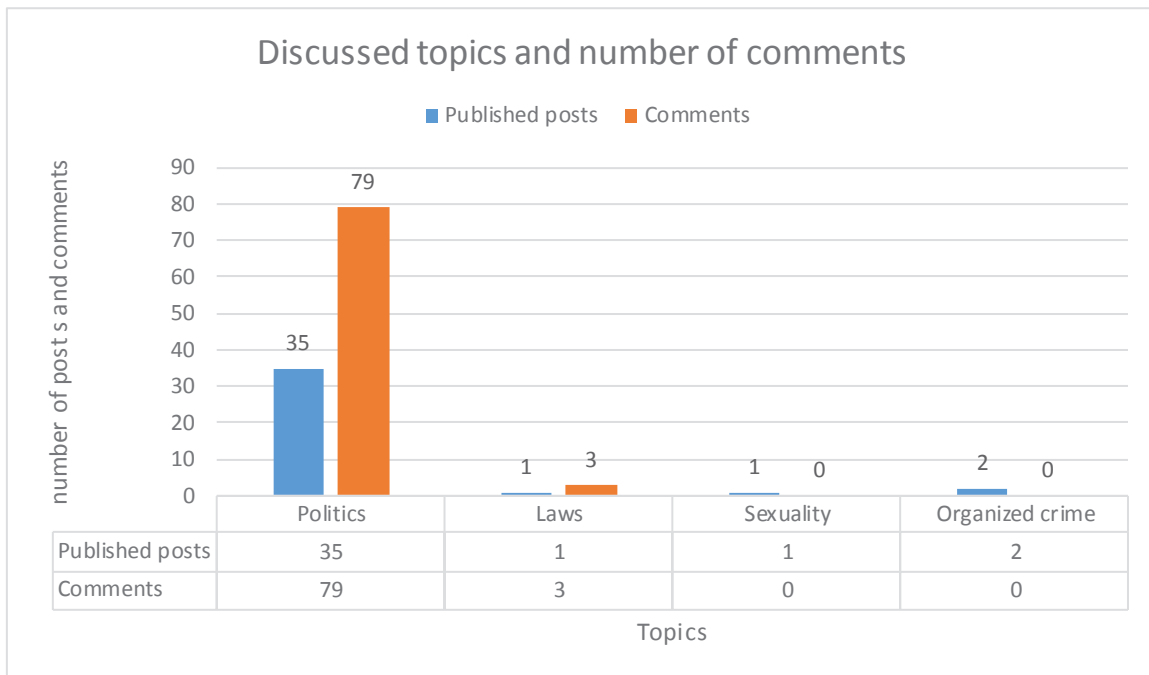
- ✓ Law against homophobia in Russia, discussed 1 time with 3 comments.

Sexuality, with a total of 1 post and 0 comments:

- ✓ Homosexuality, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Organized crime, with a total of 2 posts and comments:

- ✓ Relationship between the post-earthquake reconstruction and Mafia, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Presentation of the Report about Mafia in Emilia Romagna, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

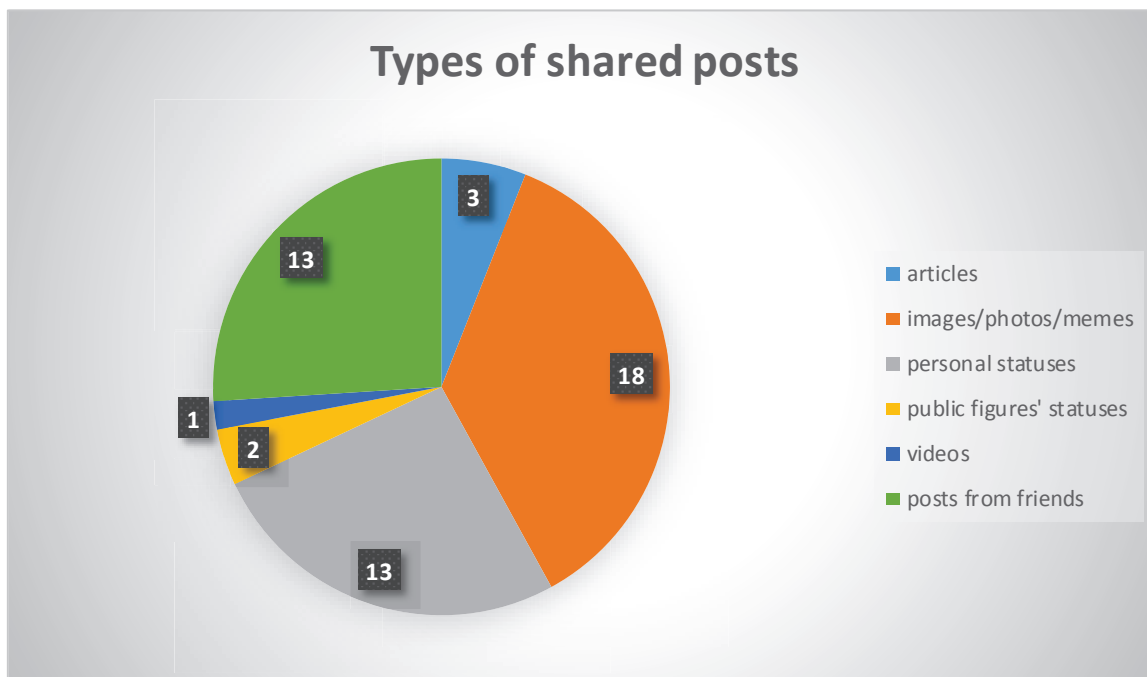


The timeline environment

By watching further this subject’s page we see that the System shows her in contact with 29 Facebook pages of sociopolitical nature and of journalistic analysis with the “Like” function, which means that she sees their contents on her Home. Here are some examples of these pages: “Sel”, “Difendiamo la cultura” (*Let’s defend culture*), “Laura Boldrini” (President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies), “Roberto Saviano” (journalist and author of books about Camorra), “Forum antimafia Sel Bologna”, etc.

Moreover, she shares the personal statuses of 2 public figures.

Her posts are divided as follows: during the three months she has shared 3 articles, 13 personal statuses, 18 images/photos/memes, 2 statuses of public figures and 1 video, in addition to 13 contributions by her contacts. We can notice a preference for sharing personal statuses e images/photos/memes.

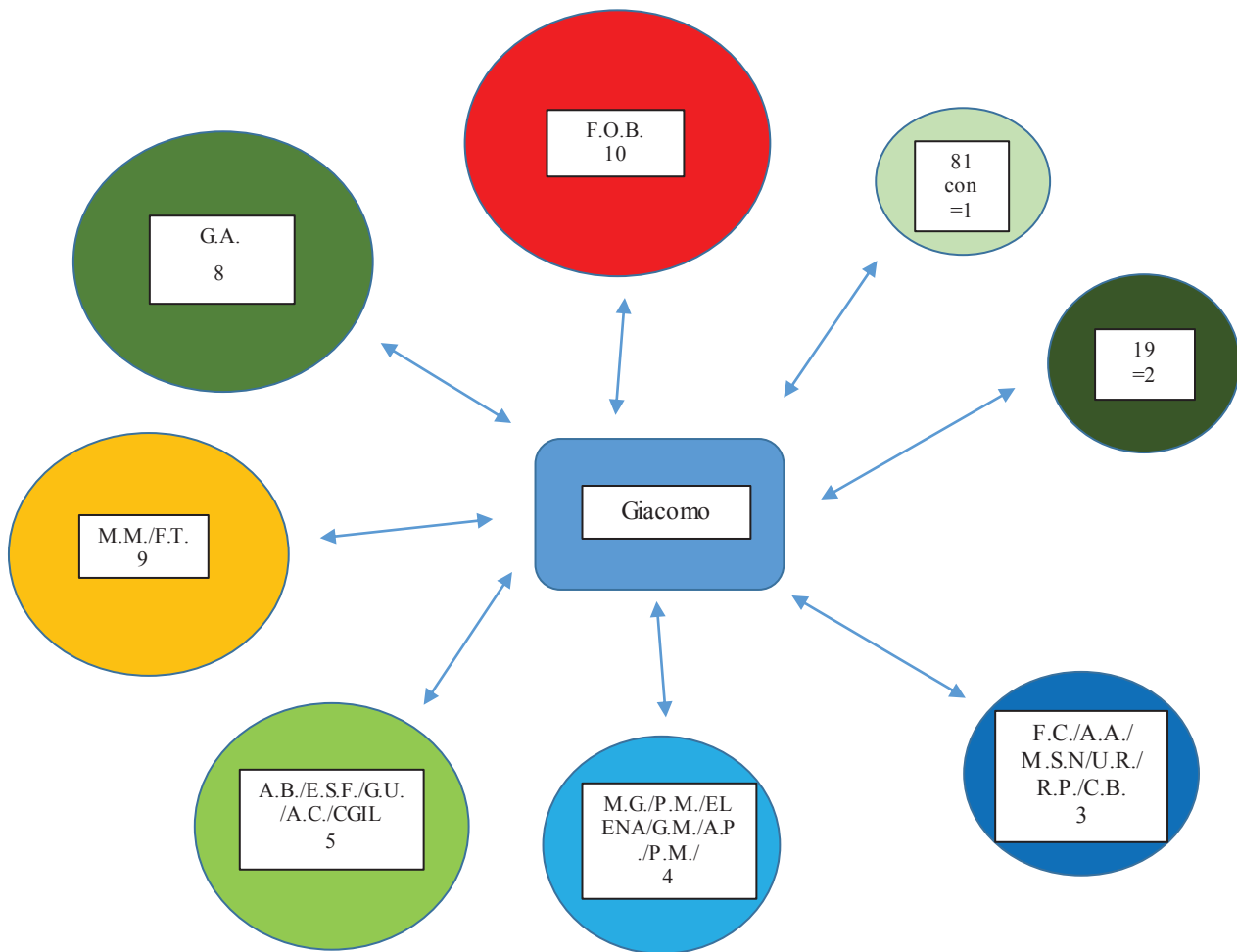


None of the sources used by Elena for her posts stands out in particular. Here too we see the presence of official newspapers such as “La Repubblica” and “Il Corriere”. To be noticed is the presence among the sources of G. A.’s Blog, a key informant of this study. The presence of posts coming from this source confirms some degree of influence by this journalist on the territory and among the subjects of the research.

Giacomo, network structure

Let’s see Giacomo, who has 2809 contacts on Facebook. 120 of them have commented on his posts with political or social contents; 4.2% of the total number of friends who have participated in the sharing of materials with 202 comments. Not all friends have commented with the same frequency, as we can see in the following diagram:

Structure of Giacomo's relationships, initials of the commentators and number of comments for each of them or by quantity of comments



Acknowledgement of the subject's sociopolitical activity by his contacts

Giacomo has 57 posts of a sociopolitical nature published by his friends. This subject is very well known on the territory, both by high-school students and by trade unions, and within the Sel Party. As we will see more in detail by analyzing his off-line activities, Giacomo participates in the organization of student and union demonstrations and delivers public speeches during them, has he did in particular during the student demonstrations of #12Oct – only Italian – and of #14Nov – on a European level. His public speeches are visible on YouTube and shared by his friends, as well as the pictures of him in the square and the statements that he issues to newspapers. Several comments published on Giacomo's timeline by his friends refer to these events. Among his Facebook contacts that post on his timeline we also find the sections of the trade union he belongs to and which is identified as the biggest one in Italy by number of members. On Giacomo's timeline, interventions

by others are even more numerous than his personal statuses that amount to 22 in the three observed months. Another peculiarity of Giacomo's page is that, despite so many contributions, the comments by his contacts to the posted material are very few.

Discussed topics

63 different topics have been discussed on Giacomo's timeline, by means of "personal statuses", "links to articles", "images", "videos", "posts published by friends", "personal statuses of public figures", commented 189 times, also considering in the discussion the subject's interventions that have been grouped as follows:

Politics, with a total of 66 posts and 74 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ General Elections of February 2013, discussed 1 time, with 1 comment;
- ✓ Center-Left Primary Elections 2012, discussed 4 times, with 6 comments;
- ✓ Criticism towards PdL Party and S. Berlusconi, discussed 1 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Communication of Sel Party for the Center-Left Primary Elections, discussed 29 times, with 3 comments;
- ✓ Activities of Movimento 5 Stelle, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Electoral program of the Democratic Party, discussed 3 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ European politics, discussed 3 times, with 3 comment;
- ✓ World politics, discussed 9 times, with 7 comments;
- ✓ Politics and wastage, discussed 1 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Relationship between media and democracy, discussed 1 time with 0 comments;
- ✓ Fascism, discussed 7 times, with 4 comments;
- ✓ Italian politics, discussed 4 times, with 6 comments;
- ✓ Socialism, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Acquittal from the bribery charge of Sel Party leader, N. Vendola, discussed 2 times, with 11 comments;

Laws , with a total of 3 posts and 1 comment, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Electoral Law, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Stability Law, discussed 1 time, with 1 comment;
- ✓ Abortion Law, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Aprea Decree, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments.

Economy, work and trade unions with a total of 9 posts and 2 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Italian economy, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ European economy, discussed 4 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Trade union and economy, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Work and youth work, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Union leader M. Landini, discussed 1 time, with 2 comments.

Sexuality, with a total of 2 posts and 20 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Homosexuality, discussed 2 times, with 2 comments.

Education, with a total of 48 posts and 71 comments including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ School and University, discussed 10 times, with 21 comments;
- ✓ Italian student demonstration #12Oct., discussed 5 times, with 6 comments;
- ✓ Active participation by the subject to the Italian demonstration #12Oct., discussed 5 times, with 12 comments;
- ✓ European student demonstration #14 Nov., discussed 7 times, with 7 comments;
- ✓ Active participation by the subject to the European demonstration #14Nov., discussed 2 times, with 5 comments;
- ✓ Italian student demonstration #24Nov., discussed 1 time, with 7 comments;
- ✓ Occupied school, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Students' meeting places, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Students' assemblies, discussed 2 times, with 16 comments;
- ✓ Election of the students' Provincial Council, discussed 5 times, with 8 comments;
- ✓ Election of the List for a School Representative, discussed 6 times, with 8 comments;
- ✓ Educational qualification and political competence, discussed 1 time, with 2 comments.

Law enforcement, with a total of 3 posts and 15 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

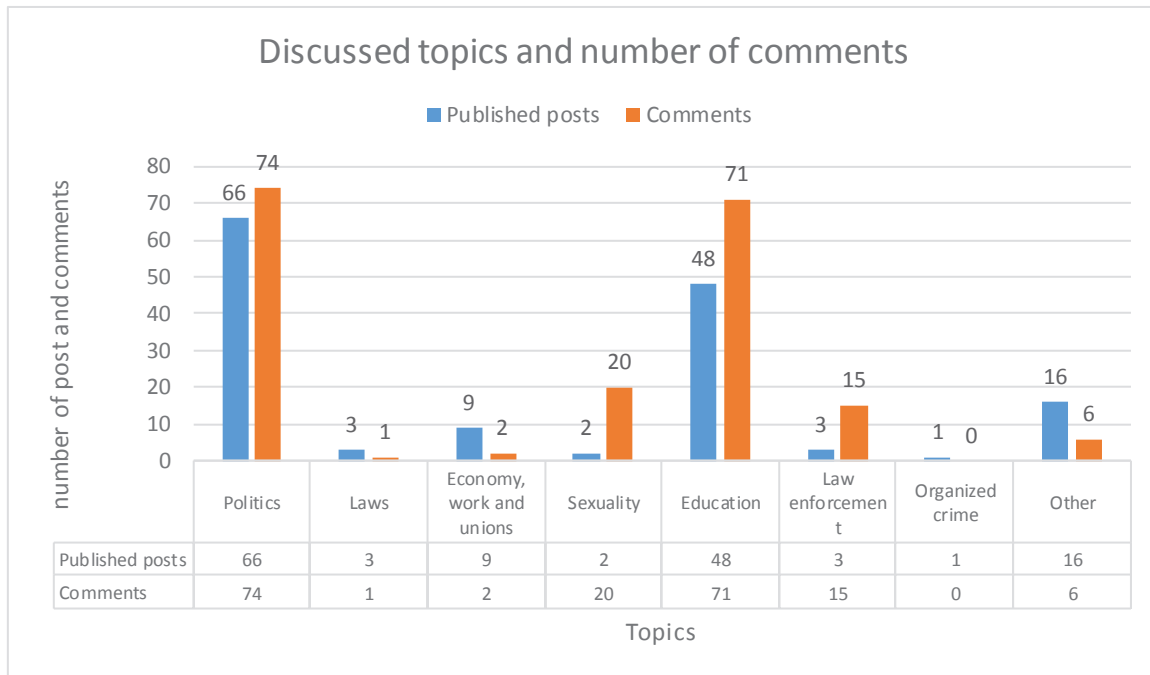
- ✓ Police and identification codes, discussed 1 time, with 4 comments;
- ✓ Minor taken into care by Carabinieri at school, discussed 1 time, with 11 comments;
- ✓ Violent policemen, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Organized crime, with a total of 1 post and 0 comments:

- ✓ Mafia, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Other, with a total of 16 posts and 6 comments, including the subject’s comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Prisons, discussed 4 times, with 2 comments;
- ✓ Public transport, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Historic quotes, discussed 7 times, with 4 comments;
- ✓ CIE (Identification and Expulsion Center), discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Petitions, discussed 4 times, with 0 comments.

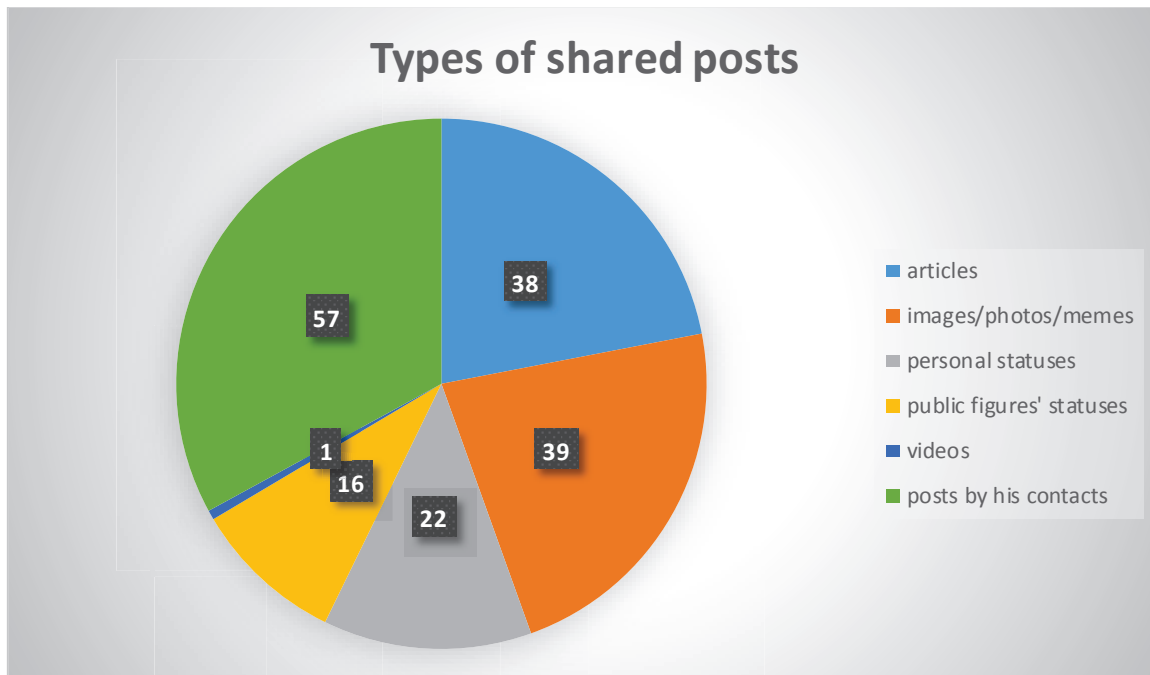


The timeline environment

By watching further this subject’s page we see that he is in contact with 1265 Facebook pages with the “Like” function, which means that he sees their contents on his Home. The number of Facebook pages which he has “Liked” is so high that the Facebook System only allows to visualize a small part of them. We can name a few indicative examples: “E. Che Guevara”, “A. Gramsci”, “U. Eco”, “N. Vendola”, “E. Berlinguer”, “BBC Mundo”, “El Pais”, “Filcams CGIL”, etc.

Moreover, he shares the personal statuses of 8 public figures, with a total of 16 statuses; among them we find politicians and journalists, such as Nichi Vendola (Secretary of Sel Party), PierLuigi Bersani (former Secretary of the Democratic Party), Sandro Ruotolo (journalist).

His posts are divided as follows: during the three months he has shared 38 articles, 22 personal statuses, 39 images/photos/memes, 16 statuses of public figures and 1 video, in addition to 57 contributions by his friends.



Also in Giacomo's case we can notice a scarce attention for videos, while his contacts' interventions and the images/photos/memes occupy another good segment, as already noticed.

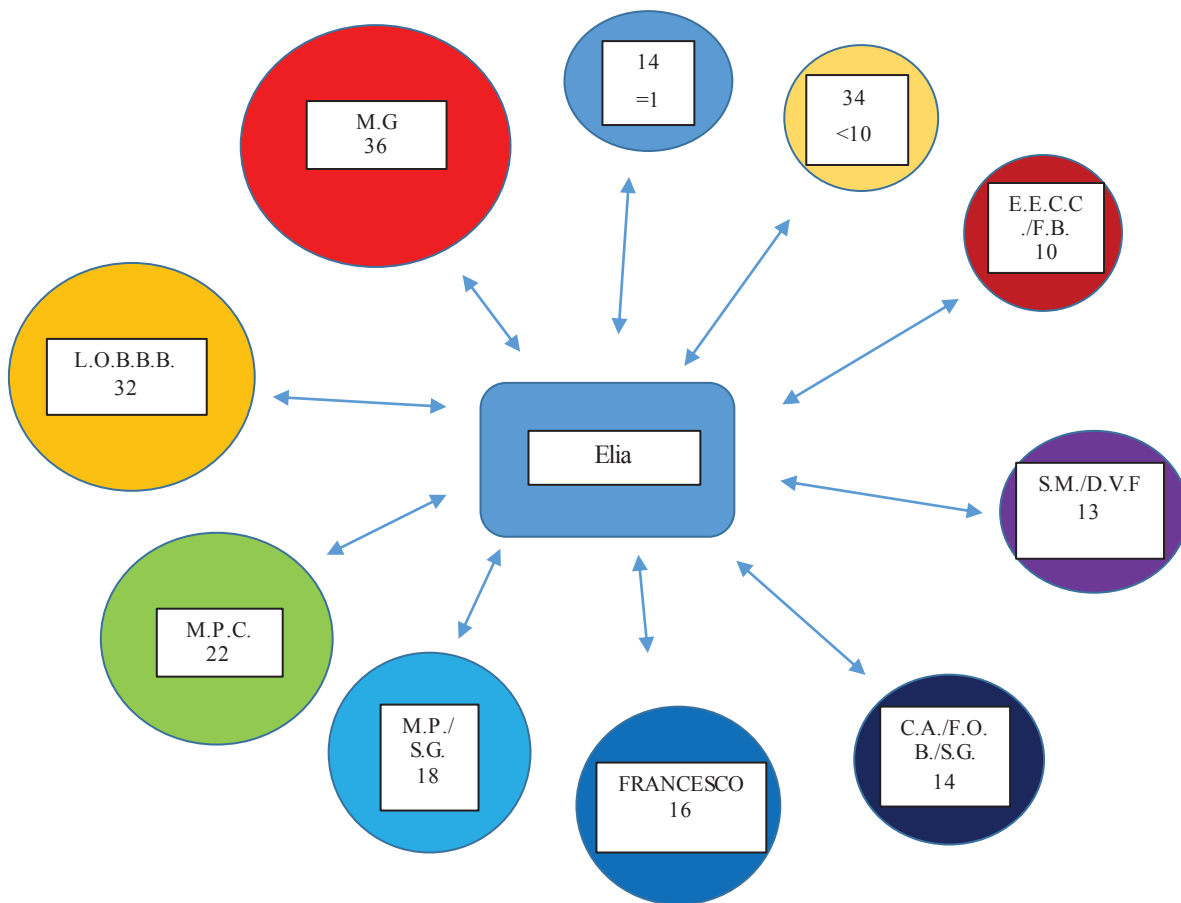
None of the sources that he uses for sharing posts on his timeline stands out in a particular way. Giacomo uses many sources, and many of them are non-institutional. The newspapers "La Repubblica" and "Il Fatto Quotidiano", particularly used by these subjects, appear here as sources only 5 times in all. As journalistic source, Giacomo prefers www.pubblicogiornale.it and Flipboard that he uses 8 times in all.

He seems to rather go directly at the information source, by checking the institutional page of Sel Party and of its leader Nichi Vendola, which he uses 15 times in all. This datum disproves what emerged in chapter 4 about the use of online institutional journalistic sources.

Elia, network structure

Let's see Elia , who has 1569 contacts on Facebook. 61 of them have commented on his posts with political or social contents; it's 3.8% of the total number of friends who have participated in the sharing of materials with 375 comments. Not all friends have commented with the same frequency, as we can see in the following diagram:

Structure of Elia's relationships, initials of the commentators and number of comments for each of them or by quantity of comments



Acknowledgement of the subject's sociopolitical activity by his contacts

Elia has 2 posts of a sociopolitical nature published by his friends. As we can see, a smaller number compared to the other subjects. Elia has a strong criticism activity towards political, social and current news that also show an analysis in relation to Laws and political issues in general. By his own admission, in this period he hasn't carried out any political activities because he doesn't

identify himself in the present Italian Politics. The difference between the number of external stimuli on his timeline and on Giacomo's, for example, might depend on this.

Discussed topics

30 different topics have been discussed on Elia's timeline, by means of "personal statuses", "links to articles", "images", "videos", "posts published by friends", "personal statuses of public figures", commented 677 times, also considering in the discussion the subject's interventions that have been grouped as follows:

Politics, with a total of 85 posts and 434 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ General Elections of February 2013, discussed 9 times, with 78 comments;
- ✓ Center-Left Primary Elections 2012, discussed 5 times, with 4 comments;
- ✓ Criticism towards PdL Party and its leader S. Berlusconi, discussed 12 times, with 42 comments;
- ✓ Criticism towards Movimento 5 Stelle and its leader B. Grillo, discussed 17 times, with 120 comments;
- ✓ Criticism towards Lega Nord Party, discussed 1 time, with 2 comments;
- ✓ Criticism towards the Democratic Party and its leader P. Bersani, discussed 4 times, with 36 comments;
- ✓ Criticism towards Rifondazione Party, discussed 1 time, with 8 comments;
- ✓ Criticism towards Sel Party and its leader N. Vendola, discussed 1 time, with 2 comments;
- ✓ Housing to foreigners, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Fascism, discussed 1 time, with 8 comments;
- ✓ Young people and elections, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Explanations of vote, discussed 3 times, with 24 comments;
- ✓ Costs of politics, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Political apathy, discussed 8 times, with 27 comments;
- ✓ Italian politics, discussed 10 times, with 32 comments;
- ✓ Italian and world politics, discussed 2 times, with 4 comments;
- ✓ World politics, discussed 8 times, with 47 comments.

Women, with a total of 4 posts and 47 comments including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Role of women and femenicide, discussed 4 times, with 47 comments.

Sexuality, with a total of 1 post and 63 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Gay marriages, discussed 1 time, with 63 comments.

Education, with a total of 1 post and 34 comments including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ School and University, discussed 7 times, with 0 comments.

Law enforcement, with a total of 4 posts and 59 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

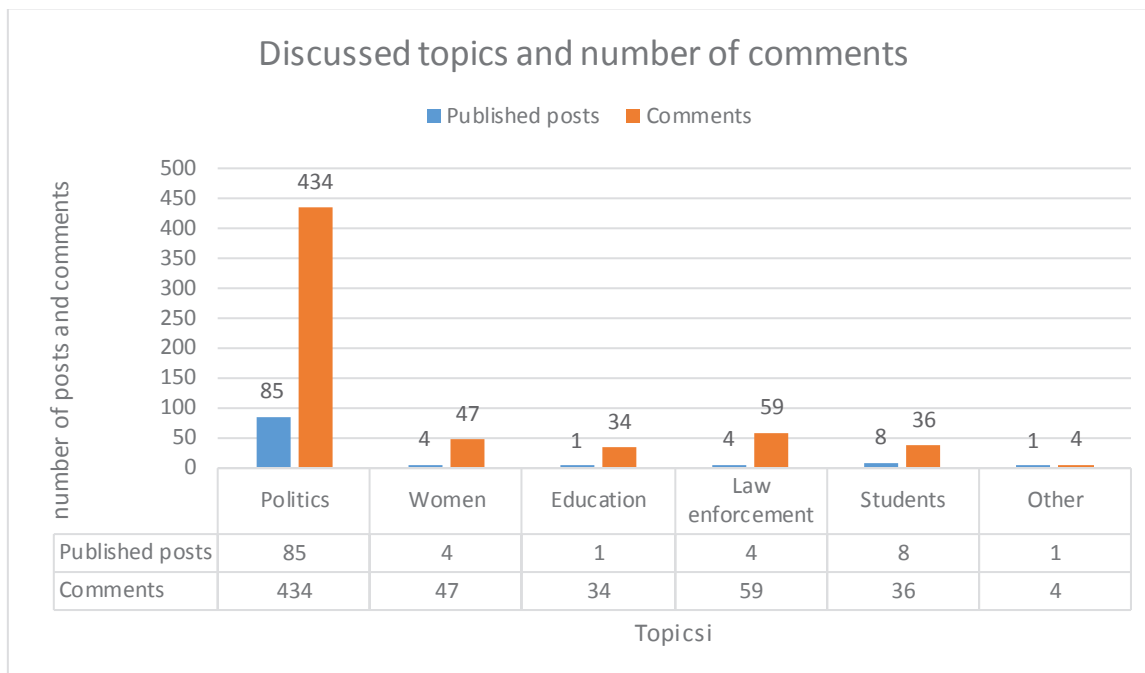
- ✓ Police and identification codes, discussed 2 times, with 46 comments;
- ✓ Police strike of #14Nov, discussed 1 time, with 3 comments;
- ✓ War and Italian soldiers, discussed 1 time, with 10 comments.

Students, with a total of 8 posts and 36 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Criticism towards demonstrating students, discussed 6 times, with 14 comments;
- ✓ Criticism towards students attacking the police, discussed 2 times, with 22 comments.

Other, with a total of 1 post and 4 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Freedom of thought, discussed 1 time, with 4 comments.



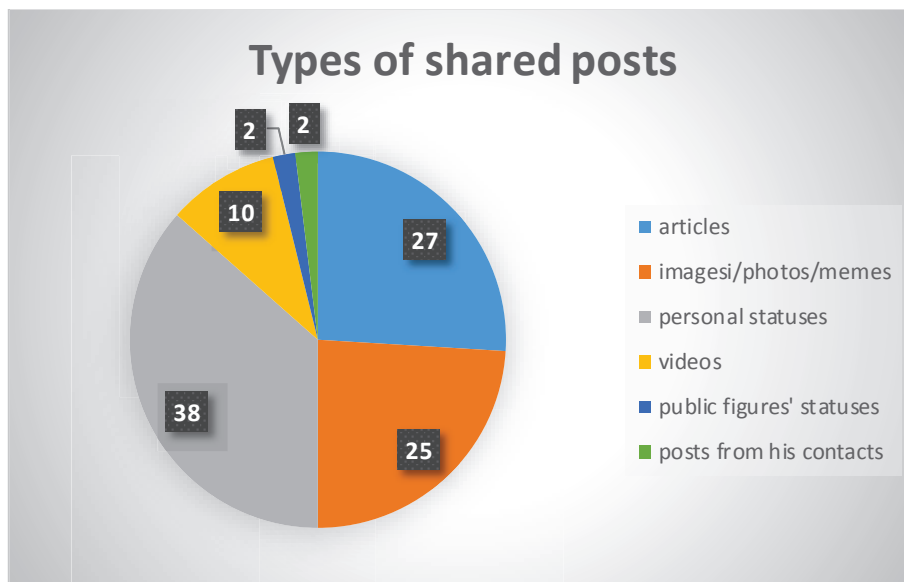
We register in one case, during a discussion, a moment of dissent between Elia and one of his contacts; a high-pitched discussion that almost became a fight, with Elia threatening to cancel the commentator from his Facebook friends. I will deal with this element further in detail in the data analysis and interpretation that I'm presenting.

The timeline environment

By watching further this subject's page, the System shows him in contact with 92 Facebook pages with a sociopolitical nature and journalistic analysis with the "Like" function, which means that he sees their contents on his Home. A few examples of these pages are: "Fronte Nazionale" (*National Front*) with the pages of about 15 different local circles, "Marie Le Pen", "Dimissioni di Laura Boldrini" (*Resignation of Laura Boldrini*), "J. Assange", "Sostenitori delle Forze dell'Ordine" (*Law enforcement supporters*), "A favore della sperimentazione sugli animali" (*In favor of animal testing*), "Ansa.it", "La Stampa", "Il Resto del Carlino", etc.

He shares the personal statuses of public figures such as "Noi che non voteremo il Movimento 5 Stelle" (*We won't vote for Movimento 5 Stelle*) and a second one whose source does not appear.

His posts are divided as follows: during the three months he has shared 27 articles, 38 personal statuses, 25 images/photos/memes, 2 statuses of public figures and 10 videos.

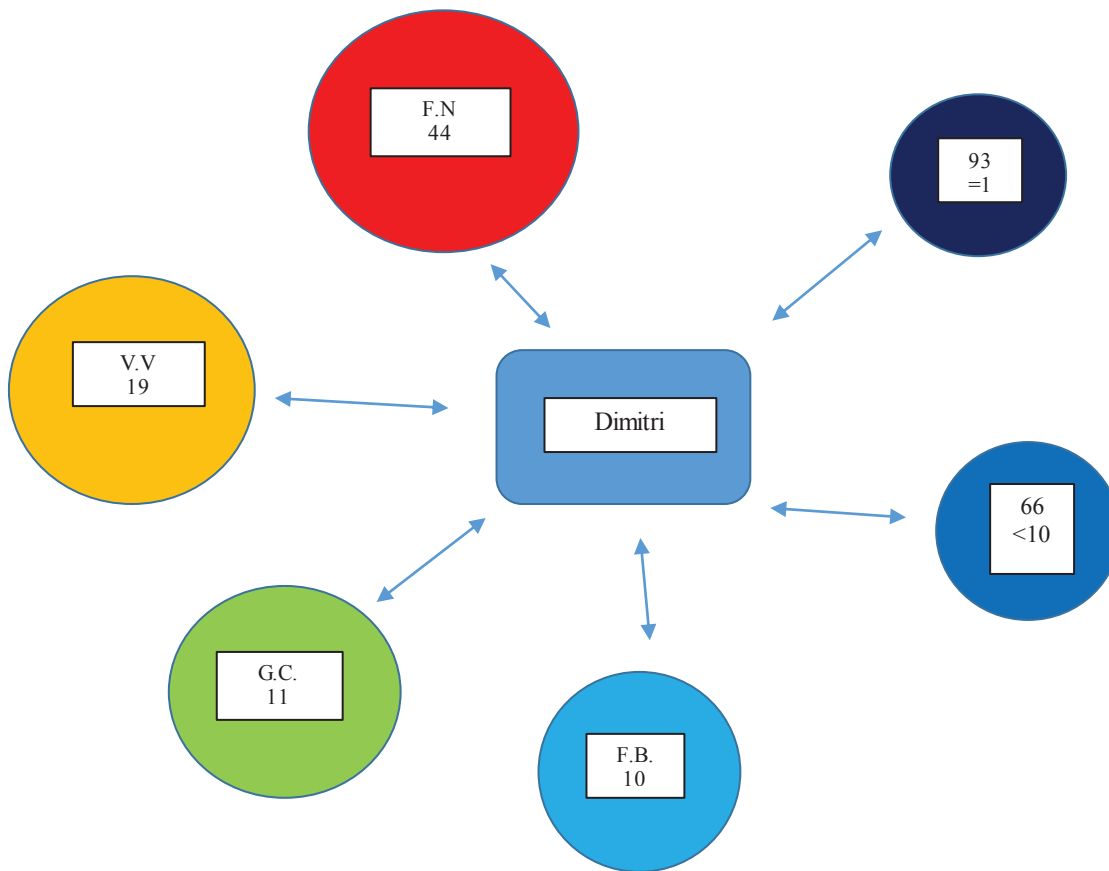


Among the sources that he uses for sharing posts on his timeline, the online newspaper “La Repubblica” stands out, used 6 times for this purpose. Other newspaper sources are “Corriere della Sera”, “Il Fatto Quotidiano”, “Libero” and “TG Com 24”, all of them used only once. Elia shows a preference for non-institutional sources such as “Siamo la gente, il Potere, ci temono” (*We are the people, the Power, they fears us*), “Adesso fuori dai coglioni” (*Now scram!*), “Noi che non voteremo il Movimento 5 stelle” (*We won’t vote for Movimento 5 stelle*), “Feudalesimo e libertà” (*Feudalism and freedom*), etc.

Dimitri, network structure

Let’s see Dimitri who has 4234 contacts on Facebook. 164 of them have commented on his posts with political or social contents; it’s 3.8% of the total number of friends who have participated in the sharing of materials with 385 comments. Not all friends have commented with the same frequency, as we can see in the following diagram:

Structure of Dimitri's relationships, initials of the commentators and number of comments for each of them or by quantity of comments



Acknowledgement of the subject's sociopolitical activity by his contacts

As we have already said, a discussion, on Facebook, doesn't only start with an impulse given by the subject, but can also start thanks to the posts published on the subject's page by his contacts. Dimitri actually has 65 of a sociopolitical nature. This exchange is certainly due to the fact that Dimitri has actively participated in the Sel Party campaign, both for the Center-Left Primary Elections of November 2012, and for the General Elections of February 2013; the subject is recognized a frontline commitment that also emerges from the kind of published posts such as, for example, the sharing of some personal notes and of images and videos where the subject makes explicit explanations of vote for his candidate.

Dimitri "puts his face" in his Political activity in the most literal sense, showing an ad with his picture as supporter of his Party in the campaign official communications both for Primary and General Elections.



You can say that all politics suck
Otherwise Vendola

Discussed topics

43 different topics have been discussed on Dimitri's timeline, by means of "personal statuses", "links to articles", "images", "videos", "posts published by friends", "personal statuses of public figures", commented 531 times, also considering in the discussion the subject's interventions that have been grouped as follows:

Politics, with a total of 171 posts and 438 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ General Elections of February 2013, discussed 6 times, with 19 comments;
- ✓ Center-Left Primary Elections 2012, discussed 38 times, with 115 comments;
- ✓ Criticism towards PdL Party and its leader S. Berlusconi, discussed 6 times, with 23 comments;
- ✓ Criticism towards Movimento 5 Stelle and its leader B. Grillo, discussed 5 times, with 11 comments;
- ✓ Communication of Sel Party for Center-Left Primary Elections, discussed 33 times, with 68 comments;
- ✓ Support to Sel Party leader, Nichi Vendola, discussed 25 times, with 37 comments;
- ✓ Advertising of events organized by the Committees for Nichi Vendola on the Italian territory, discussed 10 times, with 2 comments;
- ✓ Personal engagement of the subject in the activities of Sel Party, discussed 18 times, with 84 comments;
- ✓ Accusation and acquittal of Sel Party leader, Nichi Vendola from bribery charge, discussed 6 times, with 17 comments;
- ✓ Support to the Democratic Party candidate, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Satire on the Democratic Party candidate, discussed 2 times, with 2 comments;
- ✓ Protest against a Democratic Party member, discussed 2 times, with 2 comments;
- ✓ Regional Elections in Sicily, discussed 10 times, with 19 comments;

- ✓ World Politics, discussed 3 times, with 28 comments;
- ✓ Politics and malpractice, discussed 1 time, with 1 comments;
- ✓ Relationship between media and democracy, discussed 1 time with 0 comments;
- ✓ Politics and the Vatican, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Candidature of the leader of “Bambini di Satana” (*Satan’s Children*) for General Elections 2013, discussed 1 time, with 6 comments;
- ✓ Satire on the candidate of FID (Fare per fermare il declino) Party, discussed 1 time, with 3 comments;
- ✓ Generic Italian politics, discussed 1 time, with 1 comment.

Economy, work and trade unions, with a total of 4 posts and 1 comment, including the subject’s comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Fiat Pomigliano, discussed 2 times, with 1 comment;
- ✓ Trade union and students, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Article 18, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Sexuality, with a total of 6 posts and 8 comments, including the subject’s comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Homosexuality, discussed 6 times, with 8 comments.

Education, with a total of 13 posts and 50 comments:

- ✓ School and University, discussed 5 times, with 11 comments;
- ✓ Student demonstration #12Ott, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ European student demonstration #14Nov, discussed 6 times, with 39 comments;
- ✓ Evacuation of students, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;

Law enforcement, with a total of 9 posts and 2 comments, including the subject’s comments as active member of the discussion:

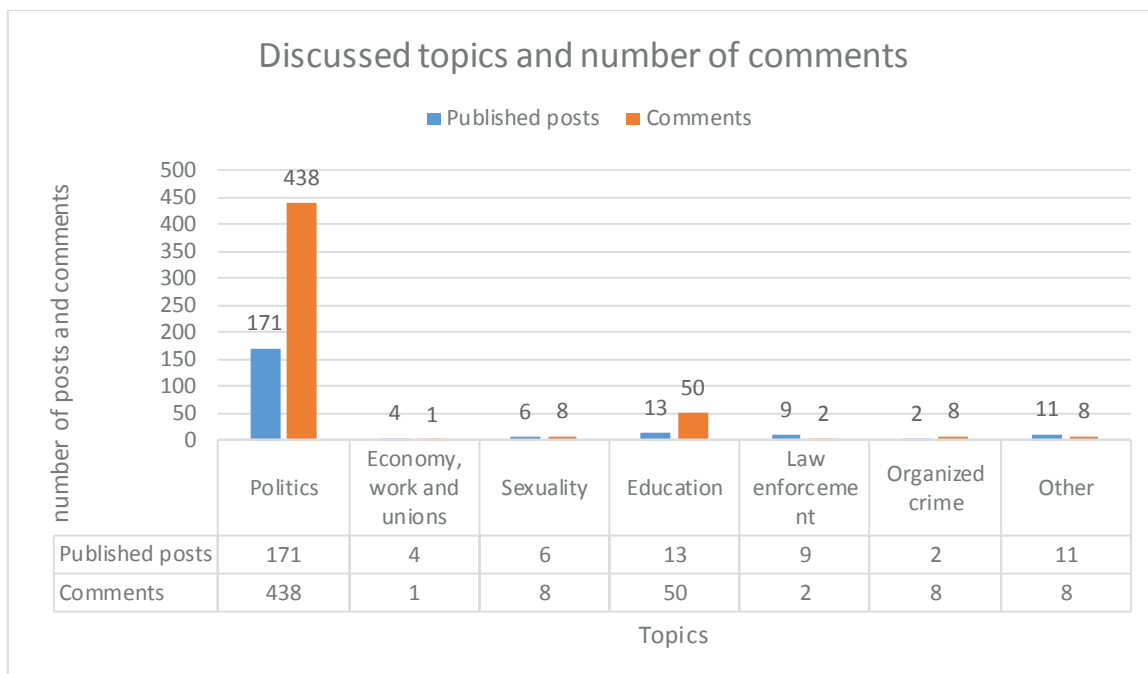
- ✓ Police and identification codes, discussed 7 times, with 2 comments;
- ✓ Diaz School⁷, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Law enforcement in Europe, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments

Organized crime, with a total of 2 posts and 8 comments:

- ✓ ‘Ndrangheta, discussed 2 times, with 8 comments.

Other, with a total of 11 posts and 8 comments, including the subject’s comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ CIE (Identification and Expulsion Centers), discussed 1 times, with 1 comments;
- ✓ Demonstrations, discussed 1 time, with 8 comments;
- ✓ Activities of religious communities in the social field, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Petitions, discussed 8 times, with 6 comments;
- ✓ Social centers, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Death of M. Cini⁸, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Generic Italian condition, discussed 2 times, with 1 comment;
- ✓ Criticism towards bourgeoisie, discussed 1 time, with 9 comments.

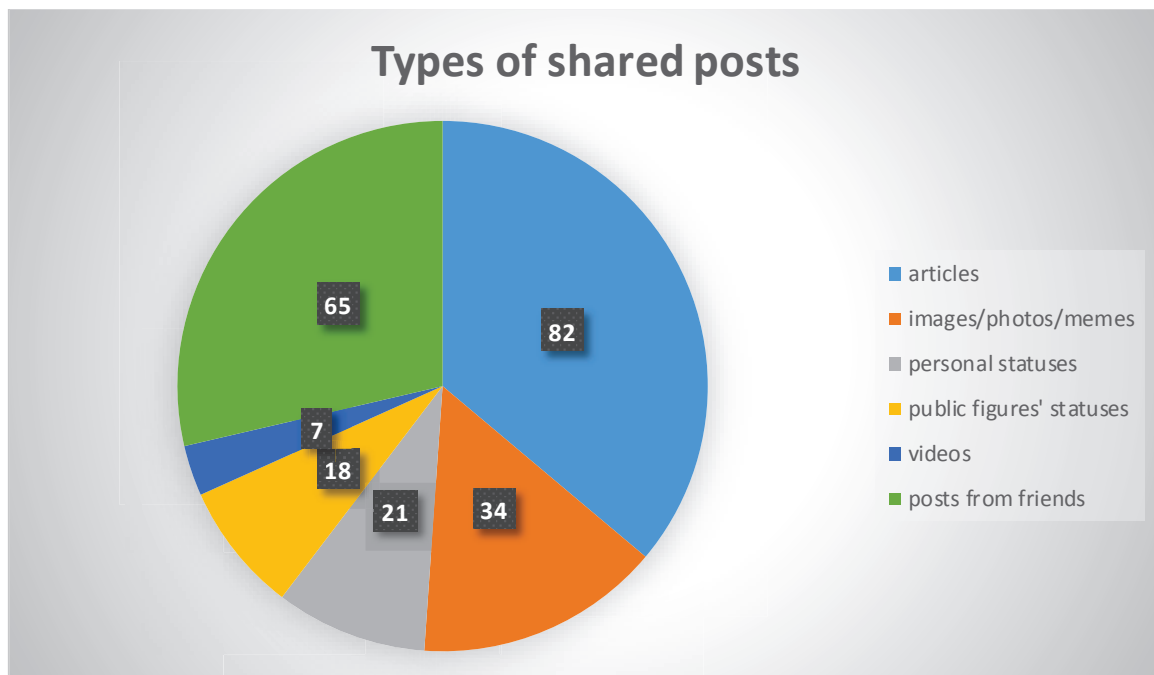


The timeline environment

By watching further this subject’s page we see that the System shows him in contact with 1044 Facebook pages with the “Like” function, which means that he sees their contents on his Home. As already seen in Giacomo’s case, the number of pages is so high that the System only shows a small part of them. Among them we find some examples of pages with a sociopolitical content such as: “Nichi Vendola”, “Gino Strada”, “Fausto Bertinotti”, “Subcomandante Marcos” (*Sub-commander Marcos*), “Che Guevara”, “Carl Marx”, “Coordinamento universitario” (*University management*), “Rete della conoscenza” (*The knowledge network*), “Libera, Bologna” etc.

Moreover, he shares the personal statuses of 18 public figures, with a total of 18 statuses; among them we find politicians and journalists, and some of them stand out in particular on Dimitri's timeline: Nichi Vendola (Secretary of Sel Party), Bologna con Vendola (*Bologna with Vendola*), 99 Posse, Democratici per Vendola (*Democrats for Vendola*), Comitati locali per Vendola (*Local committees for Vendola*), Bookmob per Vendola (*Bookmob for Vendola*).

His posts are divided as follows: during the three months he has shared 82 articles, 21 personal statuses, 34 images/photos/memes, 18 statuses of public figures and 7 videos.

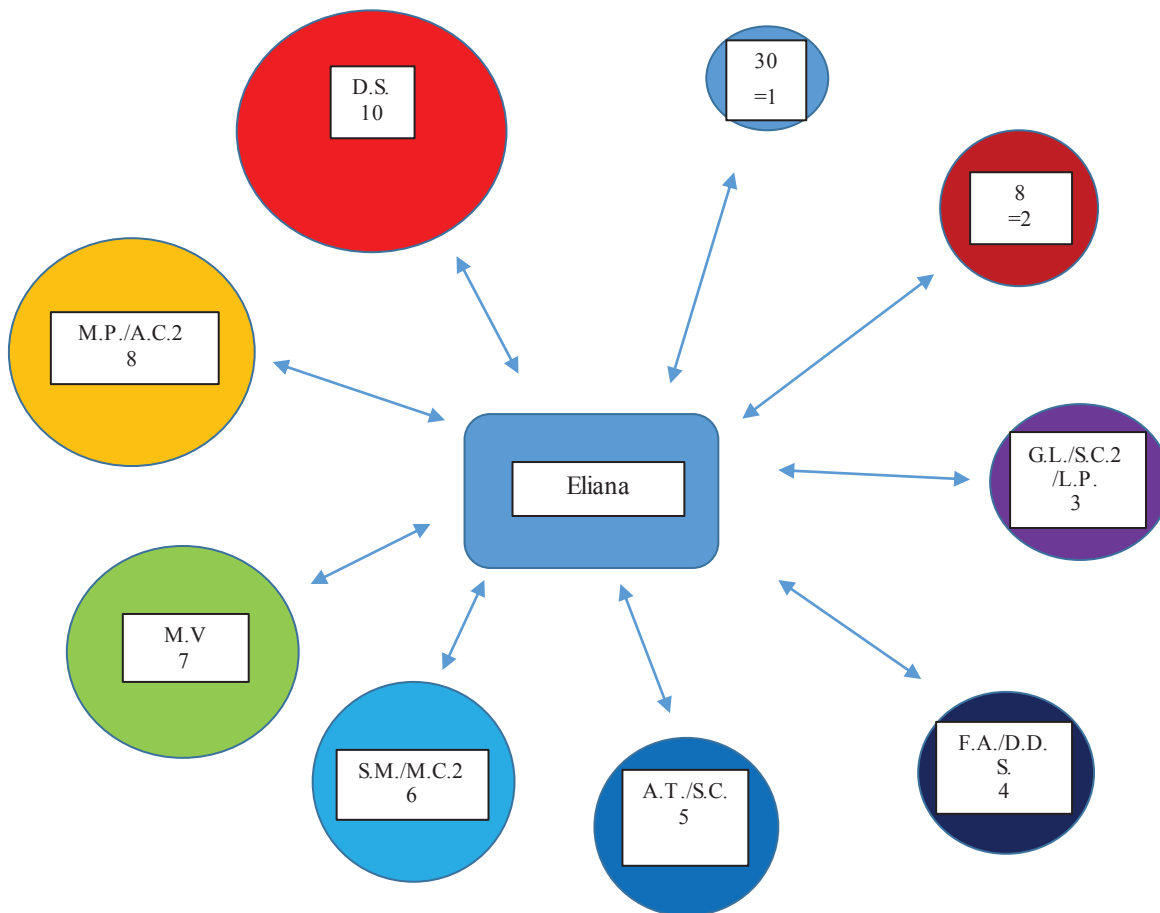


Among the sources that he uses for sharing posts on his timeline, those related to the activity of the Party that he supports stand out, namely nichivendola.it, conameliaconvendola.it, bookmobpervendola, sinistraecologialiberta.it. journalistic sources are “Telesud”, “La Repubblica”, “SkyTg24”, “Corriere di Bologna”, “Il Mattino di Padova”. Other sources are Indymedia, coordinamentouniversitario.it, retedellaconoscenza.it, ilcorsaro.it.

Eliana, network structure

Let's see Eliana, a social activist, who has 1530 contacts on Facebook. 52 of them have commented on her posts with political or social contents; it's 3.4% of the total number of friends who have participated in the sharing of materials with 121 comments. Not all friends have commented with the same frequency, as we can see in the following diagram:

Structure of Eliana's relationships, initials of the commentators and number of comments for each of them or by quantity of comments



Acknowledgement of the subject's sociopolitical activity by her contacts

On Eliana's timeline, discussions have only been started by others in one occasion.

Discussed topics

48 different topics have been discussed on her timeline, by means of "personal statuses", "links to articles", "images", "videos", "posts published by friends", "personal statuses of public figures", commented 164 times, also considering in the discussion the subject's interventions that have been grouped as follows:

Politics, with a total of 83 posts and 111 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ General Elections of February 2013, discussed 23 times, with 50 comments;
- ✓ Center-Left Primary Elections 2012, discussed 3 times, with 5 comments;

- ✓ Criticism/satire towards PdL Party and its leader S. Berlusconi, discussed 14 times, with 15 comments;
- ✓ Criticism/satire towards Movimento 5 Stelle and its leader B. Grillo, discussed 5 times, with 6 comments;
- ✓ Criticism/satire towards UDC Party and its leader P.F. Casini, discussed 1 time, with 2 comments;
- ✓ Criticism/satire towards Sel Party and its leader N. Vendola, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Criticism/satire towards Minister Fornero, discussed 5 times, with 1 comment;
- ✓ European politics, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ World politics, discussed 12 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Political malpractice, discussed 5 times, with 6 comments;
- ✓ Politics/Mafia collusions, discussed 1 time with 0 comments;
- ✓ Regional Elections in Sicily, discussed 3 volte with 8, comments;
- ✓ Regional Elections in Molise, discussed 3 times, with 3 comments;
- ✓ Duty to vote, discussed 3 times, with 1 comment;
- ✓ Abstentionism, discussed 1 time, with 14 comments;
- ✓ Fascism, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Economy, work and trade unions, with a total of 4 posts e 0 comments:

- ✓ Italian Economy, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ European Economy, discussed 1 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Work, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Violence against women, with a total of 11 posts and 6 comments:

- ✓ Violence against women, discussed 8 times, with 6 comments;
- ✓ Female genital mutilation, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Children's prostitution, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Sexuality, with a total of 14 posts and 32 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Sexuality, discussed 1 time, with 6 comments;
- ✓ Morning-after pill, discussed 1 time, with 9 comments;
- ✓ Homosexuality, discussed 12 times, with 17 comments.

Education, with a total of 4 posts and 0 comments:

- ✓ School and University, discussed 3 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Students demonstration, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments

Law enforcement, with a total of 11 posts and 2 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Italian police, discussed 9 times, with 2 comments;
- ✓ World police, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Prisons, discussed 1 time, with 1 comment.

Organized crime, with a total of 2 posts and 0 comments:

- ✓ 'Ndrangheta, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments.

Social activity, with a total of 15 posts and 3 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Amnesty Italia and/or International events, discussed 10 times, with 3 comments;
- ✓ Death penalty, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ War, discussed 3 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Childhood, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

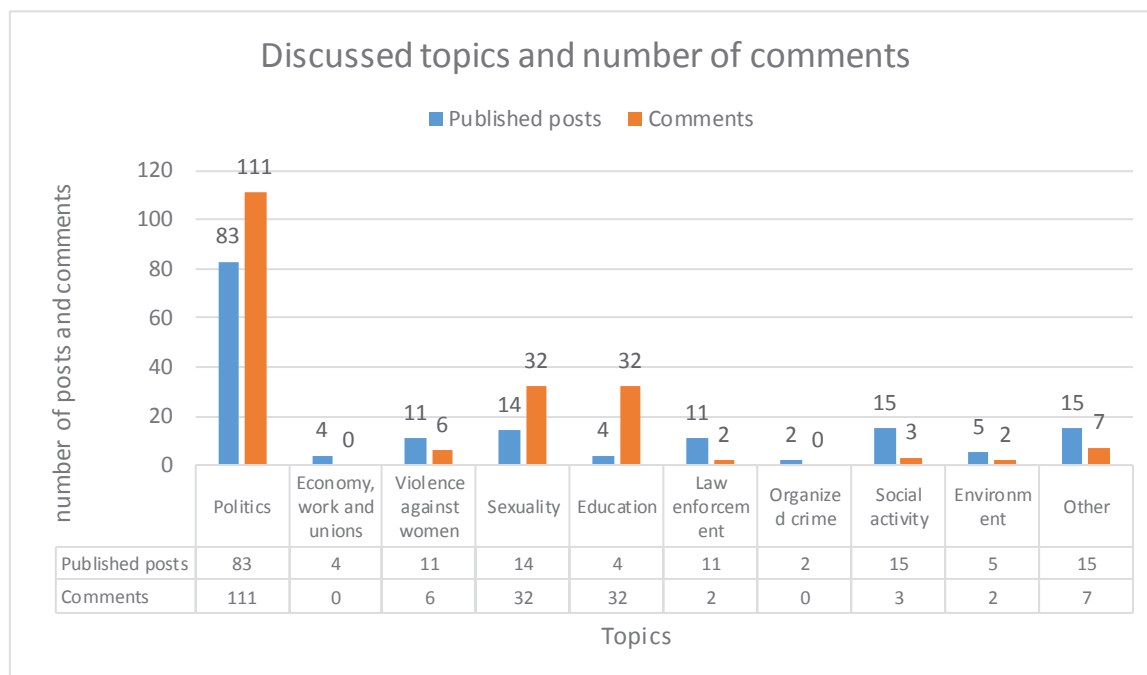
Environment, with a total of x posts and x comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Hunting, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Animal protection, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Ecology, discussed 3 times, with 2 comments.

Other, with a total of xx posts and x comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Democracy, discussed 1 time, with 2 comments;
- ✓ Freedom, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Society, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Earthquake in Molise, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Tav, discussed 2 times, with 3 comments;
- ✓ On Italy and Italians, discussed 5 times, with 1 comment;
- ✓ Vajont disaster, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;

- ✓ Deportation of Jews, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Financing the Erasmus project with Nobel Prize funds, discussed 1 time, with 1 comment;

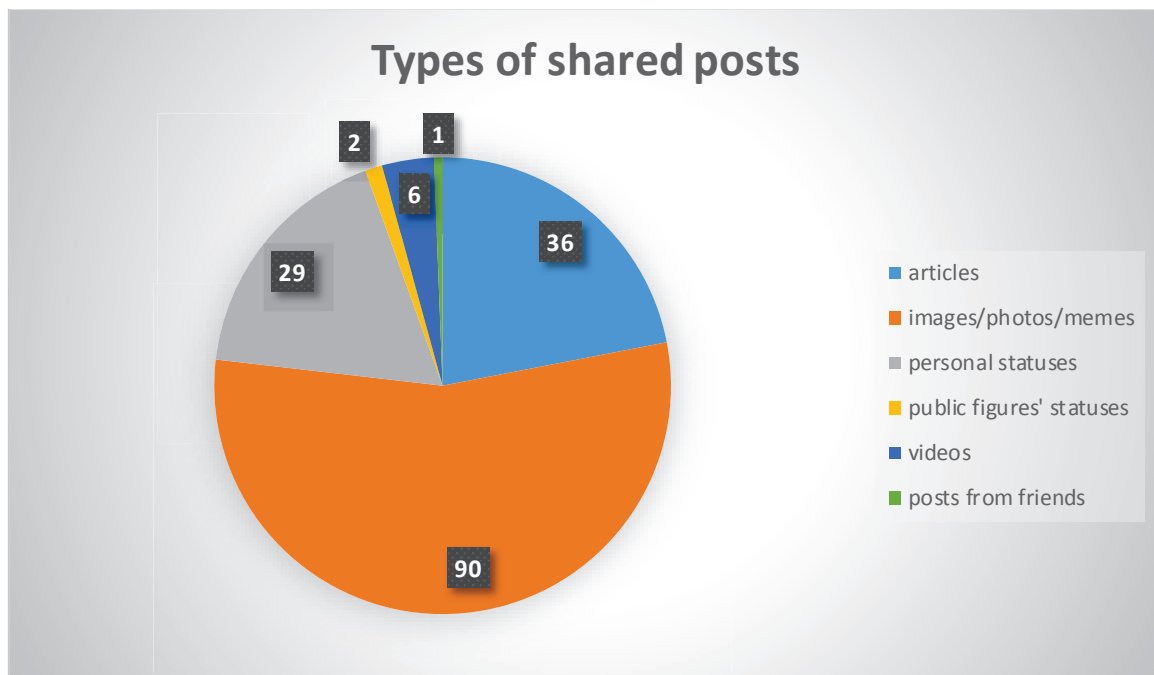


The timeline environment

By watching further this subject's page we see that the System shows her in contact with 2074 pages with the "Like" function, which means that she sees their contents on her Home. As already seen in other cases, the number of pages is so high that the System only shows a small part of them. Among them we find some examples of pages with a sociopolitical content such as: "Gandhi", "Voci per la Libertà - Amnesty" (*Voices for freedom*), "Link Coordinamento Universitario" (*University management link*), "Libera Bologna" (*Free Bologna*), etc.

She shares the personal statuses of 2 public figures, with a total of 2 statuses.

Her posts are divided as follows: during the three months she has shared 36 articles, 29 personal statuses, 90 images/photos/memes, 2 statuses of public figures and 6 videos.

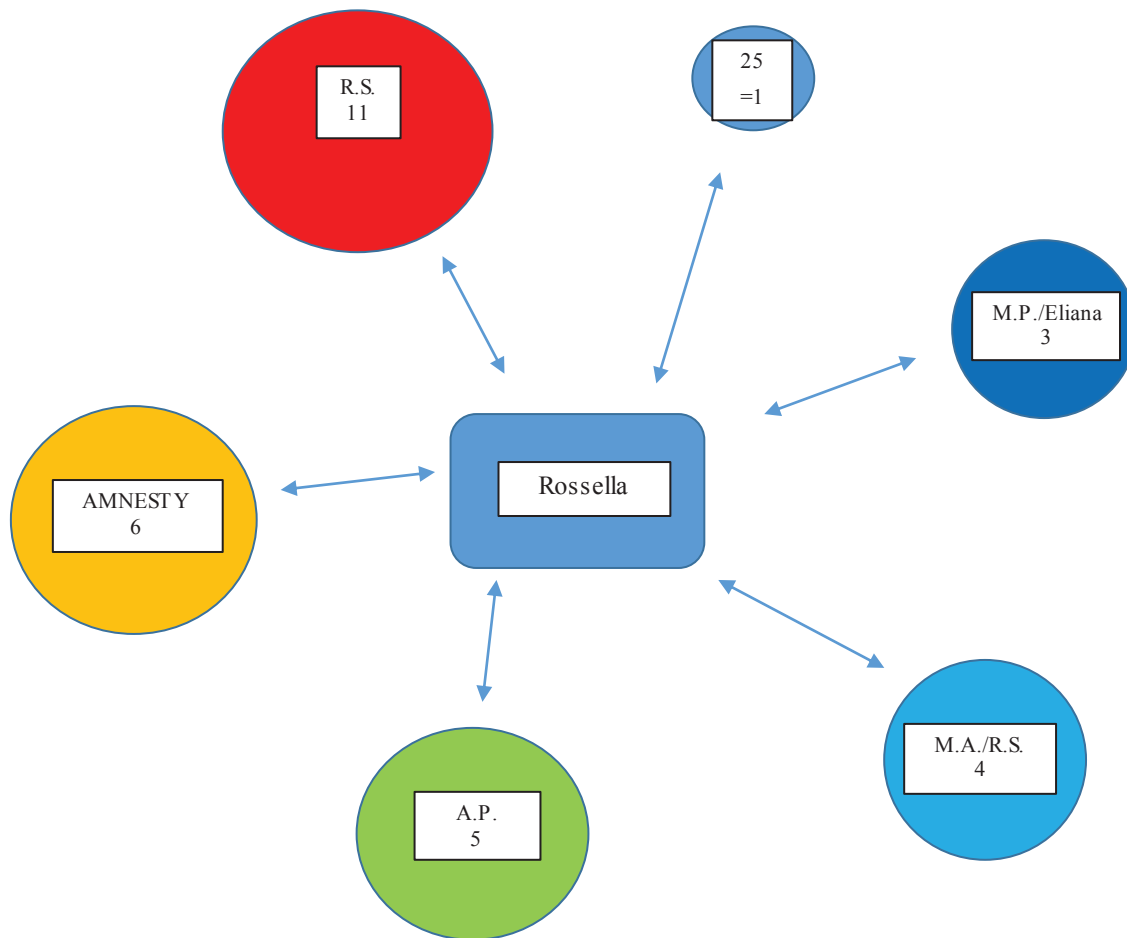


Among the sources that she uses for sharing posts on her timeline, “Amnesty Italia and/or International” stand out, used 7 times, the institutional sources are “Corriere della sera”, “Ballarò”, “La Repubblica”, “tupugliatv.net”. Other non-institutional sources are Violaposts.it, giornalettismo.com, paceperilcongo.it, befan.it.

Rossella, network structure

Let’s see Rossella, a social activist, who has 1100 contacts on Facebook. 34 of them have commented on her posts with political or social contents; it’s 3.1% of the total number of friends who have participated in the sharing of materials with 66 comments. Not all friends have commented with the same frequency, as we can see in the following diagram:

Structure of Rossella's relationships, initials of the commentators and number of comments for each of them or by quantity of comments



Acknowledgement of the subject's sociopolitical activity by her contacts

On Rossella's timeline discussions have been started by others in 10 occasions. I'd like to remind that Rossella has an institutional mandate within Amnesty International, as she is the Regional Manager of the Emilia Romagna Youth Group; this implies an acknowledgement of her activism by other people.

Discussed topics

19 different topics have been discussed on her timeline, by means of "personal statuses", "links to articles", "images", "videos", "posts published by friends", "personal statuses of public figures", commented 67 times, also considering in the discussion the subject's interventions that have been grouped as follows:

Politics, with a total of 10 posts and 47 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ General Elections of February 2013, discussed 2 times, with 27 comments;
- ✓ Center-Left Primary Elections 2012, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Criticism/satire towards Lega Nord Party, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ World politics, discussed 3 times, with 12 comments;
- ✓ Duty to vote, discussed 1 time, with 4 comments;
- ✓ Explanation of vote, discussed 1 time, with 2 comments;
- ✓ International cooperation, discussed 1 time, with 2 comments.

Economy, work and trade unions, with a total of 1 post and 12 comments including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ World economy, discussed 1 time, with 12 comments;
- ✓ Work exploitation, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Violence against women, with a total of 6 posts and 5 comments:

- ✓ Violence against women, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Sexual violence, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Female genital mutilation, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Prostitution, discussed 1 time, with 5 comments.

Social activity, with a total of 13 posts e 17 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Amnesty Italia and/or International events, discussed 10 times, with 17 comments;
- ✓ Death penalty, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Human rights, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Childhood, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Other, with a total of 2 posts and 0 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Immigration, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Condition of Africans in the USA, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

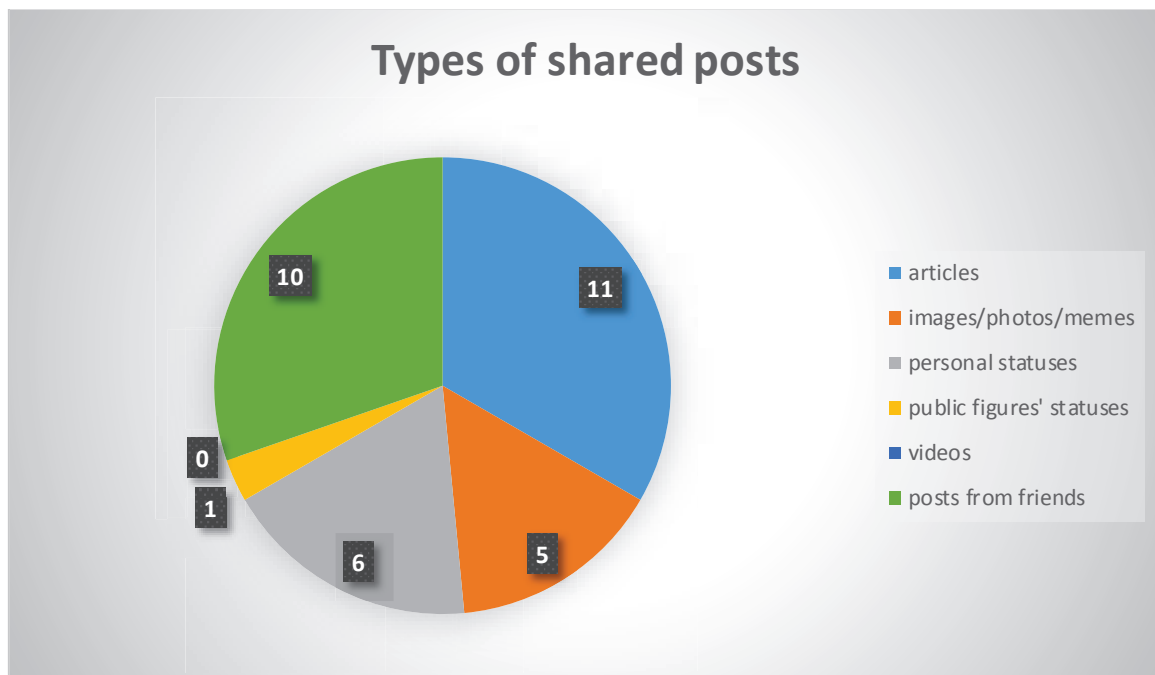


The timeline environment

By watching further this subject's page we see that the System shows her in contact with 507 Facebook pages with the "Like" function, which means that she sees their contents on her Home. As already seen in other cases, the number of pages is so high that the System only shows a small part of them. Among them we find some examples of pages with a sociopolitical content such as: "Women leaders in International relations", "School of Public Policy", "Repubblica ambiente" (*Environment republic*), "Amnesty International e Italia", "Palestina Libera" (*Free Palestine*), "Action Aid", "Casa delle donne", "Anpi", "Amref", "Unhcr" etc.

She shares the personal status of 1 public subject, Amnesty.

Her posts are divided as follows: during the three months she has shared 11 articles, 6 personal statuses, 5 images/photos/memes, 1 status of a public subject and 0 videos.

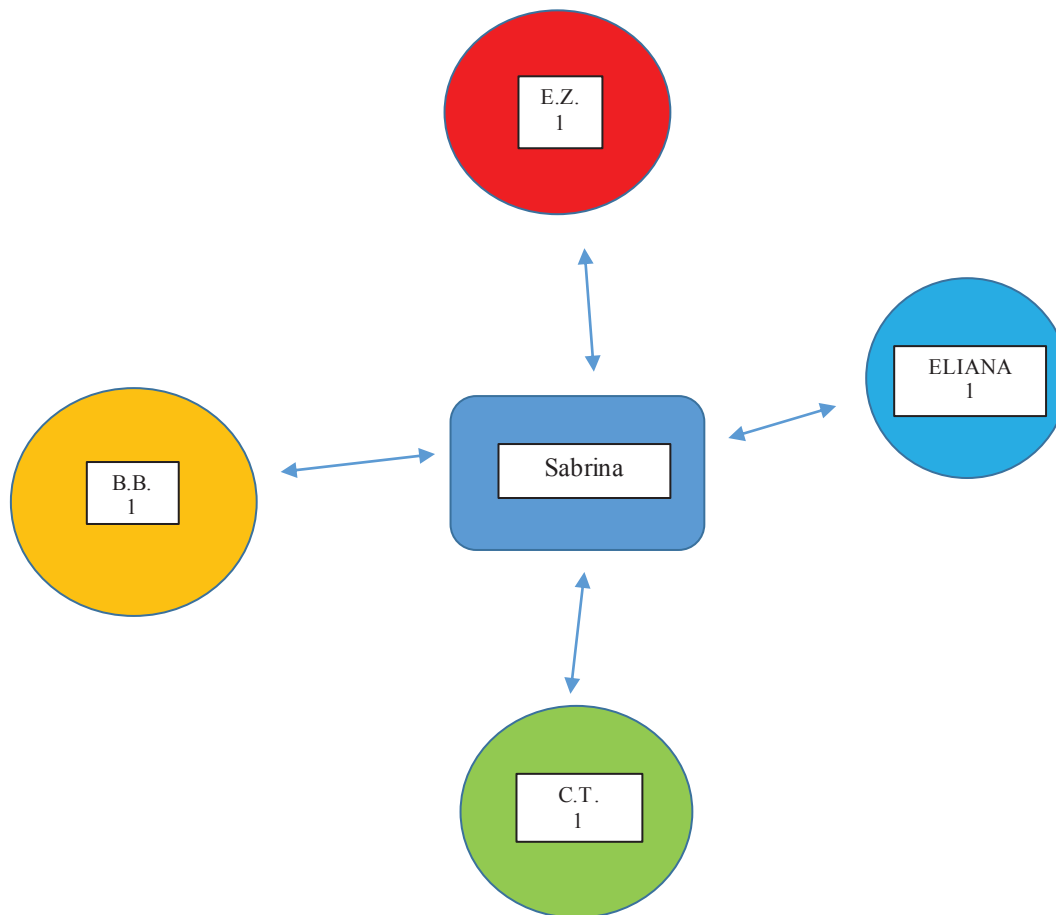


Among the sources that she uses for sharing posts on her timeline, Amnesty Italia and/or International stands out, used 5 times; the institutional sources are “Ballarò”, “The Guardian”, “Il Fatto Quotidiano”, “Cronache Internazionali”.

Sabrina, network structure

Let’s see Sabrina, a social activist, who has 307 contacts on Facebook. 4 of them have commented on her posts with political or social contents; it’s 1.3% of the total number of friends who have participated in the sharing of materials with 4 comments. In this case all friends have commented with the same frequency, as we can see in the following diagram:

Structure of Sabrina's relationships, initials of the commentators and number of comments for each of them or by quantity of comments



Acknowledgement of the subject's sociopolitical activity by her contacts

On Sabrina's timeline, discussions have been started by others in only one occasion.

Discussed topics

16 different topics have been discussed on her timeline, by means of "personal statuses", "links to articles", "images", "videos", "posts published by friends", "personal statuses of public figures", commented 4 times, that have been grouped as follows:

Politics, with a total of 14 posts and 3 comments:

- ✓ General Elections of February 2013, discussed 2 times, with 1 comment;
- ✓ Criticism/satire towards Movimento 5 Stelle and its leader B. Grillo, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;

- ✓ Criticism/satire towards PdL Party and its leader S. Berlusconi, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Criticism/satire towards Minister E. Fornero, discussed 2 times, with 1 comment;
- ✓ World politics, discussed 1 time, with comment;
- ✓ Duty to vote, discussed 4 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Explanation of vote, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Political malpractice, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Violence against women, with a total of 2 posts and 1 comment:

- ✓ Violence against women, discussed 2 times, with 1 comment.

Social activity, with a total of 5 posts and 0 comments:

- ✓ Amnesty Italia and/or International events, discussed 3 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Amnesty appeal, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Search for new activists for Amnesty Italia, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Law enforcement, with a total of 1 post and 0 comments:

- ✓ Police violence, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Education, with a total of 2 posts and 0 comments:

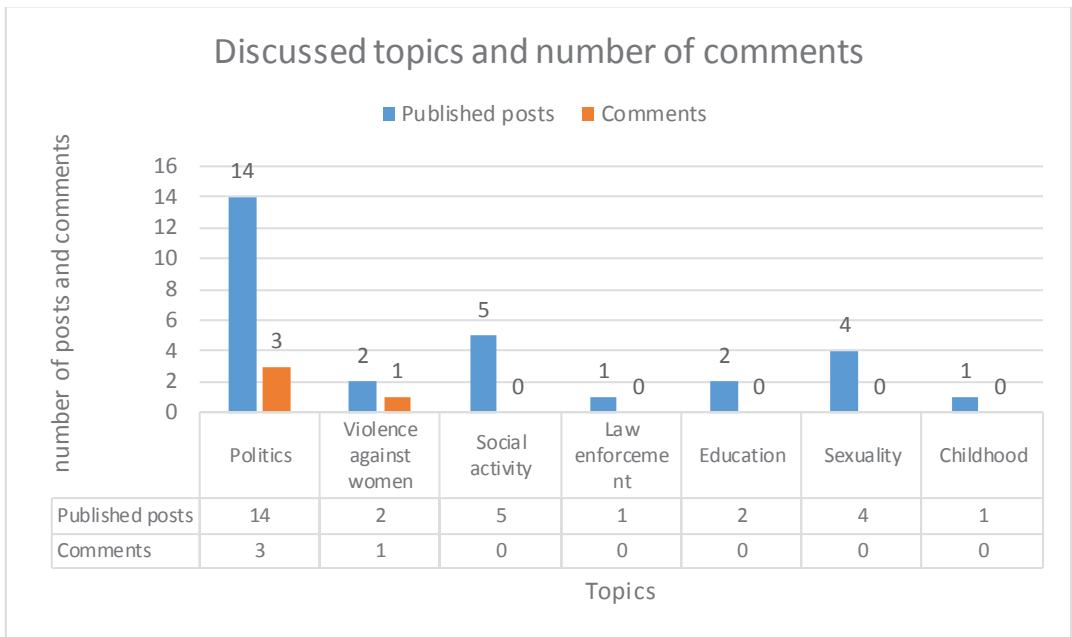
- ✓ Education, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments.

Sexuality, with a total of 4 posts and 0 comments:

- ✓ Homosexuality, discussed 4 times, with 0 comments.

Childhood, with a total of 1 post and 0 comments:

- ✓ War orphans, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

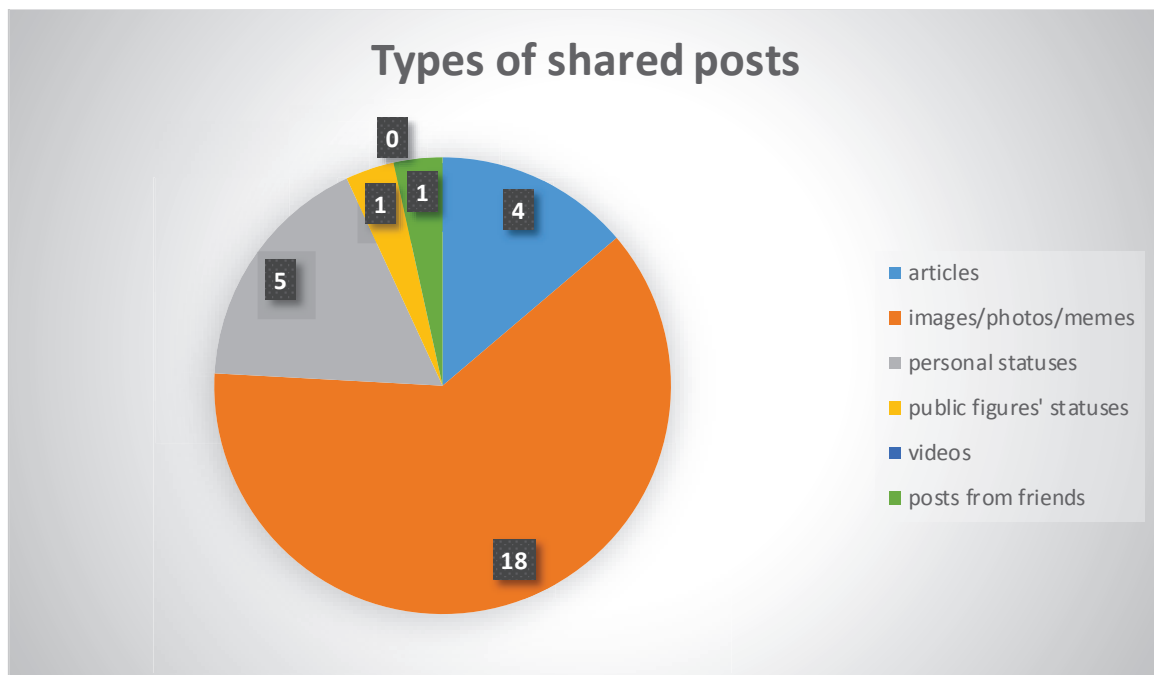


The timeline environment

By watching further this subject’s page we see that the System shows her in contact with 57 Facebook pages with the “Like” function, which means that she sees their contents on her Home. Among them we find some examples of pages with a sociopolitical content such as: “Progré”, “Presa Diretta”, etc.

She shares the personal status of 1 public subject, Amnesty.

Her posts are divided as follows: during the three months she has shared 4 articles, 5 personal statuses, 18 images/photos/memes, 1 status of a public subject and 0 videos.

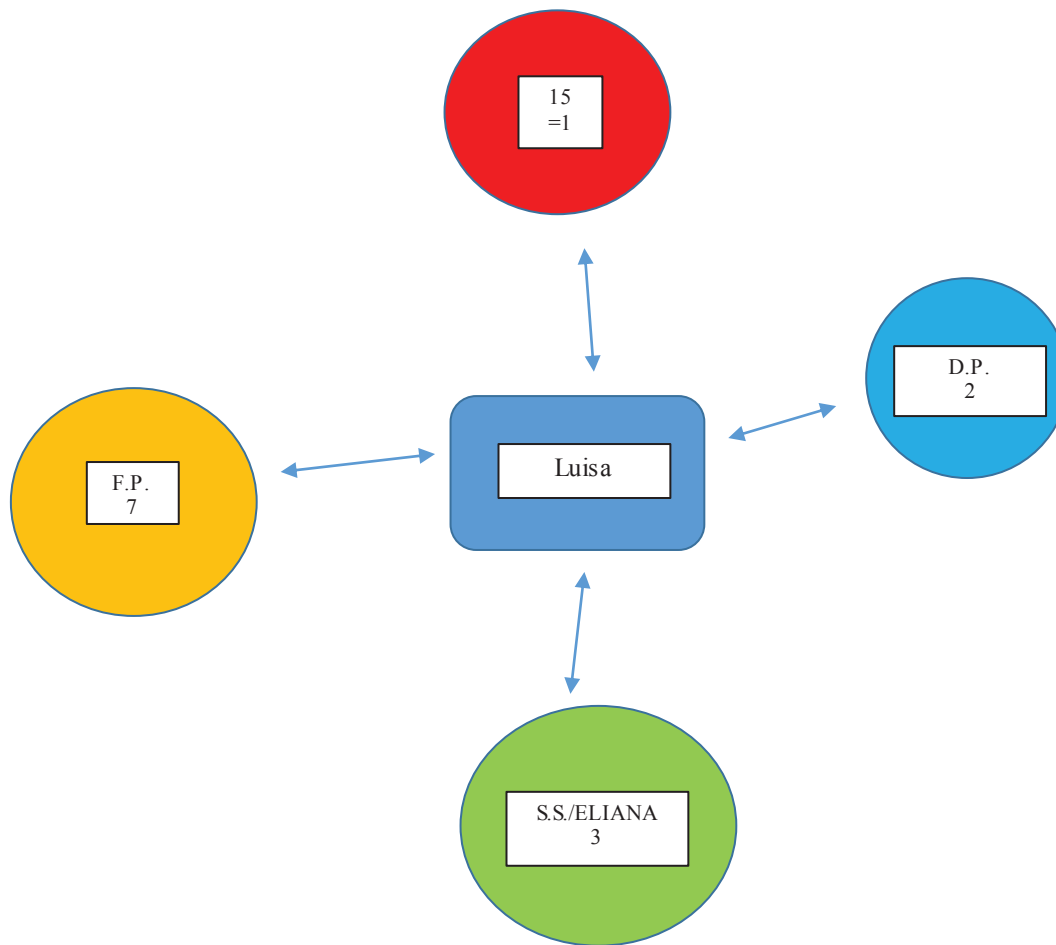


Among the sources that she uses for sharing posts on her timeline, Amnesty Italia and/or International stand out, while the institutional sources are “Corriere di Bologna”, “La Repubblica”, “Dichiarazione Civile”.

Luisa, network structure

Let’s see Luisa, a social activist, who has 324 contacts on Facebook. 19 of them have commented on her posts with political or social contents; it’s 5.9% of the total number of friends who have participated in the sharing of materials with 39 comments. Not all friends have commented with the same frequency, as we can see in the following diagram:

Structure of Luisa's relationships, initials of the commentators and number of comments for each of them or by quantity of comments



Acknowledgement of the subject's sociopolitical activity by her contacts

On Luisa's timeline, discussions have been started by others in 3 occasions.

Discussed topics

21 different topics have been discussed on her timeline, by means of "personal statuses", "links to articles", "images", "videos", "posts published by friends", "personal statuses of public figures", commented 39 times, that have been grouped as follows:

Politics, with a total of 15 posts and 21 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ General Elections of February 2013, discussed 2 times, with 3 comments;
- ✓ Criticism/satire towards Movimento 5 Stelle and its leader B. Grillo, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;

- ✓ Criticism/satire towards PdL Party and its leader S. Berlusconi, discussed 3 times, with 16 comments;
- ✓ Criticism/satire towards Lega Nord Party, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Criticism/satire towards the Democratic Party and its candidates for Primary Elections, discussed 2 times, with 2 comments;
- ✓ Support to Rivoluzione Civile Party, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Duty to vote, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Fascism, discussed 3 times, with 0 comments.

Violence against women, with a total of 7 posts and 0 comments:

- ✓ Violence against women, discussed 5 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Female genital mutilation, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments
- ✓ Women's rights, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Social activity, with a total of 9 posts and 13 comments, including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

- ✓ Amnesty Italia and/or International events, discussed 8 times, with 13 comments;
- ✓ Support to Greenpeace, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Education, with a total of 1 post and 0 comments:

- ✓ Education, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Economy, work and trade unions, with a total of 1 post and 5 comments including the subject's comments as active member of the discussion:

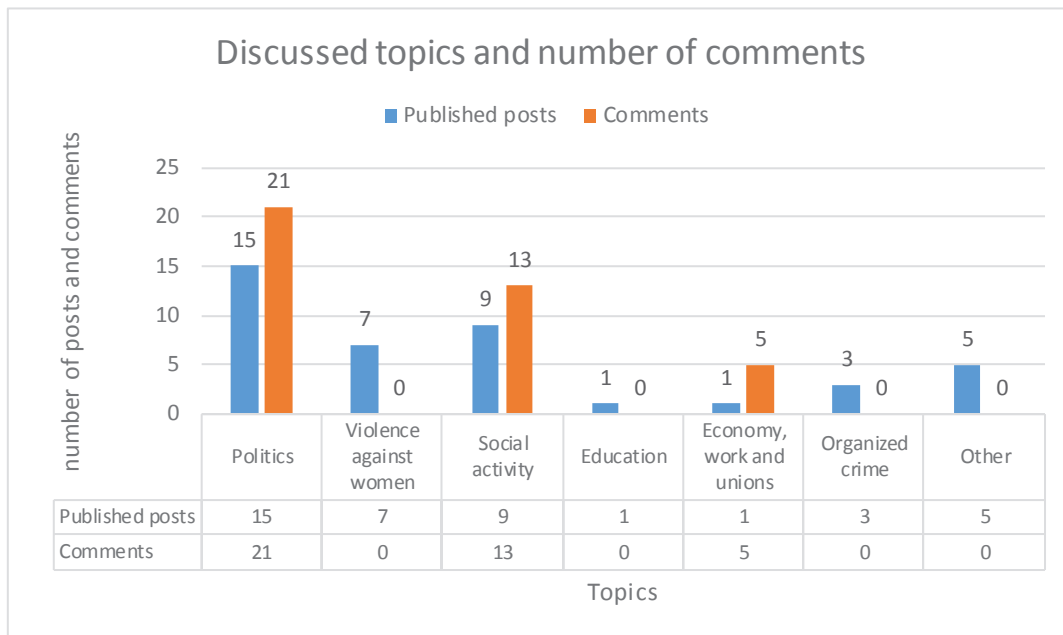
- ✓ Melfi Fiat Workers, discussed 1 time, with 5 comments.

Organized crime, with a total of 3 posts and 0 comments,

- ✓ Mafia, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Camorra, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

Other, with a total of 5 posts and x comments,

- ✓ Racism, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Petitions, discussed 2 times, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Boycott of multinational corporations, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments;
- ✓ Demonstrations and square clashes, discussed 1 time, with 0 comments.

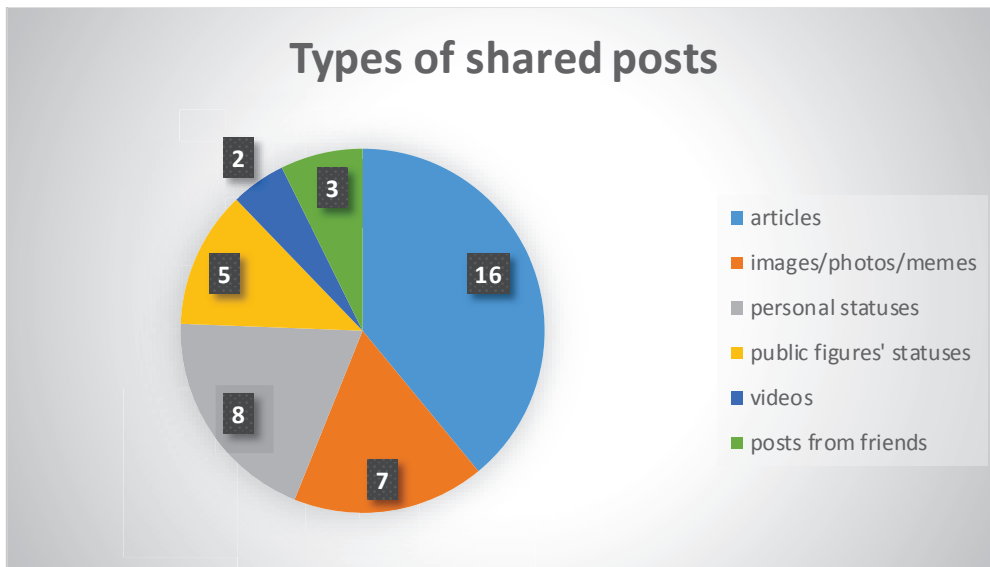


The timeline environment

By watching further this subject’s page we see that the System shows her in contact with 423 Facebook pages with the “Like” function, which means that she sees their contents on her Home. The Like page is partially closed and we can only see a few examples, such as: “Spazio Giovani” (*Youth Space*) and “Projects Abroad”.

She shares the personal statuses of 5 public figures such as Amnesty, Nichi Vendola and Roberto Saviano.

Her posts are divided as follows: during the three months she has shared 16 articles, 8 personal statuses, 7 images/photos/memes, 5 statuses of public figures and 2 videos.



Among the sources that she uses for sharing posts on her timeline, there are: “Mediterre.net”, “Il Fatto Quotidiano”, “Amnesty”, “Raistoria.it”, “Dieciventicinque.it”, “Progre.eu”, “La Repubblica”, “Rivoluzione Civile Bologna”.

The last subject, although being available for observation, has a partially closed timeline and in general the rates of his contacts, relationships and comments are very low.

4. Data analysis

Structure of the subjects' Networks

I will now analyze this amount of data.

I repeated several times in this work that one of its purposes is to understand how the network of contacts of the subjects involved in this research is structured. In the chapter about the theoretical structure I mentioned the concept of “significant player” showed by Spadoni and Cavallo in their text “The Social Networks”. What makes a subject a “significant player” on the web? The subjects observed in this study can be considered as such? According to the two sociologists, the concept of “significant player” refers to the concept of “collaborative learning” that is to say to that

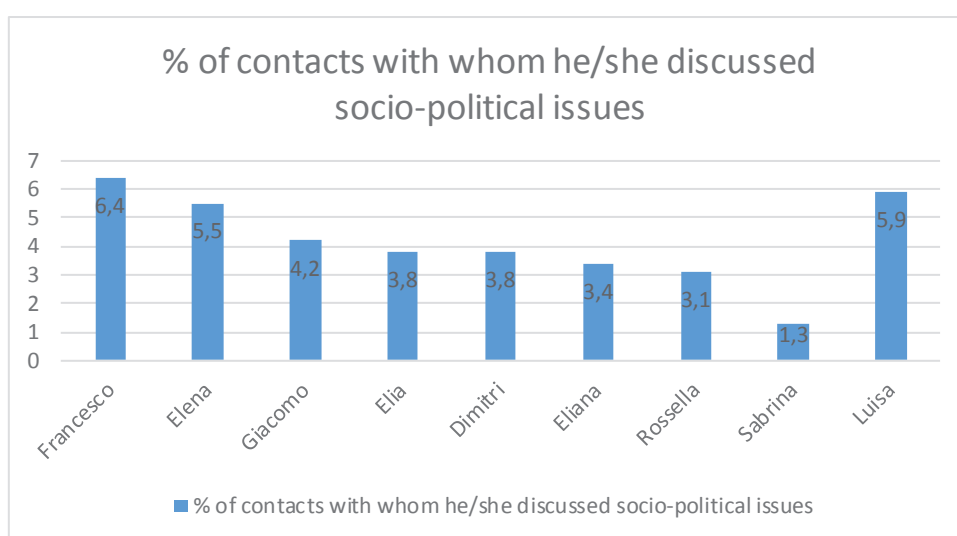
“(…) mechanism by which each member of a community becomes responsible for the knowledge of himself, of other individuals and of the group as a whole. To do this, he makes available all his knowledge and skills to everybody, to be used when required, at the right moment”⁹

Part of this mechanism are

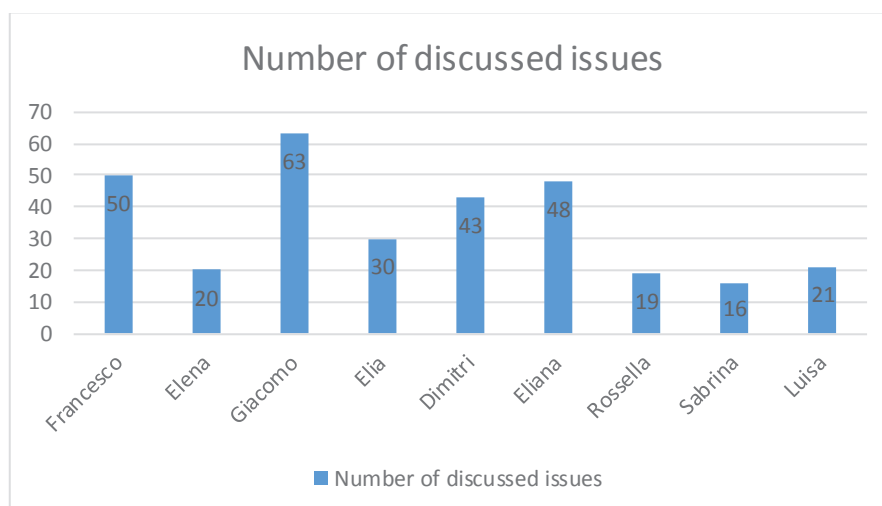
“(...) the number of connections that link its members and the role of cohesion in determining the solidity of the group”¹⁰

Let's try to summarize the connections of these subjects, remembering that one has preferred to limit the access to his profile thus bringing the number of observed subjects to 9. During the three months of observation, Francesco discussed socio-political issues with 6.4% of his contacts; Elena with 5.5%, Giacomo with 4.2%, Elia and Dimitri with 3.8%; Eliana with 3.4%; Rossella with 3.1%; Sabrina with 1.3% and Luisa with 5.9%.

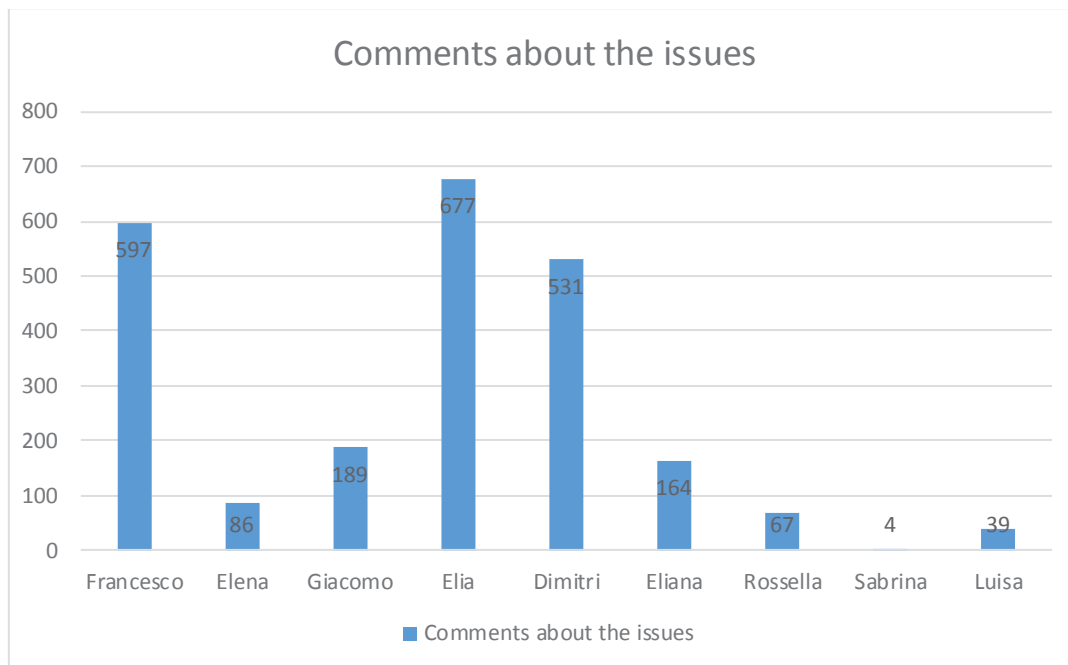
Let's see this in a diagram:



Francesco discussed 50 issues; Elena 20; Giacomo 63; Elia 30; Dimitri 43; Eliana 48; Rossella 19; Sabrina 16; Luisa 21.



Let's see now the total number of comments about the discussed issues, including those of the subject as an active member of the discussion: Francesco 597; Elena 86; Giacomo 189; Elia 677; Dimitri 531; Eliana 164; Rossella 67; Sabrina 4; Luisa 39.



Let's recall for a moment some of the national data presented in the chapter 4 of this study: 9.2% of young people of the 21-year-old category does voluntary work and 4.7% belongs to a political party, so the subjects observed for this research could be almost defined as a "niche" on the National total amount taken into account in the statistics, since they were actually chosen on the basis of their activism. On account of this, I will try to evaluate the communicative network of this niche and that is: the number of contacts created by a small number of individuals in the area.

The question I'm asking myself is: can the percentage of contacts with which the research subjects discuss about socio-political issues be considered high or low?

We should not forget that among the research subjects, there are remarkable differences in the created networks, from the peak of Francesco with 6.4% to the minimum of Sabrina with 1.3%; with the maximum number of debated issues of Francesco (50) and the minimum of Sabrina (16); with the maximum number of comments to posts by Elia that amount to 677 to the minimum by Sabrina again (4).

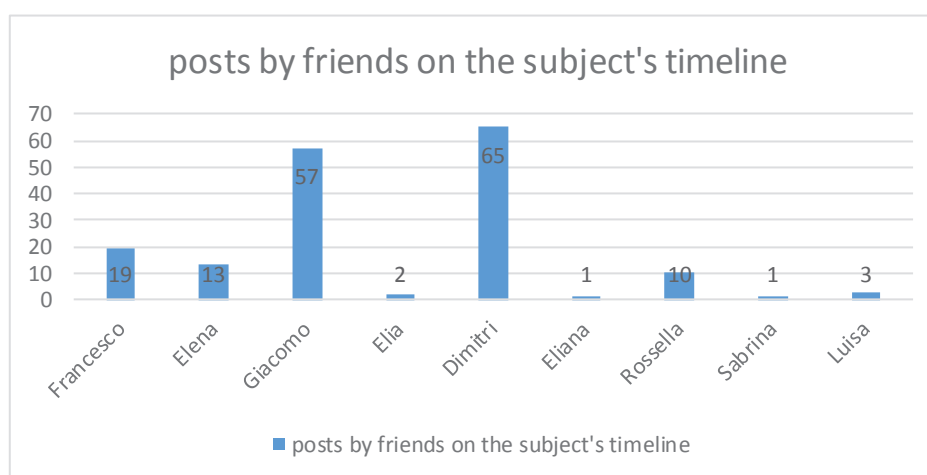
Another element to take into account while trying to understand the value of these networks, is a datum by the Telefono Azzurro – Eurispes Report, which indicates a further interesting information, useful to compare these data: the actual mass of friends on Facebook with whom a person in fact

communicates. According to the Report, among those who claim to have more than 500 friends, 59.8% admit to only communicate with a “small number” of them, 17.1% with the majority and only 3.7% claim to communicate with “everybody”. This datum refers to the category 16-18 years old, so to the immediately lower category compared with the category of this study. However, we can suppose that in the following 2-3 years, this datum will not significantly change, especially when, like in the case of Giacomo or Dimitri, the subjects reach thousands of contacts.

That being so, how can we consider the single networks created by the research subjects? I guess one could say that Francesco, Elena, Giacomo and Luisa were able to create a good network, in terms of number of contacts achieved. But if we want to evaluate the quality of the debate undertaken by each one of them about the different issues with the parameter of the posted comments, then Elia (677 comments), Francesco (597 comments), Dimitri (531 comments), Giacomo (189 comments) and Eliana (164 comments) were able to do in-depth and engaging discussions. In this case, the number of debated issues can also have an impact, and they are 50 for Francesco, 63 for Giacomo, 48 for Eliana, 43 for Dimitri, 30 for Elia.

If we recall the above-mentioned concept of “significant player”, I believe that these 7 subjects can be considered as such by virtue of both the network and the sharing of materials, knowledge and opinions. It is a communication that we can consider as a constitutive element of the “collective learning” that implies an exchange of information and their availability through links and posted materials.

I will add a further element: the recognition by the friends of a specific role of the subject that can be deduced - and in some cases is almost declared - by the number of posts published by the friends on the subjects’ timeline. Let’s see this:

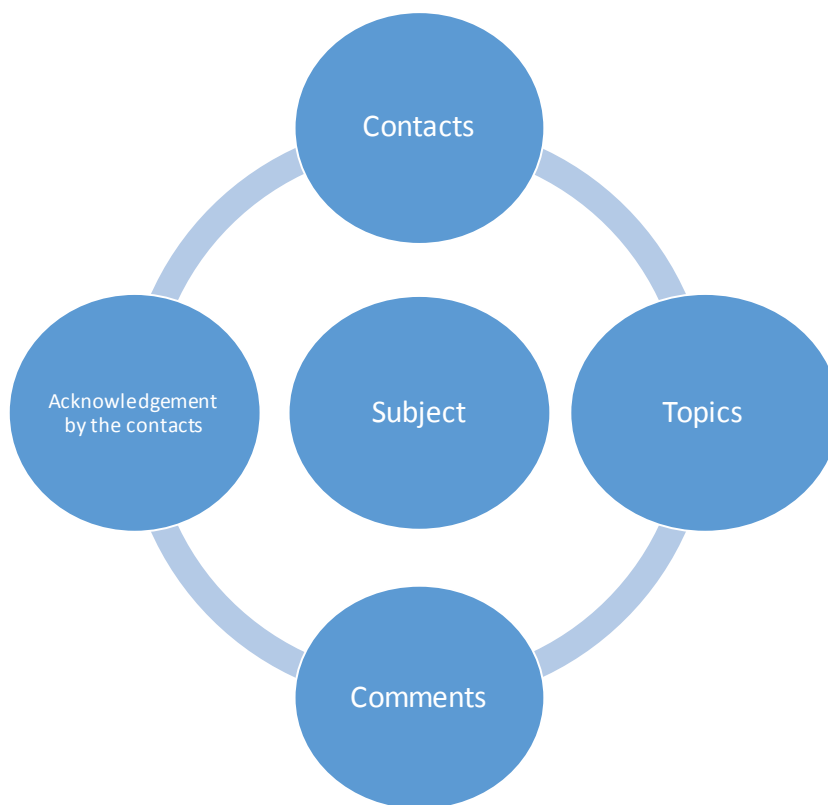


We see that Dimitri and Giacomo stand out. They are the two most “visible” subjects in the Bologna area. As already stated, Giacomo is one of the promoters of the student demonstrations of #12Oct and #14Nov, has a role in the Sel Party, a role in the biggest Italian trade union, CGIL, and

is the Coordinator of Secondary and High-school Students of Emilia-Romagna. He gives interviews, and holds rallies in the squares.

Dimitri behaves differently, but he has the same public impact. He supports the Sel Party for which he organizes some events, such as the meeting with the leader Nichi Vendola in one of the main theatres in the city. We observed him literally standing up for the political campaign, both for the Center-Left Primary Elections in 2012 and the General Elections in 2013. Dimitri has his place in the rallies of student demonstrations too.

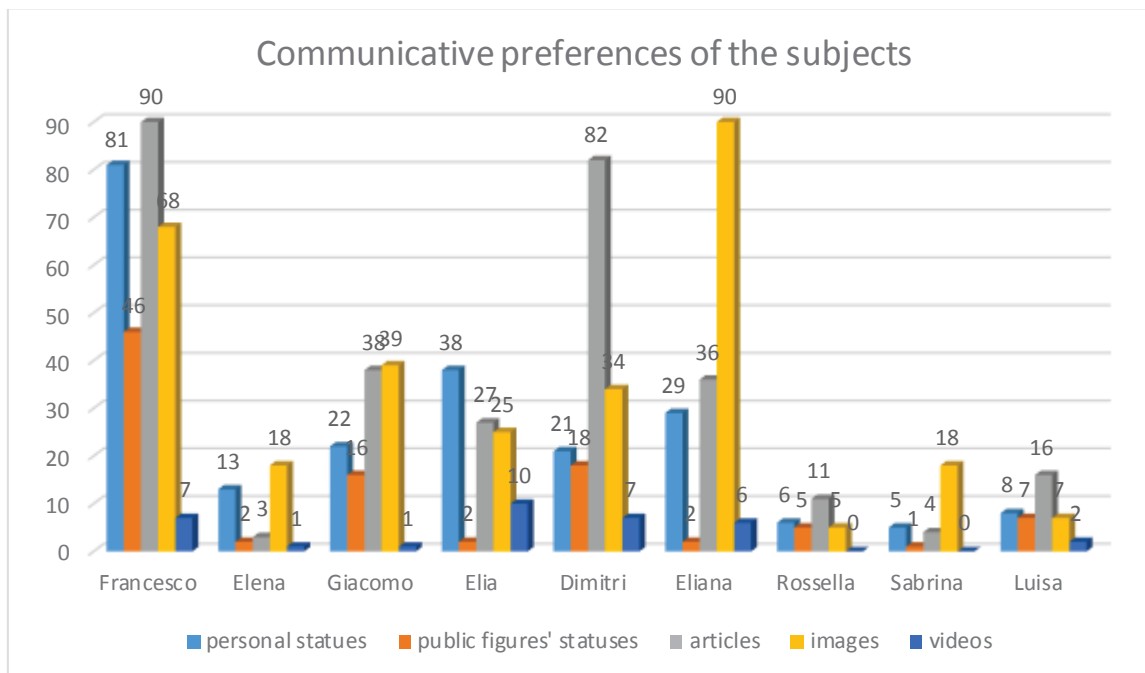
The result of this analysis is a network that is composed this way:



We observed that, depending on the case, each of these elements, contacts, comments, topics and acknowledgement by the subjects, can have a different weight in the network of the single subject.

Communicative preferences

Another element that this study tried to understand concerns the communicative ways chosen by the subjects. We know that Facebook, as a Social Network, allows different ways: the description of personal statuses, the publishing on your own timeline of public figures' statuses, the sharing of articles, pictures and videos. For each subject I can highlight different communicative preferences. Let's try to see what they are for each one of them.

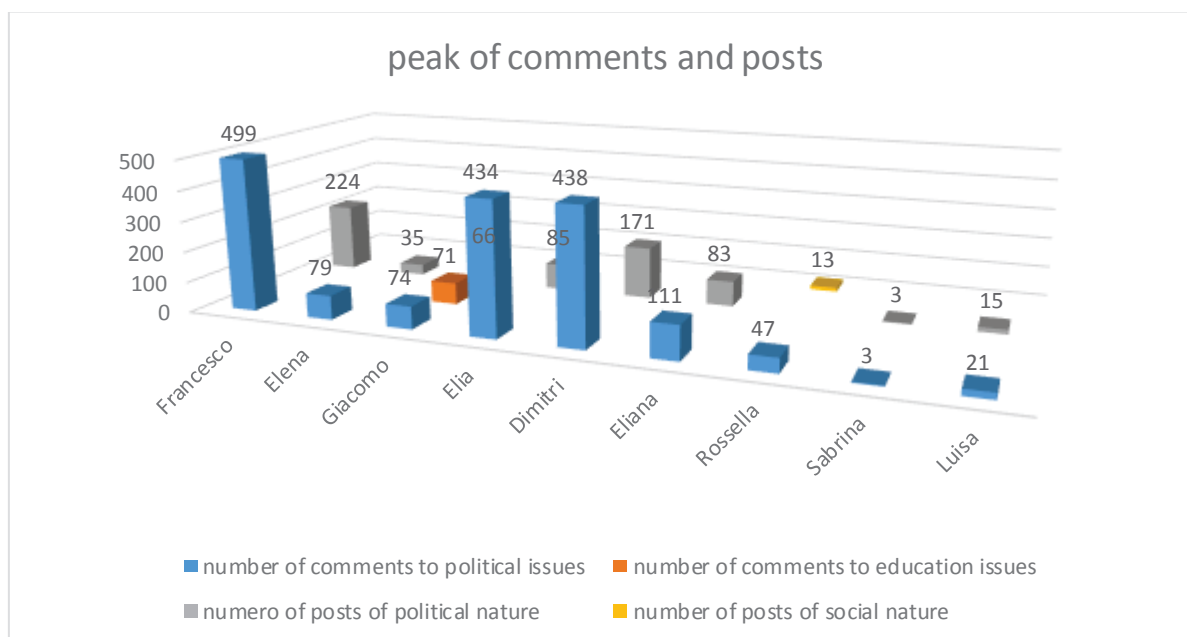


It's clear that each subject prefers certain forms of communication, let's now see the first three choices of each subject:

- ✓ Francesco prefers articles, personal statuses and images/memes;
- ✓ Elena prefers images/memes, followed by personal statuses and finally articles;
- ✓ Giacomo prefers images/memes, personal statuses and articles;
- ✓ Elia prefers personal statuses, articles and images/memes;
- ✓ Dimitri prefers articles, followed by images/memes and personal statuses;
- ✓ Eliana prefers images/memes, articles and personal statuses;
- ✓ Rossella prefers personal statuses, articles and images/memes;
- ✓ Sabrina prefers images/memes, personal statuses and articles;
- ✓ Luisa prefers articles, personal statuses and equally articles and images/memes.

In no case, posts of the public subjects or videos appear to be the favorite communicative forms whereas, even though with inverted orders, personal statuses, articles and images/memes appear to be the first three favorite forms of communication by everyone. Personal statuses leave to the subject the opportunity to express his/her thought¹¹ whereas links to articles allow him/her to share potentially useful materials by facilitating that exchange which Spadoni and Cavallo refer to when they talk about “collaborative learning”. Memes, as we saw, are characterized by conciseness and their ability in doing parodies.

What have the subjects communicated? We observed that all of them have somehow discussed both social and political issues irrespective of the nature of their activism. If we go into detail, we'll discover an interesting element, they all had their peak of comments in the posts of political nature, even the 5 subjects engaged in social activities. Only Giacomo stands out for two very close peaks about political issues and education, by virtue of the evident hybrid nature of his commitment, both as sympathizer of the Sel Party and as Coordinator of Secondary and High-school Students of Emilia-Romagna. In regards to this, I believe we should consider the periods chosen for the observation, as October and November 2012 were characterized by a great number of student demonstrations and by the Center-Left Primary Elections, while February was characterized by the General Elections of 2013. During the year of observation, from September 2012 to September 2013, I also tried to highlight some specific events connected with the social activities of the young women who do voluntary work for Amnesty Italia but, as we will hear from Eliana during her in-depth interview, Amnesty does not have special peaks in its activity. Each campaign of this association lasts months or even years. The campaigns are cyclically presented again but they are always operative until the issue presented arrives to a solution. Probably for this reason, the electoral period is the most significant for all the subjects. The peak of comments, however, is not always connected to the peak of debated issues; it can happen, in fact, that more posts of a certain nature are published that receive less comments compared with other issues that are less posted but more commented. This is the case of Rossella who has her peak of issues in the social field but her peak of comments in the political field.



The timeline environment, the space and the internet bubble

The Facebook timeline of each subject has then become the environment of this ethnographic research about the media. That space lived and created by each subject, loaded with meanings, with objects that have a specific meaning for each one of the subjects. This environment is reflected in the personal statuses, in the links to the articles, in the sharing of videos, images or thoughts of the research subjects that give to it that shape that the visitor can see by scrolling it.

Next to the timeline, that is the personal place of each subject, we have the Home, that different space in which the subject can see flowing like in a blog the updates and posts of his contacts, whether they are friends or pages to which he/she granted his/her "Like". It is the community space where the center of everything, as Cavallo and Spadoni (2010) state again, is actually the subject who is the matching point, the least common denominator of all his/her friends on Facebook, of every person to whom the subject granted his/her friendship. We already saw, in the chapter about the theoretical structure of this research, how, according to the authors of Collettivo Ippolita, a social bubble comes up again on Facebook, the reiteration of the network of offline acquaintances, only those we like. Only in two cases, as we saw above, once with Francesco and once with Elia, there have been some dissents in the communication, in the exchange of comments to a post and, in both cases, they threatened to "unfriend" their "friends". Actually, again according to the Collettivo, this possibility would not be allowed by the System and it would only occur very rarely by virtue of the nature of this Social Network based on consent and contact, on communication and sharing that allow a better commercial profiling.

By scrolling the subjects' timelines, we saw that they "Liked" a number of pages about public figures, - of whom they can also share statuses - pages of institutional and non-institutional newspapers, pages of politicians or Parties. The updates that all these players post on the Social Network create the social environment of the research subjects who see, whenever they do login into their Home, the marks of the presence of these players. They are actually carefully chosen by the research subjects, therefore the member of the Sel or PD or PdL Party will see the notifications of the Party, of the Party member, of the Party leader and will read the updates of the institutional and non-institutional newspapers of his political area, whereas he/she will find satirical and critical posts about political opponents, etc. It follows that there is a re-statement of a world of references that is always the same. A self-produced version of the internet bubble in which the subjects, - all subjects, not just those of this research - tend to propose again their world of relationships. To avoid that, a good media literacy is necessary.

¹ In *Pragmatica della comunicazione umana (Pragmatics of Human Communication)* (1971), Paul Watzlawick divides human communication into three sub-sectors: syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Specifically, pragmatics deal with the effects of communication on the speakers, that is with the influence that communication exercises over their behavior, not over their knowledge.

² There might be a third reason concerning an aura of “feeling non-responsible” that comes with the “Like” function. During his interview, M.T. speaks of “Click Activism” and defines it as the circumstance according to which to “Like” a page or a cause, would be the same as thinking to have found a solution, or at least done something for the topic of the page or of the cause. While, on the contrary, you actually did nothing.

³ Markham A., (2013), *Remix Cultures, Remix Methods. Reframing Qualitative Inquiry for Social Media Contexts*, in Denzin N. K., Giardina M. D, *Global Dimensions of Qualitative Inquiry*, Walnut Creek, CA, Left Coast Press, p. 70

⁴ *Ivi*, p. 70-71

⁵ Definition from the Treccani encyclopedia.

⁶ A *corsivo (italic)* is a particular kind of journalistic writing. It’s a short comment on some news, some public figures or some public affairs, which could have a polemic or ironic tone. Its name comes from the fact that, in the beginning, it was actually printed in *italic*, in order to graphically underline the difference from the other articles. As for the classic rules of journalism, it’s a text mixing rhetorical devices and is often of a satirical nature. It usually appears as a column, as in the case of M. Serra’s “Amaca”, and is periodic.

⁷ The words “Diaz School” refer to the trial for the events that took place during the G8 in Genoa, as in chapter 3.

⁸ A physicist and environmentalist, several intellectuals and politicians commented on his death, which happened on October 2012.

⁹ Cavallo M., Spadoni F., (2010), *I Social Network, come internet cambia la comunicazione*, Milano, Franco Angeli, p. 106-107

¹⁰ *Ibidem*

¹¹ Always within the limits of what is allowed by the Facebook System, that doesn’t admit “hate speech”, a violent and vulgar content, that can be reported by other users to be deleted or, in case of certain key words, detected by the System itself.

Data analysis, second part, The in-depth interviews: the meaning of activism from a phenomenological point of view.

Foreword

Another tool used for this research is the in-depth interview of the 5 subjects who were the most active, both online and offline, on the political and social issues, who were willing to be interviewed.

I interviewed Francesco, Dimitri, Elena, Rossella and Eliana.

The interview's protocol, already presented in the methodological chapter of this work, included 5 questions that intended to examine:

- ✓ the personal experience as activists since the beginning, the meaning of the socio-political activity in the activists' lives and the goals set;
- ✓ the perception of themselves as media activists;
- ✓ the socio-political education;
- ✓ the media education;
- ✓ the role of the family, of the group of peers and of the school in these two educational environments;
- ✓ the relationship between the online and the offline activity.

Unlike the analysis of the network structure, that has a more quantitative nature, here we recover the phenomenological theoretical framework in an attempt to answer some of the questions of this work such as: understand the specific meaning that activism has for each interviewed subject, since its embryonic phase to the current state. The origin of a path, the significant experiences of education, the perception of oneself as participant in a specific environment.

The contents within quotation marks are original texts from the interviews that are fully available in the appendix of this work.

1. The origin of activism

Making reference to the studies by Piero Bertolini¹, we saw that an object has a particular meaning that is built in the past and present of the subject and is projected into the future. The first question posed to the subjects about their activity, concerns the "origins" and tries to understand how, when and in which context their activism is born, in order to try to understand its meaning. A

meaning that is explicitly asked to the subject to limit all forms of interpretation and to address to the activist him/herself.

Let's start with Francesco. His interest in political issues begins when he is 13-14 years old and then it starts up permanently at 15-16. He begins to discuss about politics within the family, his mother plays a special role in the discussion, but it is at school that he begins his real activity during the school occupations to protest against the Moratti Reform, when he also begins a discussion about political issues with his peers. At this point, school starts to play an important role in Francesco's political education. The High School that he attends becomes the background in which he politically grows, some of his teachers are clearly aligned. He initially gets information through traditional printed media and by following older schoolmates with whom, in the following years, there will be a handover. They will finish school and will pass the baton to those who remain, including, indeed, Francesco who will do the same when he will finish High School and go to University. In his case, school becomes a place of great political importance. When he runs for the elections for the provincial student council, he wins.

During the University years he enrolls in his Party and begins a more intense activity which starts with the election campaign for the mayoral candidate in Bologna, then he participates in the Referendum on Public Water, Nuclear Energy and Legitimate Impediment. The next step will be educational with an interesting journey activated by the Party that will take him both to Europe and around Italy. Francesco is determined: he wants to become a Member of the Italian Parliament in order to have the power to make a change. The purpose of his political activity is to propose a cultural, social, political and economic alternative for the country. On an international level, to achieve the greatest possible level of happiness and well-being. For Francesco, politics are a "raison d'être", a way to "be fulfilled" and leave a "mark of himself" on Earth.

The origins of Dimitri's activism are deeply rooted in his family, starting with his grandfather who worked in the National Leadership of the Communist Party alongside Enrico Berlinguer. Thanks to this, since his childhood he had been in company with political leaders such as Bertinotti² and Vendola. His father is engaged in political activities too, first with the Rifondazione Comunista Party, then with Sel Party. However, Dimitri asserts that the two men have never pushed him to get involved in politics.

According to Dimitri, what they actually did was to educate him on the complexity of things; they made him understand that facing an issue does not just mean to face head on it but to study it in its origins, to understand it in its corollaries, to identify all the subjects involved in it and to try to find

some political solutions with the counterparties. In his hometown in Sicily, heavily sided with the right wing, Dimitri creates a first group of young people politically engaged with the left wing, the Left Wing Network, with the purpose of “opening some discussions in the city” and he becomes a member of his Party for the first time. Later he will leave both the youth group and the Party, starting to follow the Sel Party in which he notices a desire to repeatedly change the structure of the Party itself, a “self-overtaking” that rejects a reiterated and end-in-itself repetition. In Dimitri’s life as a political activist there is a series of disappointments by the adults engaged in politics or by other members, including peers, of the groups and the political workshops to which he belongs, one by one. This leads him to always look for new realities to grapple with. He also moves over the social area to better understand the needs of the territory and the people. Among his activities, he also looks after the communication of the groups he belongs to, for example “Pugliamo l’Italia”³ and the national communication campaign of the Sel Party. Then he joins the Rete della Conoscenza (*Network of Knowledge*). His activism does not have a specific goal and doesn’t want to have one. Dimitri prefers to “make himself available to the change”; it is the “path towards utopia” and the “making himself available to those who will come afterwards” by giving up certainties and by accepting what will come. A specific goal for him would represent “a bond”.

Let’s get on to Elena, the third subject of this group of five engaged in political activity. First of all, she specifies that she interprets politics as “citizenship”. She starts as a Scout and, later, she expands her activity through the channel of her High School that she identifies as the place of origin of her activism (the same High School as Francesco’s). It is here that she gets in contact with Community Organizations such as Libera against mafias, Amnesty International and Emergency, as well as getting in touch with G.A., the journalist who has been a key informant for this study. Still in school she carries out her first activities by inviting, during the school occupations, the mayoral candidates for the city to talk with the students. Another point of origin of her interest in politics are the discussions within her family and the claim that even as a child she knew the Italian President’s name. She first experiences the reality of the Democratic Party, then that of Sel that will become her Party. Her next step is voluntary work in prison. The purpose of her activism is the achievement of the total respect of the rights and duties of the citizens by recognizing the role of the State. Politics should be used to make a change.

We see that Eliana operates in the social area. She starts her activity soon as well, with Scouts when she is 12 years old and she begins to “have a feel for the others” by working in mental health centers and with old people. Around the age of 14, during High School, her activity takes a

clearer shape. During her University years she works with the Organization Libera against the mafias, the Students' Union and Amnesty International. The purpose of her activism is to "keep doing activism" for the "contribution that activism gives to her life". 80% of the influence on her activism comes from her family, as she states, especially from her father whom she considers a "good person" who taught her the difference between good and evil, and from her sister, a Law student, already active with Amnesty.

Finally, let's see Rossella. Her experience started at 16 with an Amnesty International work-camp. She joined the Organization and she is still a member. She founded the Amnesty university group of which she is the Manager. She involved about 40 people in the group unlike other similar groups that are made up of 5-6 individuals. Her work is recognized on a national level, so much that she is contacted by other realities to have indications. For Amnesty she organizes events, stands for the collection of signatures, fundraising, flash mobs... Her purpose is the fulfilment of human rights but also the involvement of her peers; to show them that there are different realities apart from those of discotheques where you "lose your brain". Therefore she is engaged in making other people responsible, by helping them to be aware of what they can do. She finds great personal satisfaction in doing something for others.

2. The perception of themselves as media activists

Francesco defines a media activist as someone who uses the media to get and share information and political or social projects with other people. He certainly considers himself a media activist, especially in recent times when he used the web very often to share materials but also because he uses a wide range of mass media including the Internet, but also TV newscasts and newspapers that he consults with daily regularity. He thinks that communication technologies should be exploited for their potential. He prefers Facebook to Twitter because the second one forces him to use no more than 140 types that are not enough for expressing himself, whereas Facebook gives him more communication opportunities.

Dimitri proposes two definitions of media activist; the first one is he/she who "tries to carry out activism through the media", while the second one is he/she who "uses digital tools to facilitate the exchange of information and considerations". This second player uses the web in particular because other media, such as television, are more difficult to use. To the question "do you consider

yourself a media activist”, Dimitri remains doubtful, but by recalling the definition of media activist that he just explained, he decides to consider himself a media activist.

This process of reflection is an element of great importance in the phenomenology of education. The construction of a dialogue helps the participants both to understand themselves in a deeper way and to activate paths of reflection and self-reflection (Bertolini, 1988, 2001, 2003).

Although he uses it, Dimitri considers Facebook a tool that limits communication because it does not allow to express that complexity that his family taught him.

For Elena, a media activist is a young person who, with the technological tools that he/she has at his/her disposal, communicate what he/she does. When I ask her if she considers herself a media activist, her answer is “more no than yes”. She declares to use the media only in a “sectorial” way; she uses them if she needs to communicate a referendum campaign but she chose silence for the Democratic Party Primary Elections of December 2013 because she is contrary to interfere in the matters of other Parties only to propose an ally with whom the Leader of her Party could confront. She uses Facebook and Twitter differently. The first one to share information and to post various materials. The second one only as a follower to collect information from Institutions, Parties and newspapers.

Also for Eliana a media activist is someone who exchanges information through the Social Networks about what he/she does. To the question “do you consider yourself a media activist” she answers “yes” and that she thinks “to be quite annoying for the persons” who are in touch with her.

The definition of media activist provided by Rossella is similar to that of the other subjects too: “a media activist is someone who does activism through Social Networks, of course”. That “of course” strengthens an automatism to consider the Social Networks as the most obvious means. When I ask her if she considers herself a media activist, her answer is “also”. She specifies that activism is a matter of “square” and Facebook is an essential tool for communication that, however, cannot replace the square. Rossella is not the only one to talk like this, but we will see that in detail later.

3. Political and social education

Political and social education is one of the “hot topics” of this study. How can someone be socially or politically educated? What contributed to make these young people “activists”? What are the most significant experiences for them? Let’s see.

For Francesco and Elena, school played a central role. We already saw that High School played a very important role in the origins of Francesco’s activism. It was the place of protests and occupations but also the place of the representation of the students’ requests within the institutional political authorities such as the Provincial Student Council. Francesco adds a further note. He attended a Humanities High School where he studied Greek and Latin that he does not consider as “dead languages” but as the study of the first democratic civilizations that shaped the structure of the present Western systems. His school represented a “particular environment” with a “particular background” where teachers were openly sided with a Party; a “common background shared with the families of origin” of the students.

The family is the second educational pole but not in order of importance. For Francesco, the role of his mother is really strong. Her origins from Bologna link her to a left-wing and partisan culture that influenced the boy’s choices.

For Francesco, an additional educational pole, the third in chronological order, is the Party itself of which he is a member. As a matter of fact, the Democratic Party provides an education for young people. Francesco took part in a multi-step project that took him around Europe and Italy: first in Salzburg and to the Mathausen concentration camp, then in Freiburg and Strasbourg for the European Union’s environmental issues and in Rome at the National Parliament and in the PD headquarters, finally in Sicily for the commemoration of the massacre of Via D’Amelio that claimed the life of anti-mafia magistrate Paolo Borsellino.

Elena has in common with Francesco the attendance of the same Humanities High School that she shows as the main place of her political education meant as “citizenship”, as she wishes to specify. At school she meets Community Organizations such as Amnesty International, Libera against the mafias, Emergency. She joins Libera and it is there that she meets G.A. who becomes one of her reference points. During the school occupation, she invites the mayoral candidates for the city to talk with the students. In parallel with the school, the discussions within her family have a significant meaning in her political education, and the claim that she “already knew the Italian President’s name at the age of 11”. She starts her voluntary work in the adult prison of Bologna and also this experience becomes so meaningful in her personal history as to show her that politics can

be the incentive for the change that she wishes in society. In addition to this, the Organization for which she works in prison organizes the voluntary workers' education with the help of jurists and prison guards.

Her political education "happens ongoing" because Elena is responsible for the management of the Old Town section of her Party without knowing what a Circle is and why, unlike other parties, Sel does not have a youth section. This leads her to continuously confront with adults who have been doing politics for decades.

For Dimitri, the most significant place of education is his family, that didn't ask him to get going or take stands but instilled in him the meaning of the complexity of things. Dimitri has a privileged background because his grandfather worked in the National Leadership of his Party next to one of the main leaders of Italian politics. Thanks to this, since his childhood, Dimitri had been many times in company with political leaders. In addition to his grandfather, Dimitri's father is strongly engaged with the Sel Party in the area of Trapani. Dimitri considers himself a political self-taught and he restates the fact that his family never asked him to participate in any way. He did that on his own. We might suppose, however, that having dinner with political leaders influenced the nature of the conversation within his family.

On the other hand, school did not represent a place of meaningful experiences. Quite the contrary. According to Dimitri, school, through its teachers, did nothing but claim to fill "bottle-students" with mere superficial knowledge and then asked to empty them during the oral exams. He charges school with a total lack of discussion and debate about the more complex issues. While school asked to learn the dates of the French Revolution by heart, the teachers avoided to talk about its ideals and the fact that the Revolution also caused the death of many people.

For Eliana, her family, the Scouts and the volunteer groups are the main places of her education. Within the family, her father plays a favored role as a "good man" who teaches her the difference between good and evil. Her sister too plays an important role because she is a Law student and is engaged with Amnesty.

The experience with the Scouts, when she was 12-13 years old, leaves a deep mark in her. She enters the mental health centers, she gets in contact with old people and feels useful to others. This is a feeling that she will continue to look for in the following years and that is, as she states, at the base of her social activism. The meaning of her activity lies in her feeling to be useful and in what this feeling makes her feel.

Another place of education are the groups of volunteers of Amnesty where not only an exchange of information but also of feelings between the voluntary workers takes place.

Rossella lives a different experience and when she is 16 years old she decides that the world of adolescence that surrounds her is not enough and looks for something meeting the requirements of a girl that has a desire to do something and that “does not want to burn her brain in the discotheque”. She discovers Amnesty International and participates in a summer camp for one week. Her first education takes place in that context in which - she states - it is not that important what they teach you but what strikes “your personal chords”. The fact of knowing that in countries such as Uruguay a peer of hers who is raped does not have the right to have an abortion, brings her closer to the area of the defense of human rights.

4. The media education

Media education is the great absent for all the 5 young people interviewed. They all consider themselves as self-taught. Media education in school, if there have been any, with some courses, had no weight, especially in the use of Social Networks. An interesting element is that when I ask about media education, the subjects’ mind goes to the Social Networks and not to other media, except for a short consideration by Dimitri who argues that it would be difficult to do communication on television.

Usually we tend to think that the knowledge of information media happens thanks to the group of peers, but this is denied in the five interviews. The element that emerges, with regard to the Social Networks which have, indeed, represented the center of discussion for the subjects, is the immediacy of the systems and the interfaces. Zuckerberg, the inventor of Facebook, did a great choice by creating a simple platform without frills and easy to read and to understand. The group of peers affects communication only to the extent that “everybody uses Facebook” and this persuades everybody to open a profile to keep in touch with friends in this way. Education, as Rossella states, is necessary for professional programs like Excel, when you use it during statistics classes and not for the Social Networks and the social networking systems.

What is needed is a “communicational skill” recognized in particular by the two girls engaged in social activities who need to organize events related to the Amnesty campaigns that could attract as many people as possible.

Leaving aside the matter of Social Networks for the moment, we can also observe that three out of five of these subjects also write for other newspapers, both digital and printed, and have experience

of communication for the national press. Rossella writes for newspapers related to her activity as a harpist; Dimitri is in charge of communication for the National campaign of his Party and writes for other websites such as “Rete della Conoscenza” (Network of Knowledge) and “Link degli studenti” (Students’ Link). Eliana writes for the page of the Amnesty group. They are therefore “producers” who address the problem of conveying efficiently a message to a particular target of persons.

So far we talked about the “use” and therefore the ability to open a profile, to manage it, to share files, to write personal statuses, to share those of others, to share videos and pictures, to publish news about events or even to publish articles as producers.

What happens when we talk about privacy settings, profiling, Internet bubble?

Dimitri talks about an education to an aware use of the network, to the necessity to know that what we publish on the Internet will stay there, available and traceable forever, that it is necessary to have an education about the ethical and fair use of means, in which by “fair” he means that knowing that to spend “12 hours a day playing on a computer maybe is not good for your health”. Rossella and Eliana appreciate the Internet and especially Facebook for their importance in the organization of events and everybody recognizes an efficacy in the communications to the widest possible audience in the shortest possible time. Everybody recognizes to the network a fundamental role in the sharing of materials and considerations even if Dimitri criticizes the fact that Facebook does not allow him to express, with its social networking systems, the complexity of the issues that he debates.

These five young people have good skills with regard to privacy settings but only few of them know what profiling is (Dimitri and Eliana) and nobody knows what the “Internet bubble” is. Therefore the systems related to the web market are essentially unknown.

One element in particular should be pointed out: for everybody the Internet, the web, the Social Network are tools, also organizational tools, sort of megaphones, a way to reach a large audience but:

- ✓ “you do activism in the squares” (Dimitri and Eliana),
- ✓ “you do activism by meeting people face to face” (Rossella and Eliana),
- ✓ “yes, the Internet is a tool of vital importance but I do activism by breaking my ass in the squares even at Christmas with a stand to collect signatures” (Rossella),
- ✓ “behind the screen it is difficult to make oneself clear... the emotional system is very different” (Eliana),
- ✓ “we have to recover live relationships” (Eliana),

- ✓ “Facebook is a beginning, then you must take to the streets, you have to meet people” (Rossella),
- ✓ “I think that those who only do politics on the web are alienated persons from what happens in reality” (Dimitri).

The subjects differentiate in a clear and certain way the two realities of their being activists. The media are an effective, important and even fundamental tool, the activist who “restricts himself” to sign an online petition is welcome but activism means taking to the streets.

5. Online and offline, which is the connection according to the subjects?

A further element of study was the perception of the online and offline conditions by the subjects. Francesco remains “loyal to his identity on the web”, he considers the Social Network a place that requires “good manners”. When he talks about online and offline, he distinguishes between real and virtual where virtual is a “different real” and where you must be careful to who’s on the other side of the screen, because a Facebook profile can be a fake. He claims to behave with coherence in the two dimensions. For Eliana, there is no difference between online and offline, she only publishes what she finds interesting. For Dimitri, the online dimension does not allow you to communicate the complexity of things and he prefers face-to-face relationships. Rossella identifies the two things like this: “the goal is the offline activity, the tool is the online activity” whereas Elena poses the problem in these terms: “online activity is the advertising poster of offline activity. Life is offline, the second step is the online dimension”. The answers given by the subjects confirm the sensation and the consideration that I wrote down in the third part of the data analysis related to the observation of the offline activity, to which I refer you to.

6. Data analysis

At this point, I’ll try to take stock of all these information.

The origin of activism, meaningful experiences, the purposes, the meaning

What I actually find interesting is that activism can begin very early in the life of a young person. According to Eliana, even when she was 12 years old. If we want to provide a chronological order, we can say that the first step takes place within the family, through the discussion of political or social issues. The fact of living in a politically and socially engaged family is relevant, like in the case of Dimitri or Eliana. For those who have followed them (Eliana and Elena), Scouts represent a second educational place especially when the meetings with persons in need are promoted, as in the

case of Eliana who met the patients of a mental health center or old people. Always trying to keep a chronological order of the more meaningful educational experiences, we can indicate school but only when it decides to offer students the opportunity to follow some educational paths. In the case of Dimitri, for example, this did not happen, as well as for Rossella. Francesco and Elena's experience is different because they attended the same Humanities High School where, in addition to teachers who were openly sided with a Party, meetings with Community Organizations were supported (Libera against the mafias, Amnesty International, Emergency...) as well as political activity in the school such as the elections of the students' representatives. Thus we see that, even if an interest for certain issues can appear around 12-13 years old, activism begins to become concrete during the first years of high school. Another element that I find interesting is the role that school occupations by the students can play in their political education. The occupations, when they do not aim at a mere waste of time, can become a workshop of political and social activity. Both for Francesco and Elena, they have been opportunities for growth in this sense. They become the context in which the discussion with the peers can become a significant educational moment. I'd like to stress that exactly during the occupations Elena invited to her High School the mayoral candidates for the city of Bologna. Again during the occupations, Elena invited G.A., a journalist who writes against Mafia, to talk to the students.

By the way, Giacomo is not in the group of subjects interviewed in depth, but by observing his timeline we discover that, during another school occupation, he invited to talk to the students Maurizio Landini, the National Secretary of Fiom-Cgil, the metalworkers' union of the main Italian trade union, whereas during the last occupation, in chronological order, he organized a meeting between the students and a communication expert to discuss about the relationship between young people and the Social Networks.

Therefore, occupations may prove to be a self-managed educational moment of great importance.

Another educational moment indicated by the subjects is that related to the specific education that can be supplied by the political environment or the Community Organizations that the subject decided to attend. As we saw, in the case of Francesco it happened with PD, for Rossella and Eliana with Amnesty International, for Eliana with the voluntary work in prison. Dimitri and Elena took their first steps as political autodidacts even if the contact with adult politicians influenced their experience.

Let's try to examine the purposes of these five subjects. Francesco has a very clear goal: he wants to become a member of the Italian Parliament to have the political power to change things. To change things, according to this subject, means to achieve the greatest possible level of

happiness and well-being not only on a national level but also on a European level. He wishes to leave a mark on Earth. It is a great inspiration that today is translated into a strong active political commitment, into study and education.

Dimitri is poles apart. He feels bonded if he thinks of a goal for his activity. He perceives change as a long process to which he is available with his personal contribution.

For Elena the goal is the recognition of the rights of citizens, not disjoined from the duties related to a state system.

For Rossella and Eliana the purpose is the recognition of the human rights of each citizen.

The meaning assigned to political and social activities has to be attributed to two currents, one moving outward, the other moving inward. The first one is related to the contribution to the construction of a better society that considers the well-being of the others, the respect for human rights, the achievement of the greatest possible happiness; the other one is related to the satisfaction that feeling useful to others causes to yourself. Eliana clearly expresses that when she states that the meaning of her activism lies in what activism gives to her.

The perception of the subjects as media activists

The perception of oneself as a media activist is one of the most interesting aspects of these in-depth interviews. I have already discussed this issue by comparing the definitions of media activists by scholars of these phenomena with the perception that the key informants of this study have of themselves. Now we can do the same with the examined subjects. A media activist is considered by all the subjects as someone who does activism through the media, with a marked preference for Social Networks, also due to the lack of opportunities to use other “institutional” tools such as television. The fact of being free and effective to reach a large audience in a short time is the strong point of the web. The main activity is the sharing of materials and considerations, the same ingredients identified by sociologists to facilitate collaborative education and collective intelligence. At the same time, however, the interviewees put a frontier, a distance between what can be done on the web and what you must do in the streets. Activism only on the web is seen as limited, the web is considered as a tool, a megaphone, an advertising poster of one’s activity but, as we read from the subjects’ direct statements, you do activism by taking to the streets and by meeting people face to face, by discussing issues in all their complexity. A point of view that seems wiser to the writer compared with the one you read in many essays, at least matured with practical experience. Whereas those who reflect about media activism divide the levels of activism into categories, those who do activism, those who get their hands dirty on the territory, bring the substance of things back to the practical activity, to the dialogue with the other, to the face-to-face confrontation, to the

recovery of a dialogue that is developed in its complexity and that is less feasible on the Social Networks.

The media education

The Italian expression “formazione ai media” is a simplified formulation of the concept of Media Education expressed by Pier Cesare Rivoltella (2001), the one articulated into “production”, “language”, “representation” and “public” by Buckingham (2003) and that leads to the consequent Media Literacy (see also Livingstone, 2009). The Italian translation of these concepts is very wide and I will try to simplify it. When we talk about Media Education we talk of “grammatical” knowledge of communication media. Exactly as I am able to read and write with pen and paper, I am (I must be) able to read and write with other communication media, from press to television, to the web, radio, theatre... At the same time, as media “readers” we must be able to understand “who” produced the message that we are reading. The market? Which market? Let’s think for example, about the debate done on the first chapter of this work about profiling. The government? Which government? A political party? Moreover, which are the purposes of the message? What does it communicate? What kind of message you want to convey to the final user? Again, which kind of representation? The media do not offer a “real” view of the world but a cut-out ad-hoc “window”, a “mediated” version, in fact. What kind of language is used? With which meanings, conventions, codes, genres, stereotypes, interpretations? For what kind of audience has the message been studied? It follows that Media Literacy, a literacy about the media, is something really complex that should considers these and many other aspects. The interviewees simply did not receive it. Their education was self-taught, although they are producers of contents and they share materials. School is a great absentee in this sense. How far, however, should school go? Which aspect of this education has it to take care of? All of them? A part? Which part? Does it have to run after the latest technologies or does it have to deal with other issues? What is right to ask school without loading it further? I will try to analyze this aspect in depth in the conclusions of this work.

Online and offline, which is their relationship according to the subjects?

The correlation, the twine, the constant flow between online and offline is an issue strongly related to the perception of oneself as a media activist and to the distinction between activism in the streets and web activism. The interviewees declare to be coherent in the two contexts, they are the same offline and online but they specify that life and reality are offline. Their identity remains coherent, online activity is the advertising poster of offline activity, online activity “comes after”. The web is a public space where you communicate what you do, but your activity is offline.

¹ *Educazione e Politica*, Milano, Raffaello Cortina Publisher, (2003); *Pedagogia fenomenologica. Genesi, sviluppo, orizzonti*. Firenze, La Nuova Italia, (2001); *L'esistere pedagogico*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia, (1988).

² Leader of the Rifondazione Comunista Party

³ The term “Pugliamo” is a clear reference to the Puglia Region, in the South of Italy, where the Sel Party has its origins.

Chapter 7, Data Analysis, Part Three, offline activity observation

1. Understand the relationship between on and offline activism

Among the questions posed in this research, there is the one relative to the activity conducted by the ten subjects offline. What is the relationship between the two modes, on and off? What fallout does the one have over the other?

To answer this question, I participated in a series of events on explicit invitation by the subjects and agreeing with them the modality of my presence. For methodological details and critical observation, please refer to the chapter on Methodology.

Here I will try to report what I have observed, not without preliminarily make a reflection that accompanied these observations, i.e.: is offline observation really of any help? Does it really have a meaning?

One can not but agree with all those authors who argue that it makes no more sense to talk about the real world and the virtual world, so well established are the flows of information from on and off options. In the case of the persons who have lent themselves to this research work, every single offline event was well publicized before and thoroughly documented after with photos, videos, texts, articles and comments later, in the online option.

The student demonstrations of October 12 and November 14 fully respond to this portrait. Facebook event created, dozens of contacts, offline event, dozens of photos, videos on Youtube in a matter of hours, sharing videos on Facebook in a very short time, publication of links to newspapers that carried the news, etc. As a researcher, I could not have been there and still document all the material available online after the event.

What happened in those two dates? On October 12th 2012 took place the first national student demonstration against the Aprea decree law that was intended to bring private economic subjects within school administration.

November 14th a day student demonstration took place at European level against the cuts to culture, school and university. In Bologna there was again talk about the Aprea Decree as well as about the state of decay of Italian schools. Thousands of young people and workers in the streets, police in riot gear, different simultaneous parades including the one of the major Italian trade union. One of the subjects of the research, Giacomo, spoke as a member on the stage of CGIL set up in Piazza San Francesco. Down from the stage and half an hour later he is in piazza Santo Stefano with a microphone in one hand talking to students who hail him. The whole thing is available on Youtube by clicking ashtag # 14Nov Bologna. He is not the only one. Immediately after Giacomo's speech

comes the Dimitri's. He also speaks to the crowd of students gathered in the piazza about school's condition and the cuts to culture. Within hours, photos, videos and articles are available on their Facebook pages, posted by their friends on their boards with comments.



Giacomo talks from Cgil stage, #14Nov

Giacomo invited me to a meeting of the Network of high school Students of Emilia Romagna (September, 2013) at a location provided by CGIL. This is an informational meeting on the application of the students to the role of institute representatives in their schools. Discussion is about regulations, circulars, and relationships among students, teachers, parents' representation and school staff. Even in this case Giacomo plays a role of "relevant actor" informing and sharing things within his community.

Dimitri, as already said, is one who "fight in the front line" and in fact, in full campaign, both in the primaries of the Left and for General Election, Dimitri lends his face to the messages of support for the Party and the leader. Also this material is available online by searching Google images of Sel Party's campaign. Dimitri is also among the promoters of the Mob Book, a collection of books to bring to Parliament through the Party Leader. Books will be delivered to him during a further event, also advertised and documented on Facebook, which is the speech of the Leader in one of the largest theatres in the city. Dimitri is one of the organizers of this event, and at the end of it he is called on the stage along with his colleagues, including current provincial coordinator of the party Egle Beltrami, next to the leader who personally thanks the young activists.



You can say that all politics suck
Otherwise Vendola



Foto 1

Elena is head of the Old Town section of her party and organizes a year opening event to present the activities of the section. The event is posted on Facebook, this one as well as the next. It's December 2012 in the institutional venue of the section, there are dozens of young people who variously gravitate around the Party and the current provincial coordinator, the participants including Dimitri and myself. During the meeting, after a welcome drink, Elena and her colleagues present the activities of the section for the year to come.

Elena takes part also in a flash mob of his Party, just days before the primary election. The purpose of their flash mob is to raise awareness on the issues of job insecurity. The rally is in front of one of the largest bookstores in the historic centre of Bologna. The press is there, as well as myself. Documentation is also posted on Facebook.



Another event involves female volunteers of Amnesty International. It is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women. The girls organized a flash mob in Piazza Maggiore, made up with fake bumps and bruises, their mouth wrapped by adhesive tape, beaten and mute. They are standing on chairs, alternating with a person without makeup. Each of them carries a

sign with an abuse written on it, the partner without make-up has a sign reciting: “I am her voice”. Also this event is abundantly photographed and shared on the network.



Let's move on to Francesco. At the new primary election of the party of which he is a member, Francesco decides to file a motion for his favourite candidate. The event is presented on Facebook with a lot of invitations, even to myself. The place is a quarter section of the Party. Francesco is the only young man in a table of ultra 50s. His motion, supporting the youngest candidate, comes as last. Even his media belong to his generation. He brings his laptop, turn off the lights and starts his presentation. Among the audience there is also the Mayor of Bologna, member of the same party. Afterwards the event will be posted on Facebook.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, a constant doubt accompanied my attending these events offline. Was my observation really meaningful? After how many minutes all that I was trying to document would arrive in the network to witness what happened? The relationship between the options on and off line is so interwoven as to make almost useless on-site presence of the researcher. Does it really still make sense to distinguish between the two sides as if they were two separate universes? The definition of “flow” of information by Castells says no, and has done so for years already. So, to what extent is the physical presence of the researcher during the event offline necessary?

Once having expressed these doubts I will try to give an answer to the question of this study with respect to the relationship between online and offline options. This relationship can be explained, in my opinion, through the metaphor of a ping pong game where the first beat is the very idea of the event. In the cases I mentioned, the first beat was made generally offline, the second (advertising) is done online, but the event is offline. Activism is “real” and “played on the street” just as stated by the young activists, in particular Rossella and Dimitri, in the course of their in-depth interviews. Without the street, without physical presence, activism is reduced to an exchange of information that excludes action, commitment, real meeting. The next phase, documentation and comments, is

online. Obviously this simple reconstruction is just a pure exercise that does not mean that there can not be other forms of documentation and comment offline, or that the idea of an event can not be born online. What I try to highlight is the strict interconnection between between the two modes. Facebook, or other Social Networks or Blogs or sites, play a role of megaphone for organization and at the same time become the diary, the memory of the event. All the “street” activism is trackable online.

¹ Source <http://multimedia.quotidiano.net/?tipo=photo&media=47685#1>

Conclusions

I've reaffirmed several times that three are the goals of this study:

1. Through observation of the profiles on social networks of ten research subjects, try to understand what kind of social and political activity young people practice online and in which way their network of contacts is structured;
2. Observe and try to understand the flow between online and offline socio-political activities, by the 10 subjects of the research;
3. Try to understand what have been the most significant learning experiences that have led the subjects of the research to appreciate the potential of the web as a tool for sharing information related to their commitment, and what the learning experience that allowed them to develop their active citizenship (School? Family? The peer group? Something else?) and what the meaning, phenomenologically speaking, that this same activity takes for them.

I will now try to summarize what emerged during these months of research, regarding each one of the issues, but I'd like to stress again that this is a research of a qualitative kind, that has implied the observation of 10 subjects only and that, therefore, has no pretension whatsoever to give conclusive or universally valid answers. What I've tried to report is the experience of 10 particular subjects, belonging to a "niche", 10 active citizens who use the media to communicate their activism. They are part of a national percentage which is below 5% when we talk about political activists and below 10% when we talk about volunteers. Therefore, these results should only be considered as indicative of a phenomenon.

These conclusions are drawn taking into account the results of all the qualitative and quantitative collection tools used during the months of observation. I shall remind that the ten subjects have been observed for a year, from September 2012 to September 2013; three particular months have been selected out of this year of observation, for a detailed analysis of the data. The three months are October and November 2012 and February 2013. October was chosen for the student demonstration, November for the Center-left Primary Elections, February for the General Elections. It wasn't possible to identify a period of "peak" of activity by the girls involved in social activities, due to the very nature of Amnesty campaigns, which can last month, or even a year. Another collection tool was a closed-question questionnaire given to all the ten subjects, with the purpose to evaluate whether and how these ten specific subjects, chosen among active citizens using the web, do fit into the image taken by national reports about the relationship between young people and the media in Italy. In the end, the five subjects which resulted most active on and offline, who

made themselves available, were interviewed in depth by means of a semi-structured interview. Actually, these are different tools, used for different purposes and that give different types of results. For the methodological details, please refer to chapter 2; at this stage in the work I will try to put together all the obtained results, in order to try and have a picture as consistent as possible.

I will start with the first question dealt with by this study, what kind of activities are carried out online and how is the network of the subjects who participated in this research structured.

The subjects, also by their own admission, use the web to share materials and considerations, trying, when possible, to develop a discussion. This is also the most traditional definition of media activism given both by academics and by the interviewed subjects. Online activism means sharing. However, given this, we need to understand how an activist's network is structured for this sharing to be effective, at least from a quantitative point of view. From Spadoni and Cavallo (2010) I borrowed the definition of "significant player", which is to say he/she who contributes to "collaborative learning" and to the development of a "collective intelligence" through a well-structured network of contacts and of discussions built up online. No doubt, some of the subjects observed during these months of work, such as Giacomo, Francesco, Dimitri, Elia and Eliana, have managed to create a network of a certain importance. Dozens of topics discussed, hundreds of comments received, a high recognition of their activities by their contacts on the Social Network who, in turn, profusely posted on the subjects' timelines. How can we consider these numbers "good numbers"? In my opinion, by keeping in mind some aspects of this phenomenon on a national level. We know from statistical reports that the percentages of young people active in politics or as volunteers are very low (respectively, little less than 5% and little less than 10%). The ten subjects of this research then represent the sample of a "niche" reality. In turn, these boys and girls are in contact on the web with certain percentages of young people interested in socio-cultural themes (a different percentage for each of the ten subjects, to be found in chapter 5 of this work). So we do have the sample of a "niche" reality in contact with a percentage of other young people who are, if not engaged, at least interested in the issues in question. All these young people, all together, publish dozens of posts of different kinds and hundreds of comments. Some dozens of contacts on the Social Network post on the observed subjects' timelines material regarding the topics in question and also materials regarding the subjects' actual activism, this way recognizing them a role, also institutional, in the engagements of the single subjects observed.

It's certainly more difficult to derive the degree of "collaborative learning" or of "collective intelligence": these are questions that would require a dedicated research work also based on

learning methods and skills, a work that cannot be carried out here. What is certain is that the tools to allow this sort of learning or collective intelligence do exist. The subjects and their contacts post materials of different kinds and coming from different sources, institutional and not, personal considerations and statements from Parties, direct experiences and comments that originate from journalistic in-depth analysis. The continuous sharing of articles, essays, testimonies, videos, images, certainly represent a good basis which to build a collaborative learning on and the personal experiences of the subjects, as activists, represent a testimony by those who work from the inside, who daily “get their hands dirty” with *doing* politics and social activities, who confront themselves both with the Institution which they belong to and with “the others”, in the streets.

To quote Harrebye (2011), we also saw that “activism”, if only limited to a protest or a demonstration, doesn’t bring any changes on a political or social level if it doesn’t actually turn into a political *doing*, into a relationship, a dialogue with Institutions. Nine out of ten of the subjects are members of political groups or Associations and meet this requirement. Their activity is not limited to occasional demonstrations in the squares but is a continual activity within an Institution that presents its motions according to the methods considered by democracy.

We should also consider that the access to information is one of the basis of this democratic process¹ and that the sharing of materials that the media activists actually do could represent a good element of access to information, at least potentially. As a matter of fact, if the official information services can be related to certain Parties or Governments, the web - if used in a skilful way - can grant, on the other hand, access to other unofficial sources, such as those of the direct experience of the subjects who – I shall stress – do also act as information creators on the web.

The second issue in question in this research work concerns the relationship between online and offline activities carried out by the subjects. The observation both of the communication on their Facebook profiles and of a number of offline events, confirmed what had already been expressed by many academics about the anachronism of the juxtaposition of “real” and “virtual”. The Internet is part of daily reality but does not replace it, as clearly and strongly stated also by the interviewed subjects. Activism must be done in the streets, in close contact with people, discussing face to face, facing the complexity of the issues out of the Facebook or Twitter environments, that limit the number of words that one can write. Actually, those who limit their activism to “online activism” are considered as people alienated from reality.

Despite this, these media are essential. A megaphone that facilitates the organization of events, the contact with as many people as possible in the least possible time, but with the

consciousness that you need to be able to communicate and use the tools of social networking to attract attention. Also knowing that not all media are the same and the web allows a simplified access both to the fruition and the production of news, while other media, such as television, are more institutionalized and economically demanding. Once you've paid for the connection, the Internet is free.

In the case of these activists, their identities remain the same too, they show no masks: each one of them appears on his/her own profile with first and last name, picture and political/social membership. In many cases, the cover photo of their profiles is the logo of some campaign they are following, the poster of some electoral communication, as well as their profile picture is, sometimes, the photo of their leader, as a sign of support, or the symbol of their Party, or a picture of the subject carrying out his/her activism, for example during a rally or a flash mob. In other words, an almost total adhesion to their cause.

The third issue taken into consideration by this study is education, the significant experience that turned a young man or woman into a media activist: what the key moments for a choice of active citizenship and activism communicated through the media were or may have been.

First let's see sociopolitical commitment. If we follow a chronologic path in the lives of the interviewed subjects, the first step happens in the family. Four out of five of the young interviewees tell about debates on these issues in their families. By recovering a datum emerged from the closed-question questionnaires given to all the 10 subjects, I'd like to remind that 37% of the parents result to be engaged in sociopolitical activities as well. The parents' activism is not in itself a key element, given that 63% of them appear not to be engaged in activism whereas their children are. What seems to be more significant is the datum showing that 18 parents out of 19 have an educational qualification ranging from high-school diploma to university degree or Ph.D. An element which can appear even more significant if we consider that 9 out of 10 subjects are university students but with two particular characteristics. The first one is that all of them are attending or have attended liberal studies, the second one is that 30% of them have flunked one or more years, while 60% of them have had educational debts. It follows that the school results, in the subjects' case, are not forcedly a binding element, whereas a liberal education seems to be so.

For some of the interviewed subjects, the Scout group was a second formative place. On a general level, the pedagogical specificity of Scouts² is to put yourself into play, to face your fears.

In particular, for Elena and Eliana, their experience with Scouts put them in contact with destitute situations, also initiating them to a journey of dedication to the others.

The next step is school and here the question is quite wide. Not all schools have politically or socially prepared these subjects. Some of them claim that they received no support whatsoever at school in their sociopolitical interest, but three of them actually did. For two of the five interviewees, school was even fundamental. Francesco and Elena attended the same Humanities High School. Eliana comes from a different school. There are some differences between the two High Schools. The first one, Francesco and Elena's High School, is an openly politically-sided environment where political issues are discussed and where doors are opened to social activism by inviting the Associations working in the area to talk to the students. According to Francesco, the nature of that High School itself, with the study of the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, the cradles of Western democracies, is an essential element. You can't study the history of the civilization that invented democracy without feeling politically involved.

The High School attended by Eliana was different, it wasn't a promoter of activities, but it was ready to welcome them when the girl would propose them to the teachers.

What's more, school became a special political place for Francesco and Elena during students' occupations, with the self-management of didactic and non-didactic activities. In these occasions, the two students organized some events, inviting political representatives and journalists working against Mafia (in particular G. A., one of the key informants of this research work) and were able to have political and social debates with the group of peers. Moreover, a handover took also place: as the older ones finished school, the younger ones took their place in school activism.

In addition to Francesco and Elena, by watching the Facebook profiles and taking into consideration the data of the closed-question questionnaire, we should register that Giacomo attended the same High School as the two above-mentioned subjects. During an occupation, Giacomo organized a meeting between Maurizio Landini, the National Secretary of Cgil and the students.

School occupation, the management of this public space where students spend a good part of their day, when used for these purposes represented for the young people a place of exchange and considerations, of education and commitment that appears extremely useful.

However, here we talk about one High School only. What happens in the other schools? Bertolini (2003) talks of a crisis both of Politics and of School. The academic sees the cause of the crisis of school, of education, in the teachers' surrender, as they haven't been able to welcome the social changes that happened in the post-fascism years, such as school access by the masses of all origins and social levels and the diffusion of mass media in the houses. After a first period of educational

willingness, the latter turned into means for propaganda and marketing but were not taken into enough consideration and faced with criticism. In more recent years, this surrender would have turned into a compliant attitude in front of a crisis of welfare and the constant cuts decided by the various Governments that followed one another.

So, is this High School a special case? How many special cases are there in our Country? If the teachers' specific involvement is a hardly calculable datum, the elections within the schools are a fact and can represent a first political experience for young people, as it was for Francesco and for Giacomo, both elected by their schoolmates to represent them in the Provincial Student Council. A first step towards a choice of "official" activism that finds a space in school.

The third educational moment, always trying to follow a chronological order in the subjects' lives, is the specific education received once they joined their Parties or Associations. In the case of Amnesty, we talk about real "camps", groups who have debates about the activities and the emotions involved.

On the other hand, Dimitri and Elena didn't receive any specific education from their Party, which doesn't have a youth section, but the constant contact with adults and their experience led them to their present consciousness. In Elena's case, who's also engaged in voluntary activities in the women's prison, some education meetings were organized by the Association that takes the volunteers to work in prison.

The luckiest one in this sense was Francesco, perhaps a member of a more structured Party, who benefited from an education project for the members of the youth section, that took him both in Europe and in Rome in the PD headquarters and sections.

One last element that I find important to point out is the moment of the beginning of these subjects' activity. Although they have been involved in the research when they already were 18 and over, their interest for sociopolitical issues is far earlier and goes back to the period between secondary and high school, therefore between the age of 13 and 14, with a real start around 16. About the same age as the two key informants of this work. Therefore, we can consider a kind of "preparatory" period to sociopolitical activity in which the key is the discussion of the above-mentioned topics in the family.

Given the education element, I also tried to investigate the sense, the meaning, the value – phenomenologically speaking, that these activities take for these subjects. Starting from a conversation about the origins of their activism and ending up asking them a "practical" goal projected into the future, I talked in depth with the subjects about what the meaning of

sociopolitical commitment was in their lives. While somebody has a clear goal, such as becoming a member of the Parliament to have the power, the practical chance to change things, somebody else refuses to be caged into one single goal but, being well aware of being part of a whole and that changes can be very long to accomplish, decides that his goal is to be at the disposal of that change for those who will come after him. A further goal, actually common to everybody, is to do good to others, to put yourself at the disposal of the utopia of a better world where every individual's human rights are respected. So, the goals of the young people of the first decade of 2000 are actually not so different from those of the young people who followed the movements of the Fifties, of '68, of '77; nor from those of the People of Fax or of the young people at the G8 in Genoa or of the two key informants of this study. The goal remains *the best world possible*, the mean is activism. Sometimes there are results, such as the modifications in Family Law and the promulgation of the Workers' Statute, following the movements of the Sixties and Seventies, or the success of a social campaign, or the good results of an election; sometimes there aren't, but change takes a long time and these young people have put themselves at its disposal. What does this give them? What meaning does it take in their lives? The desire to leave a "mark on the Earth", quoting Francesco, the way they feel by taking care of other people.

The last question examined concerns education in the field of media. From the in-depth interviews, a self-taught education results in all the investigated cases. I'd like to remind that they're 5 out of 10. None of the interviewees recognizes a role in their media education neither to school nor to their families. The results of the closed-question questionnaires show a massive presence of communication media both in the family and in their room, and in their own house when the subjects don't live with their family. So, the availability of the media is a basic datum. These subjects suffer no digital divide, neither the economic nor the cultural one. They have access to all media, they use them, mix them and, in some cases, do create texts in turn. The testimonies show a direct, practical, manual experience, made easier by the very nature of the media, created to be immediate, logic, of easy interpretation, in short "usable". If on one hand we are nowadays used not to expect much from school (but I will deal with this issue in a more detailed way later), on the other hand we have become used to think about an extremely strong role of media education among peers. But the latter, from the testimonies received, seem to be great absentees too. The peers are only useful to media education to the extent that "everybody uses Facebook" and if you want to communicate with them you need to join them in that same space. The rest would come as a consequence, from the usability, the easiness, the actual intuitiveness of these systems. This is what emerges from the interviews.

But do the subjects see themselves as media activists? In my work as media educator, I've often met people who, for example in a school, were in charge of the theatre workshop, of journalism, of videos, etc. Every time I'd heard them say, "You know, I used to be an actor, a journalist, a filmmaker. All of a sudden I've become a media-educator!" This always made me smile. In my opinion this represents, in the most simple way, the distance that exists between those who practically "do", getting their hands dirty, working with young people, and those who "meditate" in what is being done. Both these things are equally necessary for education but a communication gap seems to remain.

The same seems to happen with the definition of media activist, or at least it happened with the subjects of this research. We saw that academics give many definitions of media activist and media activism, and I actually reported some of them in this study; but when you actually happen to ask subjects who "should be" media activists by "definition", such as the 10 people involved in this study, you realize that they don't always think of themselves as such... When I asked them, "Do you consider yourself a media activist?" some of them had to think about it, find a definition of media activist before answering. Some of them answered, "more no than yes", others with a simple "Uhhmmm", and others are sure that they are. What happens in these cases? Or what do we deduce from the subjects' answers and from their idea of media activism? Apart from definitions, this is a practical question. Activism implies – I will repeat the concept once again – getting your hands dirty in the act of doing, discussing or debating excitedly with the others, working, studying, committing yourself, putting your face in it. These are all expressions used by the interviewees. These are all things that these ten subjects followed online and offline put into action by putting the media element on another level. The two terms have a different essence in the concept of media-activism of these subjects. Activism means doing, while media means sharing, information, exchange, that we actually know have a significant importance in what was defined as collaborative learning or collective intelligence. But once more, these subjects start off with doing. Elena's definition is very interesting: online activity is the advertising poster of offline activity.

But what role should school have in media education? There's a huge number of indications regarding young people's right to be put in the condition to avail information, to use the media, to be taught their languages. From the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to the Moratti Law that proclaimed the importance of three main subjects, English, Computer Science and enterprise, to the Suggestions of the document by Minister Fioroni that indicated a first way to include the study of the media at school. But in which ways has this study of the media been carried out in our schools? During the years, several courses have been launched, of all kinds. On a national level, the

project Classes 2.0 had great emphasis and brought a number of devices in the schools, in particular an IWB in every class participating in the project. But what is the role that school has to play – if any – as regards the media? Bertolini (2003) was already lamenting the absence of school in a critical reading of TV messages and, in the same text, also a useless, an-end-to-itself technicality. Many computer experimentations in many classes resulted in big expenses for computers and devices and little attention - and even less funds - to their maintenance and updating, creating a hardly sustainable situation with machineries left to grow old in the computer rooms³. A condition in which, in the binomial media-education, school seems to pursue the media neglecting the educational side. A chase after the latest App (where the funds allow it) that leaves the educational aspect aside with the exception of such external projects created more or less ad hoc as a class paper or a video, that tend anyway to focus their attention on “grammatical” questions more than on a true critical media education.

What do we mean by critical education? Basically what, in the course of time, many authors and academics of this field have indicated, among which D. Buckingham in his *Media Education* or P. Rivoltella, from Italy, just to name a few of many who have been dealing with these topics all around the world. Media education should be considered under its various aspects: “production”, “language”, “representation” and “public” (Buckingham, 2003). This means - as already outlined in some way in chapter 6 of this work – being able to read and write the media, knowing what market, Party, Government, society has produced a certain message and why, recognizing the language and being able to tell the difference between an article, an advertisement, a film of a certain kind and addressed to a certain target and so on, being aware that the message is not “reality” but a representation of reality, not a “window on the world” but a “cut-out” of the world and being able to recognize the segment of audience to which the message is addressed, the specific target identified by the producers of a certain message. I’d like to remind that the five interviewed subjects, although being skilled web users and, in some cases, creators of text, know very little about the profiling that categorizes them into market segments or the “Internet Bubble” that encloses them into a system which is always the same. Only by facing the complexity of the media structure we can think of developing a critical sense and this cannot happen if school limits itself to chasing the latest technology. A useless chase, in which school already starts off as a loser because, in my personal opinion, that is not its role. In my opinion, the role of school is to fight against the social and economic barriers that create differences in the subjects’ education and learning. And it’s also to give everyone, in a public context, the same tools and educational experiences that would help the students to live in their society and in their times. To educate active citizens in the above-mentioned

ways and to shape a person with a critical ability, able to read the messages surrounding him/her irrespective of their coming from a printed newspaper or from the web.

The future of this research. Is a spillover on the territory possible?

This research brought to light several issues, together with a huge amount of data. A first issue that could be further analyzed in another work is women's participation in politics. We saw that of 5 politically engaged subjects only one is a girl, while in the field of social volunteerism, 5 out of 5 are girls. Is there a gender issue? And if so, how does it work? Why does it exist?

This is not the only question raised by this study. A second question is the achievement of the goals of activism. A longitudinal study that would follow an activism project from its planning to its end in order to evaluate its effectiveness, would not only be an interesting path but it would allow to trace a course of education to activism, to citizenship, more focused on the results. Let's always keep in mind the low percentages of political commitment among our youth, deriving from national reports, in addition to the great percentages of abstentionism from voting in Italy in general, which was 52% for the last elections.

The key element is the "active citizenship", but we need to clarify what we do mean by this term in a society that defines itself as "democratic". An "active citizenship" wants information, activation, mobilization, a relationship with the Institutions, it doesn't limit itself to demanding rights and accepting duties, but does act within a dialogue, a negotiation. In these terms, Social Media may represent an important tool both for sharing and thinking and organizing activism itself⁴. As we saw, the subjects of this research meet these criteria: they do share, inform, think, create contents in turn, participate in the squares and inside Institutions and Associations.

Therefore, the next step is that activism must lead to a change, to a result (Tufte, 2013). Does this happen in the case of the subjects involved in this research?

Nine out of ten of these subjects are part of institutional groups, whether they are Parties or Associations. The five girls members of Amnesty have seen the success of some campaigns and, although it can be said that each volunteer's commitment has certainly contributed to the success of the cause, it is difficult to tell the specific contribution by these five girls, unless an ad-hoc investigation course is made (perhaps).

In the case of student demonstrations, we saw a stop to the Aprea Decree, but we can't establish - unless we make a careful reconnaissance and studies on the legislative process of that specific Decree - whether there is a causality between the two things.

Francesco, Dimitri and Elena have worked for election campaigns: also in this case it is difficult to evaluate the success of their activity. Of course, if the candidates supported by both of them had won the General Elections in 2013, it would have been easier to answer. This didn't happen, but does this spoil the quality of the work carried out or the result achieved anyways?⁵ We cannot know what would have happened without the commitment of all those who, together with these three subjects, contributed to the election campaign with their activity. As well as it is difficult to “weigh” the contribution of these three young people – who actually gave their contribution – who tried to achieve the goal of a Center-Left Government after years of a Right-wing Government.

Given all the elements and the data emerged from this study, it would be advantageous that these wouldn't remain in a university archive but could be developed into projects on the territory aiming at developing an active citizenship and an informed use of communication media to try to raise the percentages of less than 5% of 21 year olds engaged in politics and less than 10% of 21 year olds engaged in volunteerism. Also in order to recover the political dimension strictly interconnected with education that Bertolini (2003) talks about, even considering useless a subject who is not interested in the issues of his/her community, and to try to get back an educational role in the political education of young generations.

¹ Tufte T., Wildermuth N., Hansen-Skovmoes A. S. Mitullah W., (2013), *Speaking up and talking back? Media, Empowerment and Civic Engagement among East and Southern African Youth*, University of Gothenburg, Nordicom, p. 12.

² Farné R., (1989), *La scuola di "Irene". Pace e guerra in educazione*, Firenze, La Nuova Italia

³ Capobianco A. *Media Education nella scuola dell'obbligo* in Farné R., (a cura di) *Media Education nella scuola dell'obbligo* in "Media Education – Studi, ricerche e buone pratiche", n. 2, Edizioni Erickson, Trento, 2010, 145-192; Capobianco A., Capecchi S. *Identità della media education: fra teoria e pratica*, *Ivi* pp. 22-39; Capobianco A., *Analisi dei dati: la scuola primaria*, *Ivi*, pp. 63-83; Capobianco A., Tirota R., *Analisi dei dati: i dirigenti scolastici*, pp. 109-117.

⁴ *Ivi*, p. 19-34

⁵ In the General Elections of 2013, the Sel Party, supported by Dimitri with his activity, obtained a percentage of 3.20% at the Chamber of Deputies that gave it 37 seats, while it obtained a 2.97% at the Senate with 7 seats. The Democratic Party, supported by Francesco, obtained 25.42% of the votes at the Chamber of Deputies that gave it 292 seats and 27.43% at the Senate for a total of 105 seats. These votes were not enough to guarantee a stable government to the Country, due to the lack of a majority in the Senate for the Center-Left coalition to which these two Parties belonged. For this reason a broad-based technical Government was chosen, led by a Prime Minister from the Democratic Party. In general, although having obtained the relative majority of the votes, the Center-Left coalition was considered a loser in the Elections. Source:

<http://www.ilsole24ore.com/speciali/2013/elezioni/risultati/politiche/static/italia.shtml>, date of last access 01.03.2014.

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Intervista a M. T., media attivista

La cornice del media attivismo, una contestualizzazione. Cosa sono il media attivismo e il media attivista nelle definizioni di M. T., media attivista.

Ti posso dire che il media attivismo per quello che riguarda la mia biografia non è stata una pratica che ho perseguito coscientemente. Facevo delle cose lo facevo con gli strumenti che sapevo utilizzare meglio e poi ho scoperto che quella pratica era media attivismo. La prima volta che ho usato il computer per fare una cosa politica è stato quando avevo circa 13 anni. Feci una raccolta di figurine del wwf che propose di tesserarmi. Erano tematiche condivise nella mia famiglia e quindi mi sono tesserato. Dalle mie parti nacque l'idea di fondare un club del wwf che aveva anche uno scopo nell'immediato perché stavano per cementare un'ansa naturale che non era un parco ma era un bel posto dove volevano fare passare una strada. Avevo un elenco su carta di tutti i soci della zona che avrei dovuto contattare. All'epoca sapevo usare un data base relazionale, quello che dovevo fare era inserire tutti i nominativi in questo data base per poi andare a contattarli fisicamente uno a uno per chiedere il loro impegno. Il posto è ancora lì, quindi la battaglia è stata vinta. Si trattava di avere un obiettivo e il data base era uno strumento per perseguirlo. Non tutti avevano quegli strumenti all'epoca, erano gli strumenti lavorativi di mio padre. Però ero portato per usarli, per me era incredibile avere uno strumento che mi consentisse di cercare velocemente tutte le persone residenti nello stesso posto attraverso un cap o gli indirizzi adiacenti per ridurre gli spostamenti. Era geniale all'epoca. Non sapevo come chiamarlo al momento, però ho capito che era media attivismo e l'ho scoperto da lì a 5 anni ... ho fatto il mio primo accesso in rete con l'arrivo all'Università di Bologna. E' stato il livello di cambiamento Non è proprio vero che il media attivismo comincia con il G8. Questo viene spiegato in un libro di Arturo di Corinto che si chiama *Hactivism*¹ che è stato scritto negli anni 90 e che fa un elenco di pratiche che in quel momento mi furono utili

Il media attivismo come pratica casuale

Prima esperienza di media attivismo a 13 anni

Primo strumento disponibile, data base relazionale

La prima battaglia da media attivista è vinta

per capire cosa facevano altri che avevano le mie stesse attitudini e scoprire analogie tra quello che facevo io e quello che facevano gli altri che avevano sostanzialmente la stessa idea di come si stava al mondo. Le pratiche erano in quel momento di utilizzo delle prime reti amatoriali per far girare i messaggi. Ce ne erano di due tipi: una era (manca in registrazione) e Telematica per la Pace di Mario Scotti Dubitosi e (manca in registrazione) Davide che in qualche maniera raccontano la scena italiana dentro la scena internazionale perché poi la rete internet come la conosciamo adesso non esisteva era essenzialmente fatta di posta elettronica e qualche pagina web molto spartana, chi si muoveva in quel momento però intuiva una potenzialità ma ci si rivolgeva a una elite soprattutto tecnici informatici che molto spesso accedevano a internet a lavoro o all'università perché i costi erano ancora sostenuti. Leggendo questi due libri mi sono reso conto di cosa facevano gli altri di interessante che avevano la stessa attitudine che sentivi tu di rapportarti col mondo per provare a cambiare alcune cose e lì ho scoperto, per esempio, che si potevano fare pagine web, siti internet, mailing list organizzare indirizzari di persone a cui mandare delle comunicazioni periodiche, come iscriversi a bollettini per ricevere notizie che non avresti ricevuto altrimenti, come scrivere dei bollettini e diramarli. Questa è sostanzialmente l'origine. Su Telematica della pace è spiegato anche un aspetto secondo me interessante di come questa cosa nasce all'interno delle primissime reti amatoriali che erano le bds che concettualmente era parallela all'internet che conosciamo perché funzionava attraverso computer che erano a casa, attraverso linee telefoniche avevano un livello di diffusione assolutamente locale perché in quel momento ci si collegava con il modem e le telefonate costavano come le chiamate urbane e inter-urbane.

Di quali anni parliamo?

Anni '90, la X-Link è nata nel 91.

Che cosa è X-Link?

Condividere una idea di "stare al mondo" nelle pratiche

Contesto tecnologico dell'inizio attività di media attivista

Si iniziano a intuire le potenzialità del mezzo

Il mezzo internet è ancora per pochi

Attitudine a rapportarsi col mondo per "cambiare le cose"

L'origine dell'attivismo è dato dalla diffusione di comunicazioni periodiche

Era un network eco-pacifista, la dba era precedente fine anni '70. I primi computer amatoriali messi in casa da alcune persone che permettevano ad altre persone di connettersi attraverso il telefono al proprio computer per scambiarsi messaggi nel senso che quella diventava una specie di bacheca dove tu mandavi un messaggio e questo veniva diffuso alle altre persone che si collegavano a quel computer. Tutto questo avveniva in maniera asincrona significa che mandavi una mail attraverso questo sistema ma non era un invio in tempo reale. Se eri a Roma e dovevi mandare una mail a uno di Milano, ti collegavi a una dba di Roma e lasciavi un messaggio nottetempo la dba di Roma si collegava a quella di Milano, la persona che era a Milano si collegava il giorno dopo o nei giorni successivi e leggeva il messaggio.

Sembra preistoria

Sembra preistoria, significa che una mail arrivava poco prima di una lettera cartacea con Poste Italiane però era il primo modo di comunicare. Il Network X-Link utilizza questo sistema perché durante la prima guerra in Iraq i pacifisti usavano la prima tecnologia che era disponibile in quel momento che erano i fax che agli inizi degli anni '90 ebbero una buona diffusione tanto è che durante Tangentopoli, La Repubblica si inventò il termine di "Il popolo dei fax". Le persone manifestavano il loro sdegno verso le notizie di persone corrotte, indagate, inquisite mandando fax ai giornali e i media-attivisti che si opponevano alle guerre in Iraq e in Kuwait utilizzavano il fax fino a che non nasce X-Link.

Sostanzialmente queste tecnologie potevano servire a questi scopi anche lì però si può andare più indietro, c'è un libro che si chiama Hacker di Steve Levì, che spiega come negli anni '60 con la nascita del primo nodo di quella che poi è diventata la rete internet e la diffusione dei computer auto costruiti dagli smanettoni a questa gente che negli anni '60 partecipavano ai movimenti di protesta veniva l'idea che i computer potessero servire per cambiare il mondo, il computer in quel

Pensare che il computer potesse cambiare il mondo

momento si usava per fare calcoli balistici e a nessuno veniva in mente che sarebbero serviti a far suonare la musica o a vedere dei video. C'è un aneddoto in questo libro che spiega perché a un certo punto si è avuta una visione più ampliata che ha fatto pensare a uno sviluppo di questo tipo: quando un computer fa dei calcoli ci sono delle interferenze elettromagnetiche tanto per cui se tu avvicini una cassa a un computer tu senti delle interferenze nella cassa. Uno di questi informatici scopre che facendo certi calcoli ottiene tutte le 7 note musicali e questo si inventa una sequenza di calcoli che da come risultato una canzone dei Beatles perché in quel momento si ascoltavano i Beatles e pensava che questi primi computer che occupavano interi piani di edifici ed erano a disposizione delle università. Fu il primo momento in cui si pensò che al computer si potesse far fare quello che si voleva. La capacità di visione di queste persone, tra cui **Bill Gates e Steve Jobs** che vengono da quell'ambiente. La nascita del media attivismo si perde nella notte dell'informatica e si trova sempre qualcuno che ti dice che qualsiasi tecnologia sia stata inventata è stata usata da qualcuno in modo diverso da come era stata concepita. Di fatto quello che conosciamo oggi come media attivismo nasce al G8 di Genova perché, si può fare questa divisione, fino al G8 di Genova la disponibilità dei computer che avevano le persone avevano una capacità di calcolo tale per cui guardavi qualche pagina internet per guardare la posta e stop. **Nel 2001 esce Windows XP, dove XP sta per Experience** perché c'è un paradigma che inventano alla Microsoft che si rifaceva allo spirito dei tempi i computer non dovevano più essere lo strumento di lavoro che spostava la tua scrivania sul desktop, **XP significa che un computer deve portarti dentro a un'esperienza e nell'esperienza ci sono le cose personali delle persone perché con XP tu puoi cominciare a vedere i video con una certa qualità, cominci a vedere le immagini con una certa qualità...** Tra la fine degli anni '90 e il 2000 iniziano a diffondersi questi primi algoritmi di compressione dati che permettono la nascita dei formati MP3 e JPG

I primi “smanettoni”

XP e il G8

XP = Experience

e questa è una svolta storica perché fino a quel momento se uno voleva fare un'immagine doveva avere computer molto potenti e soprattutto grandi immagini prendevano molto spazio sul computer. Il quel momento un hard disk medio era di 40 MB che oggi ci fa ridere, però 40 MB voleva dire che se tu avevi una sola immagine di 1 MB avevi tempi lunghissimi per aprirla. Con i computer che escono all'inizio del 2001 equipaggiati con XP potevi sentire la musica e vedere le foto di una certa qualità. Quindi l'attinenza con il G8 c'è perché con il G8, il concetto di media che sta nel media-attivismo sta nella possibilità di utilizzare questi strumenti per diffondere informazioni di un certo livello. Noi siamo, e non da quel momento, una società che soprattutto si è formata sull'immagine e potevamo avere degli strumenti a basso costo diffondevano immagini e suono diventava fondamentale se tu volevi fare un certo racconto della realtà. Di più, sempre alla fine degli anni '90 e all'inizio del 2000 si diffondono anche le prime tecnologie mobili, i cellulari che consentono alle radio indipendenti di poter fare cronache in diretta chiamando qualcuno che è sul posto e mettere in radio. Ad esempio, al G8 di Genova in Radio Gap che è un network di radio indipendenti che sostanzialmente raccolgono voci dalle manifestazioni chiamando la gente al cellulare. Tant'è che si temeva che le Istituzioni tagliassero le connessioni gsm, cosa che invece non succede perché tutti usavamo il cellulare. Il media attivismo esiste da molto prima, in Italia possiamo dire dagli anni '90 e la motivazione che prendeva le mosse da una scena internazionale, perché questa cosa delle bds nasce in America, si diffonde in Europa e arriva da noi in questo modo. Dagli inizi degli anni 00, grazie ai nuovi computer e alle nuove tecnologie che si diffondono, come ad esempio le telecamere digitali, che sono state una cosa fondamentale a Seattle dove la gente andava in manifestazione, filmava quello che succedeva in piazza e dopo un'ora il girato era disponibile in rete. Anche questo è raccontato in un altro libro che circola in rete, scritto di

Disponibilità di mezzi economicamente accessibili per raccontare la realtà

Matteo Pasquinelli che si chiama Media Activism².

Io leggevo questi libri andando alla ricerca di persone che ... intanto chi fa questo lavoro è curioso e vuole imparare ciò che non sa da chi può insegnartelo

Quale lavoro? Quello dell'informatico o dell'attivista?

No, l'attivismo non è un lavoro, è una attività che può impegnarti anche diverse ore ma soldi se ne vedono davvero pochi. Poi in realtà, è inutile negare che quello che so fare lo faccio perché ho passato molte ore lì e ho imparato delle cose. Il ragazzo che ha imparato a suonare la canzone dei Beatles con il computer ha fatto ricerca, non istituzionale, non nei canoni della ricerca, non sarà riconosciuta ma ha fatto ricerca a tutti gli effetti. E così per le prime distribuzioni di Linux, è una storia dei primi anni '90 tu potevi mettere sul tuo pc Linux ed erano persone che facevano ricerca, con materiale distribuito attraverso le dba dove gente ha perso diottrie a studiare manuali sul video, che non stampavi perché avere una stampante era costoso, per imparare. Dentro tutto questo c'era una benzina inesauribile che era la passione.

Io ero dentro questo flusso come molti altri. Se dovessi dire che questa era una cifra di tutta una generazione, questo no. La mia generazione è quella cresciuta con i primi computer, Commodore 64, Atari o Amiga a seconda di come ti dividevi ma quelli erano per giocare. A casa avevo a disposizione un Net che mio padre usava per lavoro. La mia attitudine nasce dal fatto che lui aveva a casa un programma che serviva per recuperare dati da una sonda che li inviava attraverso una radio. C'era un programmino che raccoglieva i dati che aveva un codice visibile e quello che io ho fatto è stato leggere il suo codice per capire come funzionava. Tu prendi una cosa che ha una serie di istruzioni, cominci a modificarne una e vedi che effetto che fa. I media attivisti prendono questi aggeggi li smontano e li rimontano per vedere se possono migliorarli, io ho cominciato a

L'attivismo è un impegno ma non un lavoro

Diversi contesti di ricerca, non istituzionali

Cosa fanno i media attivisti

lavorare prendendo un programma scritto da qualcun altro e modificandolo.

Quindi il media attivismo sta con l'informatica? Con il computer? I giornalisti morti ammazzati dalla mafia perché scrivevano nomi e cognomi non sono media attivisti?

Io ti ho raccontato la storia, parlavamo di origini.

Quello che succede dopo è come quello che succede con le automobili, le prime erano guidate da persone che le avevano viste costruire o le avevano progettate, le seconde sono guidate dai meccanici che erano quelli che sapevano metterci le mani. Oggi le automobili sono guidate da persone che non hanno idea di come funzionino ma le guidano. Con l'informatica è successa la stessa cosa, i primi erano utilizzati da chi li aveva inventati ma tu oggi lo usi senza sapere come funziona. Perché il concetto di XP è quello di farti fare un'esperienza, che poi per te può essere anche lavorativa, allora puoi scrivere, puoi impaginare. Queste cose sono servite a chi hanno altre attitudini rispetto agli informatici ma ti consente di fare bene il tuo lavoro o di vivere la tua esperienza. Tant'è che ci sono persone, tu mi parli di antimafia, ci sono persone come Riccardo Diodes (?) che è un giornalista siciliano che faceva un bollettino telematico in cui potevi essere inserito per ricevere informazioni via mail e lui faceva antimafia in quel modo in quel momento. Su Peace-Link c'è una lista antimafia di persone che se volevano ricevere informazioni le trovavano lì, non dovevi essere un tecnico informatico per usare questi strumenti, ovvero cominciavano a non essere più strumenti per soli tecnici informatici e soprattutto la scena del media attivismo era una scena dove il tuo compito non era tanto acquisire conoscenze per te ma per aiutare chi non sa fare perché non resti fuori.

Ora siamo a una terza fase, sono pratiche sociali che si stratificano l'idea è che entra nelle pratiche comuni della società, ti faccio un esempio, seguendo questi temi mi sono appassionato di Copy Left³ e software libero, nelle persone è cambiata l'attitudine perché se

L'usabilità dei mezzi informatici

Media attivismo = condivisione

tu ora posti un'immagine senza troppi problemi, che si diffonde in migliaia di copie e senza un costo, un tempo si pensava che questo avrebbe significato la morte dell'autore. La pratica sociale che si diffonde è quella che ora caratterizza i ragazzini che prendono, copiano e incollano quello che vogliono senza più citare niente e nessuno perché è **il digitale nasce perché si diffonda la conoscenza ai costi più bassi possibili**. Questo crea anche altri problemi, però in prima battuta che fa in modo che tutti si debbano registrare e che ci sia questa cosa qui e cioè che di quella cosa lì tu ti devi occupare, viene diffusa, perché ogni ragazzino prende tutto quello che vuole, copia e incolla. Diventa un problema quando devono fare dei lavori a casa, dei compiti adesso c'è il problema che Wikipedia diventa una fonte di citazione pressoché inesauribile e tu non hai più l'attitudine, nessuno gliela insegna, di citare la fonte e questo è un dato di fatto.

Dal punto di vista del media attivismo, se tu vuoi diffondere un messaggio il modo migliore non è tanto diffonderlo tu ma creare un contesto nel quale tu lo diffondi a una rete di contatti e questa lo diffonde ad altre reti in maniera virale, devi sfruttare dei meccanismi di rete in modo che la trasmissione diventi multi cast. La diffusione broad cast è quella della tv dove c'è una fonte e molteplici ricettori e la diffusione multi cast ci sono più fonti e molteplici ricettori e questa cosa è resa possibile grazie al fatto che il digitale pervade tutti, qualsiasi tecnologia abbiamo in mano è digitale anche quando non lo sappiamo. I telefoni usano tecnologia digitale, non si tratta solo di web o la posta elettronica ma le telefonate che facciamo, la tv è digitale. Gli smartphone sono piccoli computer digitali. Si apre uno scenario in cui chiunque possieda uno strumento del genere può fare il media attivista, tutto il contesto che si è creato intorno **ti dice che tu puoi essere un produttore e non solo più un ricettore passivo questa cosa crea anche un'attenzione morbosa che è voluta.** Lo You di YouTube è una proiezione del tuo ego. Sei tu quello che può fare un qualsiasi video e diffonderlo a una rete che è potenzialmente di tre miliardi di persone. Quando nel 2006 Time mette

Digitale abbassa i costi di diffusione dei materiali

Utilizzo di "reti" per la diffusione di materiali e conoscenze

Ognuno è "produttore" di informazione. La degenerazione dello You

l'immagine di una persona qualunque della rete come copertina con sotto uno "You" sta dicendo che tutte le persone della rete possono essere protagonisti. La morbosità qual è? E' che questa cosa non è vera, non è vero che facendo un "Like" sotto il post di qualcuno o facendo un commento o uplodando un video sei protagonista di alcunché. Per essere protagonisti, per essere comunicatori ci vuole altro però di fatto viviamo in un contesto sociale dove tutto quello che viene prodotto fuori ti porta a pensarlo.

Quindi, se volessimo dare una definizione di media attivismo, anche semplificando, potremmo dire che si tratta di diffusione di informazioni?

L'utilizzo dei nuovi media digitali per la comunicazione, che può avere varie accezioni. Per quello che mi riguarda: la comunicazione sociale. Di fatto, il media attivismo è come un abito che puoi dare a questi strumenti per fare qualcosa. Negli anni ho partecipato a vari dibattiti a cui ho partecipato un ragazzo ha raccontato come usa questi strumenti. Lui fa il camionista e ascolta la radio tutto il tempo, soprattutto quei programmi dove c'è ospite un politico che risponde alle domande del pubblico. Ha segnato tutti i numeri di telefono delle varie trasmissioni che segue e quando c'è un politico che vuole bersagliare chiama e fa le domande che ritiene essere scomode per queste persone. E' una pratica da media attivista, col tempo ha anche affinato le cose. I responsabili dei canali radio hanno imparato a riconoscerlo dal numero di telefono e hanno iniziato a non rispondergli più, lui ha cambiato il numero e ha continuato a chiamare. Non solo, capisci che è media attivista perché registra l'audio della domanda e della risposta e lo posta su YouTube così altri possono commentare. E questa cosa ha avuto una portata tale, con lo spirito dei tempi. Io non posso dire che non è media attivismo, non è quello che è nelle mie corde ma che sia media attivismo è fuori discussione. Non è un informatico ma di questi tempi utilizzare questi strumenti è stato

Definizione di Media Attivismo

Il media attivismo per MT

massimamente semplificato che per chiunque uploadare un file su Youtube è facilissimo. Ora non ricordo perfettamente i dati, ma ogni minuto sono postate circa 24 ore di video, è paradossale perché ci sono più filmati di quanto tempo di fruizione potenzialmente hai per vedere. Ma è la tendenza attuale.

Tutto è portato a dire “you” e puoi diventare qualcuno. Cosa effettivamente succede, il fenomeno delle Twitter Star, i blogger, i video che diventano virali e chiamano l’attenzione della tv ti dimostrano che se tu sei bravo e hai degli strumenti che ti permettono di stare in un ambiente dove sono tutti in competizione con gli altri, ti permette di affermarti per le cose che produci.

Questa cosa aiuterà a cambiare il mondo. C’è una discussione su questo, sono tutte persone che usano le tecnologie digitali per poter comunicare qualcosa, che poi questo qualcosa abbia una valenza per cambiare il mondo è tutto da vedere. Soprattutto che lo cambi in meglio è tutto da vedere però che questa cosa sia diffusa e sia ormai entrata nelle corde di una grossa fetta di persone è poco ma sicuro.

Ci sono autori che ritengono internet intrinsecamente democratico, credi sia vero?

Posso risponderti in questo modo, perché c’è stata una mia personale evoluzione delle cose. Che io abbia fatto parte dei tecno-entusiasti è poco ma sicuro, nel senso che non la fai quando ho iniziato a farla io se non vuoi cambiare il mondo. Se pensi diversamente te ne stai a casa a guardare la tv. Che poi al momento questa cosa serva a cambiare il mondo o che ci sia una specie di spirito dentro la rete che automaticamente.... Vale una vecchia definizione, si diceva che elettrificazione + soviet = socialismo. Allora ti potrei dire, rete + attivismo delle persone = il mondo migliore possibile. No, questa cosa non è vera. Questa cosa è contraddittoria come è contraddittoria la vista, esiste chi nella rete fa delle cose interessanti ma anche chi pensa di fare azione attraverso la rete.

Guarda quello che sta succedendo ai dissidenti dei grillini, se Beppe Grillo dice: “tu sei fuori dal movimento perché lo hai tradito”, immediatamente 50, 100, 200

Fenomeni della rete

Strumenti per cambiare il mondo

Si cambia davvero il mondo?

persone vengono sul tuo profilo a insultarti, quella è una pratica di media attivismo ma è agli antipodi di ogni concetto di mondo migliore possibile ci si possa immaginare. Queste cose convivono tutte. ■ Arturo di Corinto che studia questi fenomeni afferma che noi non abbiamo un modello interpretativo che prima ancora di essere modello interpretativo delle tecnologie è modello interpretativo delle relazioni sociali che riesce a dirti che questa cosa fatta in questo modo produce questo risultato che ha questa valenza; fatto in quest'altro modo produce quest'altra valenza. ■ Parlando della rivoluzione araba, diceva che la rete non è diffusa lì come lo è da noi e che questa è stata una costruzione dei media occidentali, il cosiddetto "brain interpretativo dei media occidentali" però che questa cosa abbia permesso a molti di loro di comunicare direttamente con molti di noi, anche questo è vero.

Molti egiziani con molti italiani?

Si, oppure con persone che erano lì, come in Iran con delle comunicazione che hanno funzionato attraverso le diaspore, cioè persone con persone che non erano più in Iran ma avevano contatti con chi c'era e hanno fatto circolare le informazioni. Così anche in Tunisia. C'è un blogger che si chiama XXX (manca in registrazione) che ha scritto un e-book che si chiama "40 km da Tunisi" e ha mostrato come a Tunisi, che è stata una delle prime città in tumulto c'è l'immagine di un camion bruciato che serviva a bruciare i cancelli di una caserma dove le persone sono entrate e hanno messo tutto a ferro e fuoco. XXX Ha mostrato questa immagine a un ragazzo tunisino che vive in Italia e ha ancora contatti con quel posto e racconta in un libro che i movimenti in Tunisia sono precedenti a quelli che hanno raccontato i nostri media come *Primavera Araba*. A questo ragazzo è stata mostrata la foto del camion e gli è stato detto che questa cosa è stata possibile grazie a Internet, e lui ha risposto "Secondo te io sono entrato su un camion e l'ho usato per sfondare i cancelli grazie a Internet? È rude come concetto ma quella foto non è stata una cosa semplice, ti spiega la percezione che abbiamo noi delle

Le altre facce dell'attivismo

Modelli interpretativi delle relazioni sociali

La primavera araba e il brain interpretativo dei media occidentali

La comunicazione attraverso la diaspora

L'attivismo precede l'uso dei media

tecnologie e poi che c'è stato bisogno di chi raccontasse e pubblicasse quelle foto tramite cellulare è poco ma sicuro. A Tunisi una parte consistente delle proteste nascono col video virale del fruttivendolo che si dà fuoco a XXXX Stremato dalle condizioni dure, sociali, nelle quali viveva si dà fuoco e questa cosa è stata il fiammifero in una prateria ormai secca e ha acceso le proteste. Ma parliamo di una situazione già presente prima. Il punto è questo, quello che posso dire da tecno-entusiasta in questo momento preferisco approfondire quelle letture, quelle analisi che mettono un po' in discussione le rappresentazioni solo positive e la cosa interessante è che iniziano a esserci analisi che... Una di queste è di Morzov (?) Analista bielorusso che lavora negli Stati Uniti che ha spiegato per esempio che l'utilizzo dei Social Network nelle dittature ed è interessante intanto perché, per esempio, Twitter e Facebook non sono usati nello stesso modo. C'è un grafico di Vincenzo Cosenza che è molto interessante perché mostra come sono diffusi i SN nei vari continenti. L'Africa, il Brasile, la Russia... hanno un proprio SN. Intanto c'è una differenza culturale, anche sulle questioni estetiche. Non è detto che una certa grafica o un certo colore vadano bene per tutti i gusti o per tutte le persone. L'idea del villaggio globale è molto fuorviante da questo punto di vista. Noi siamo molto centrati su noi stessi, sulla nostra visione occidentale ma altri paesi hanno altre attitudini, altri interessi. Quindi in ogni paese si è evoluto un proprio sistema. I cinesi hanno fatto una cosa che è nelle loro corde rispetto alla evoluzione tecnologia mondiale, vedono visto una cosa che gli piace e la copiano per farne quello che vogliono. Hanno preso Facebook, lo hanno cambiato in una cosa che non è Facebook ma lo sembra e lo hanno dato ai cinesi. I loro vantaggi qual è? E' che se c'è un dissidente dentro Facebook loro sanno subito cosa dice, cosa fa e cosa pensa. Morozov spiega che i gruppi su Facebook sono ottimi gruppi per comunicare ma siccome esiste la pratica che è spiegata in un altro libro che si chiama "Nell'acquario di Facebook" del Collettivo Ippolita, siccome Facebook funziona con la trasparenza radicale

Social Network nel mondo

L'idea del "villaggio globale" è fuorviante

per cui ti iscrivi con nome e cognome che non sono i tuoi sei potenzialmente bannabile perché Facebook vuole che tu sia trasparente. XXX dice che per i dissidenti è una cosa mortale, perché se tu sei in rete con nome e cognome e ti iscrivi a un gruppo di dissidenti, non c'è bisogno della polizia che ti viene a casa a cercare un volantino, c'è un computer centralizzato che dice subito che tu sei un dissidente e che sei rintracciabile per le cose che metti in rete e per le cose che condividi.

Questa cosa è drammatica nei paesi dove ci sono delle dittature ma può avere riscontri sgradevoli anche nell'occidente dove ci sono degli stati di diritto. Tant'è che ora, rispetto alla terza parte del media-attivismo che è quello dello You dove ti puoi permettere di fare quello che vuoi con un cellulare, in Spagna che non è una dittatura ma il movimento del 15 di maggio dell'Occupy sta ragionando su una serie di pratiche per le quali rispetto alle primavere arabe, alle comunicazioni che si scambiano con i vari Occupy in giro per il mondo, per le varie manifestazioni che hanno fatto in piazza... un re-twit, un re-twit cos'è? È che qualcuno scrive e tu diffondi il messaggio che quella persona ha scritto, ma facendo questo ti porti dietro la fonte del messaggio. Diffondere la fonte di un messaggio potenzialmente dirompente mentre c'è una manifestazione in piazza significa mettere nei guai qualcuno, ed è successo perché questi strumenti sono monitorati. Qualche tempo fa L'Espresso ha messo fuori questa notizia che poi è stata smentita, che la polizia italiana aveva un accordo non ufficiale con Facebook per accedere ai profili delle persone senza avere l'autorizzazione della magistratura. La polizia ha poi smentito ma i giornalisti de L'Espresso hanno fatto un'indagine per dire questa cosa qui. Che comunque ci siano delle forme di controllo da questo punto di vista è poco ma sicuro. E comunque se tu non vuoi entrare in quell'ambito lì ci sono 10mila modi per ledere il diritto alla privacy delle persone. Molte delle persone che sono lì sui SN non sanno che le cose che diffondono anche inconsapevolmente possono essere raccolte da terze persone che ne possono fare l'utilizzo che vogliono. Qualche tempo fa il New York

Facebook scopre i dissidenti

Il controllo esercitato in rete

Times ha fatto un'inchiesta sul modo in cui la criminalità organizzata identifica le persone da svaligiare e colpire perché se tu dici su Facebook che stasera partecipi a un evento, loro sanno benissimo quando tu non sei a casa.

Qual è allora l'interesse di un collettivo come quello di Ippolita?

E' l'interesse di un collettivo che viene da una tradizione antica di media-attivismo e adesso che queste cose hanno messo tutti nel circo che non siamo più solo spettatori ma siamo nell'arena con i leoni, dice guarda che se vuoi fare l'addestratore di leoni devi essere preparato o prendi una zampata. Scrive questi libri per spiegare alle persone come stare attenti in rete questa cosa è tanto problematica per le persone adulte quanto per gli adolescenti per i quali può essere devastante. Tante notizie te lo spiegano, c'è stato un gruppo di minorenni che ha aperto un gruppo di appoggio a Riina che non sapeva cosa stavano facendo. I media hanno dato risalto a questa notizia e a ciò è seguito un interesse della Questura che ha identificato questi ragazzi, individuando i minorenni, i minori di 13 anni che non possono avere accesso al Social Network, chiedendo chi avesse dato loro l'accesso, denunciando i genitori per omessa custodia di minori... si sono aperti una serie di scenari inimmaginabili. Non è come guidare la macchina, che se non hai la patente non puoi guidare ma una specie di patente ti serve. Hai un sistema che potenzialmente ti permette di investire le persone e di essere investito e incidenti di questo tipo possono succedere. Quindi, il media attivismo nella sua terza fase comincia a rivedere questo concetto. Queste cose accadono perché abbiamo mezzi che conosciamo pochissimo, Facebook ti cambia le regole della privacy senza dirti nulla e perfino una persona esperta come me che ci sta dentro per due motivi, uno perché è curioso e cerco di capire l'altro è perché ti tocca farlo perché questo è ciò che c'è ora. Avevo messo nella pagina delle informazioni il mio numero di cellulare e un bel giorno me lo sono trovato sul profilo perché Facebook

L'importanza della media literacy

aveva cambiato i livelli di privacy da un giorno all'altro e come è successo a me è successo a molte altre persone. Ancora adesso ho visto persone a cui scrivevo in maniera privata e che mi rispondevano sul mio profilo dimostrando una ignoranza dello strumento e sono incidenti che capitano quando usi cose di cui non conosci il funzionamento. Il problema è che io ho maturato l'idea che in realtà abbiamo costruito un sistema che incentiva incidenti di questo tipo perché il loro è un bisogno mercantile ed economico. Non hanno interesse che le persone utilizzino questi strumenti per chissà cosa ma per manifestare completamente i loro interessi che possono servire per fare sondaggi elettorali, sondaggi di tipo economico, per vedere cosa ti possono vendere... Abbiamo fatto una legge sulla privacy molto restrittiva che addirittura ha fatto un registro delle opposizioni (la registrazione non è chiara) dove se tu non volevi ricevere comunicazioni mettevi il tuo numero di telefono lì sopra e nessuno poteva chiamarti a casa a una cosa dove tu dai le tue informazioni e le prendono non solo i soggetti economici che ti possono vendere qualcosa ma anche soggetti che non sono economici e che non avrebbero nessun titolo per sapere che giornali leggi, che caffè bevi la mattina ma siccome hai scelto di stare dentro quella cosa glielo fai sapere comunque.

Qual è il senso che tu dai al tuo media attivismo?

In questo momento io sono in questa terza fase dove penso che la scelta di un uomo che ha fatto il mio percorso di vita è quello di diffondere la consapevolezza che abbiamo a che fare con degli strumenti che sono interessanti perché effettivamente danno delle grosse potenzialità alle persone quindi in qualche maniera sono la realizzazione di ciò che intendevo negli anni '90 cioè la realizzazione che ognuno di noi avesse degli strumenti in mano che per me sono stati strumenti di conoscenza formidabili, nel senso che ho conoscenze che se non avessi avuto la rete non avrei avuto e questa era una cifra in comune con persone della mia generazione. E questa è contrapposta, non può

L'interesse dei SN non è dell'informazione in se ma per la possibilità di vendere pubblicità

Senso del media-attivismo

essere che ti incastri in una gabbia dorata dove ci sentiamo un po' tutti in competizione con gli altri e dove l'ultimo interesse è quello di costruirsi un'attività in rete che cerca di dimostrare qualcosa ma che fattivamente non fa nulla. Negli Stati Uniti è stato coniato un termine che si chiama **Click Activism**, cos'è? E' quando tu condividi un'immagine. Negli anni '90 si diceva "il bambino del Biafra messo in televisione" che automaticamente commuove le persone, c'è un'intervista fatta a un filosofo di una XXX che sta su un sito che si chiama Mediamente che era una trasmissione degli anni '90 dove si fa un parallelo che da una suggestione molto forte, dice che il prossimo nella società mediatizzata la vince sul vicino. Noi siamo capaci di empatia più verso le persone che vediamo su uno schermo televisivo piuttosto che per le persone che abbiamo sul pianerottolo di casa. Riusciamo a essere trasportati emotivamente più verso le persone che vediamo attraverso lo schermo piuttosto che per le persone che ci sono vicine e questa cosa è enfatizzata dai Sociali Network per cui vediamo un bambino che soffre la fame, con la didascalia scritta da chissà chi, con una immagine forte che ha più a che fare con la pubblicità e non con l'informazione e questa cosa si riempie di "Like" e noi pensiamo che cliccando "Mi piace" abbiamo assolto la nostra funzione, il nostro bisogno di dire che siamo vicini a quella cosa. Questa cosa viene chiamata Click activism, persone che dopo aver cliccato "Mi piace" si sentono vicini a una causa ma in realtà non hanno nulla per quel ragazzino e comunque è tutto da vedere che con il Like hai cambiato l'agenda politica del tuo paese dimostrando che ci sono persone interessate a curare il problema di quel ragazzino piuttosto che altri. In questo momento sono concentrato su un media attivismo che ragiona su quali sono le tendenze; ci sono tendenze che annunciano la distopia e altre che annunciano l'utopia. Quelle che annunciano la distopia sono quelle di cui parla il Collettivo Ippollita, ci troviamo dentro a un acquario, pensiamo di poter comunicare con il mondo e invece forse comunichiamo con una cerchia ristretta dei nostri contatti su Facebook, neanche con tutti. Però abbiamo la percezione di essere

[Click Activism](#)

[Click Activism e agende politiche](#)

[L'acquario di Facebook](#)

potenzialmente visibili in uno spazio pubblico di 3 miliardi di persone. Se ci pensi è una cosa che a livello locale tocca corde a livello locale piuttosto profonde ma non crea altro, tra l'altro quello è un circo che la quantità di stimoli culturali ti permette di passare tutto il tempo là sopra senza uscirne mai e c'è tutta una riflessione che viene fatta soprattutto da chi si occupa di tv generaliste di quante ore si passano sulla tv generalista e quante su questi strumenti perché da questo punto di vista dell'economia... per esempio, non ti puoi permettere più di spendere tanti soldi sugli spot televisivi perché quella cosa lì non arriva più alle persone. Un'altra cosa interessante per un media attivista e che è specchio dei tempi è che adesso le persone guardano la tv con una di queste cose in mano (prende uno smartphone), oppure un pc portatile sulle ginocchia e ha altro che attira l'attenzione. Guarda la tv e comunica con lei attraverso questi strumenti. E' ormai accertata, se tu prendi una trasmissione come Servizio Pubblico, loro hanno costruito tutta la loro trasmissione rispetto ai telespettatori che fanno questo. Dal punto di vista pubblicitario è devastante perché quando parte la pubblicità la persona distoglie automaticamente lo sguardo dalla tv e lo porta sullo strumento che ha di fronte. La strategia della pubblicità televisiva in questo momento è totalmente inutile e devono inventarsi altro e probabilmente ci stanno anche pensando. E anche la forma di difesa che hanno le persone nel continuare a usare degli strumenti che intercettano i loro interessi. La pubblicità non è interessante solo che ti hanno catturato con qualche storiella particolarmente ammaliante o ti hanno attirato con qualche tetta e qualche culo e quindi sei attento a quella cosa per altri motivi ma queste cose non funzionano più. Le persone continuano a usare questi strumenti perché magari durante la pubblicità vogliono continuare a discutere di quella cosa che hanno visto prima che partisse lo spot. Questa cosa sui minori è devastante perché non gliene frega niente. Adesso la cosa interessante per chi ha dai 13 ai 18 anni e anche dopo è che se tu non hai visto la tv, la tua trasmissione preferita in quel momento, sai benissimo che a distanza di un'ora

Tastiera mediatica

La comunicazione tablet-tv

La comunicazione tablet-tv

qualcuno la prenderà e la uploaderà su YouTube e potrai vederla quando vuoi, fermarla quando vuoi se c'è un passaggio particolare e non vuoi vedere tutte le ore puoi selezionare solo quel passaggio lì, ancora tutti i siti dei giornali più grandi ormai fanno soltanto questa cosa qua. Quello che succede in tv che è particolarmente importante e alza l'audience cos'è? La Santanché che manda a fanculo Santoro allora la stampa che fa? Prende quei due minuti lì pubblici e quelli sono sicuramente i due minuti più cliccati della giornata. Il prima o dopo non interessa più a nessuno, quella è la cosa più cliccata perché il sangue fa audience in tv perché ti tocca vedere tre ore di tv per vedere qualcosa che in qualche maniera ti fa uscire dal torpore e ti sembra di aver visto una cosa importante. Tanto vale prendere quei due minuti dalla rete e vedere solo quello. Questo è il cambiamento in corso.

Quindi ora sei nella terza fase del media attivismo, dove hai a disposizione un mezzo da usare che, allo stesso tempo, diventa un mezzo di controllo

Diventa un mezzo di controllo, sì. Ero persuaso dal fatto che questi fossero degli oggetti di liberazione più che di libertà. Liberavano un tempo, liberavano un bisogno, il bisogno del media attivismo in quel momento storico era un'azione indipendente e questa cosa ha funzionato. Adesso, per esempio, tornando su questo pezzo quello che viene in mente è che non sempre c'è informazione indipendente perché magari ti mancano le fonti. Se uno è bravo a scrivere ti può scrivere un pezzettino che ti sembra anche giornalisticamente ben fatto ma che è pieno di "fuffa" e non sai chi lo ha scritto, non sai dove vive, non sai quali fonti ha utilizzato. Questa cosa qui è drammatica. Che una persona come Luca De Biasi che è stato mediatore della fondazione Ares che prova a tradurre in Italia il concetto del XXXX sharing e dell'informazione trasparente dove il problema non è più il giornalista neutrale. Il comunicatore neutrale non esiste, esiste il comunicatore spiega come la pensa, qual è la sua visione del mondo, quali sono le sue fonti

Selezioni dei video televisivi su youtube come fonte di informazione per i media tradizionali

Media come mezzo di liberazione

Senza le fonti manca l'informazione indipendente

Il comunicatore neutrale non esiste

e con questa trasparenza mette in rete il proprio lavoro. Questa cosa ti permette di fare due cose: innanzitutto quando leggi una cosa sai che il giornalista ha degli interessi personali e un'affermazione che lui non s'inventa, viene dagli Stati Uniti, se un giornalista scrive sul New York Times, loro hanno un concetto che si chiama "misclosure", se tu lavori per la Apple e scrivi un articolo che parla di Apple, la prima cosa che devi dichiarare è che hai interessi nella Apple. Questa cosa è banale, chiunque la dovrebbe fare in comunicazione. Tu devi sapere, quando leggi un articolo, se chi l'ha scritto ha degli interessi commerciali in quella cosa lì. E questa cosa qua è tanto più pesante quanto il fatto che è vero che le persone condividono i contenuti dei siti generalisti e non per niente il sito del "Fatto", del "Corriere della Sera", di "Repubblica" svettano rispetto ad altri. Però come altri contenuti che sono divertenti, sono contenuti che sono autoprodotti e non hanno fonti non hanno certificazioni di alcun tipo e non significa che devono avere un'autocertificazione centralizzata. Il concetto interessante della fondazione Ares è che una certificazione peer-to-peer, cioè un'autocertificazione tra soggetti alla pari che certifica che tu stai facendo un buon lavoro perché conosco quello che stai facendo tu e tu conosci la cosa che faccio io non è un bollino che ti concede qualcuno è un bollino che ti viene dato da soggetti alla pari. E' qualcosa che ha molto più a che fare con il peer-review dei lavori di ricerca e però è sostanzialmente la cosa da fare. Cosa fa l'attivista di questi tempi? Io sono molto interessato al concetto di XXXX-Chaking che anche questo è un concetto che viene dagli Stati Uniti però è interessante perché bisogna cominciare ad abituarsi all'idea che non tutto quello che passa attraverso la tv ma anche attraverso i Social Network è verità assoluta e che ce la possiamo bere così come vogliamo. Lì bisogna attivare un meccanismo di questo tipo e distinguere tra chi, ti faccio un esempio, nella discussione su Grillo uno ha posto una questione che se vuoi è un dettaglio. Mentre si ragionava di Grillo si è parlato del fatto che dagli anni '90 fino al 2000 si è occupato di

Concetto di misclosure

Riconoscimento peer-to-peer

una serie di temi che con le elezioni non avevano a che fare nulla, una di queste erano le nano particelle di cui si era occupata soprattutto una ricercatrice con suo marito che è impegnato nello stesso campo. Hanno usato un microscopio per un'ipotesi di studio che queste polveri inducono un certo tipo di patologie. Hanno lavorato soprattutto sugli inceneritori, per questo Grillo se ne è occupato. Ho seguito questo fatto che è iniziato partendo dagli studi sull'uranio impoverito e sugli effetti delle esplosioni nelle zone di guerra agli inizi degli anni '90. Soldi per studiare gli inceneritori e le nano-particelle non ce ne erano ma per gli studi sull'uranio impoverito si. Perché a un certo punto i ministeri della difesa di varie nazioni hanno dovuto tamponare la protesta montante; stavano morendo tanti ragazzi in piena salute che a 30 anni si ammalavano di cancro e non capivano perché e dovevano tamponare questa cosa per cui hanno dato tanti soldi per le nano-particelle. E quindi la sua tenacia era qua. Nella volgata dei grillini, a Montanari (il marito della ricercatrice) è stato tolto questo microscopio e Grillo non se ne è occupato perché Montanari voleva soldi per fare questi studi. Molto probabilmente non è così però quei soggetti, chi sta dietro al Blog di Grillo e prende ogni cosa che lui dice come verità assoluta e continuano a utilizzare questa cosa anche se non ha più un fondo di verità. E tu cosa fai? Hai un amico che conosci per altri versi che ti manda un messaggio di questo tipo: "Guarda che Montanari non si occupa più di queste cose, non perché le nano-particelle fanno bene o male, perché voleva dei soldi" e prendi quella cosa per assodata perché te l'ha detta un amico, una persona di cui ti fidi per tutt'altri motivi. Il problema è che non è un giornalista, non ha detto quali sono le sue fonti, non ha chiesto direttamente a Montanari. Ci sono delle costruzioni in rete che ti dicono le cose come sono ma la cosa interessante di questi tempi è che questo non ha più nessun effetto nel senso che uno all'interno di questa roba ci legge quello che vuole, non c'è più nessun tipo di ancoraggio con la realtà fattuale delle cose e questo è devastante per un media-attivista nel senso che puoi costruirti questa cosa qua in molti

modi, puoi costruirti questa cosa qui perché vuoi dare un peso alla campagna allora vuoi enfatizzare ma di questi tempi molto probabilmente una campagna funziona soprattutto se dai un'informazione certificata delle persone che liberano le persone dall'ignoranza. Se il media attivismo non aiuta le persone a liberarsi dall'ignoranza e le costringe a essere continuamente imprigionate in cose che non sono vere e le prigioni si moltiplicano, una cella dentro una cella dentro un'altra cella.

Il media come mezzo di liberazione

Che cosa è la “bolla di Internet”?

C'è un altro libro scritto dal “Collettivo Ippolita” che si chiama “The dark shadow of Google” e ho visto che la stessa cosa è stata ripresa da altri pensatori per esempio negli Stati Uniti. Il senso della bolla è questo; Google è monopolista nel settore dei motori di ricerca, ormai quando qualcuno dice “Ho fatto una ricerca in internet” è ovvio che l'ha fatta con Google anche se Google non è l'unico motore di ricerca ma è quello che usiamo tutti perché è quello più semplice e quello più completo. A Google si sono resi conto di un fatto, che la dice lunga sulla nostra percezione di realtà. Che noi cerchiamo le cose che cercano le persone che hanno gli stessi nostri interessi. Se io cerco un ristorante e sono a Bologna, molto probabilmente non mi interessa sapere di un ristorante di Messina ma di uno di Bologna. A Google alla metà degli anni '00 hanno cominciato a ragionare sulle ricerche personalizzate e sulla profilazione delle persone per fare in modo che il servizi venga ritagliato su di te come un abito. Cioè che tu riceva le stesse informazioni che una persona che ha i tuoi stessi interessi si aspetta di poter ricevere. E quindi, se sei a Bologna e ti aspetti di poter ricevere delle informazioni sui ristoranti di Bologna, se sei una persona che si occupa di cucina vegan, ti aspetti di ricevere delle ricette di cucina vegan. Se Google sa da dove sei collegato e hai fatto un account gmail Google ha l'elenco delle ricerche che hai fatto e sa quali sono le cose che sei andato a vedere. Quando vai su Google e clicchi una voce e vai a vedere e magari non è quella che ti interessa

La bolla di Google

e torni indietro, Google sa che quella voce non era nei tuoi interessi e la prossima volta te la scarcerà. Quindi la bolla di Internet è sostanzialmente uno strumento ovattato che questi strumenti ti costruiscono intorno per evitare all'utente uno shock. Qual è lo shock? E' che tu cerchi qualcosa con il tuo motore di ricerca e non hai immediatamente soddisfazione per quello che stai cercando. Cioè la cosa diventa frustrante; la cosa che temono da Google è che tu faccia una ricerca che sia frustrante rispetto alle cose che tu cercavi. Se questa cosa succede loro la considereranno come un servizio che non ti hanno dato e loro hanno costruito il loro monopolio sul fatto che altri motori di ricerca non erano competitivi da questo punto di vista. Il problema è che con la crescita impetuosa di internet di questi tempi loro devono memorizzare così tante pagine in internet che davvero diventa impossibile darti la cosa che ti interessa davvero nel dettaglio. Allora ti devono dare una buona approssimazione di quello che ti interessa e lo devono fare profilando i tuoi interessi e guardano le scelte che hai fatto su Google e i video che hai visto su YouTube, perché YouTube è di Google, guardano Gmail perché Gmail è di Google e quindi ti profilano e ti costruiscono una bolla intorno di quello che sicuramente ti può interessare. Anche qui ci sono delle analisi critiche, una di queste è interessante, perché sostanzialmente ci dice che non può più accadere che... noi in questo momento siamo in balia degli algoritmi. Un algoritmo è un programma codificato da qualcuno che a un tipo di input ti da sempre risposte di quel tipo, e quindi la suggestione più forte dei critici rispetto a questa cosa qua, alla bolla di internet, vuol dire che stiamo perdendo un aspetto umano che è quello dello "scarto" quello del "serendipity" cioè non ti potrebbe più capitare che tu cercando una cosa trovi un'altra cosa che non pensavi di dover trovare e che però rappresenta un altro tipo di interesse che tu pensavi di non avere e che invece potresti approfondire in questa maniera. Il problema delle bolle in internet che sono il problema dei motori di ricerca ma lo sono anche della cerchia di amici che ti fai nel tuo profilo solo che in questa maniera

L'algoritmo di Google

Si perde lo scarto dell'inaspettato

siamo tutti in una situazione dove non ci potrebbe più capitare di entrare a conoscenza che noi non pensavamo fosse di nostro interesse e invece magari lo può diventare. Vuol dire l'omogeneizzazione sociale. Se tu pensi a un minorenni e all'informazione è una cosa devastante.

Si tratta, quindi, di una riproposizione continua del tuo schema?

Esatto. Tutti usiamo Google anche inconsapevolmente, per esempio, ormai le persone sono abituate a non mettere più l'indirizzo nella stringa, l'indirizzo è .it, .com, .net, non te lo puoi ricordare, è una cosa da programmatori di internet che ha una concettualizzazione da scienziati. Le persone non se lo possono ricordare e cosa fanno? Scrivono delle parole nella stringa e il browser, soprattutto Firefox ma anche Chrome che guarda caso è di Google va a cercare su Google il primo risultato della ricerca attraverso quelle parole e va direttamente sul sito che ti serve e nel 99% dei casi va sicuramente dove volevi andare. Ti faccio un esempio, siamo connessi da qui, dalla rete universitaria, di più, dalla rete universitaria di Bologna è naturale che se cerchi Unibo AlmaEsami su Google lui ti porta direttamente lì ma magari da un'altra parte c'è qualsiasi altra pagina Alma Esami o qualcuno ha aperto una Ditta con lo stesso nome ma in questa maniera non la riuscirai mai a raggiungere. Sostanzialmente essere in una bolla in rete è questo, essere in balia degli algoritmi che decidono per noi. La bolla di internet è anche la bolla di Amazon. Cosa succede su Amazon? Tu scegli un libro e cosa fa Amazon? Ti dice, "le persone che hanno preso questo libro hanno preso anche quest'altro libro" Significa che tu con un algoritmo di questo tipo che ti facilita un compito che è quello di uniformarti alla maggioranza delle persone che hanno i tuoi stessi gusti ma se io sono un appassionato di metal in questo modo non potrò mai scoprire una sinfonia di musica classica perché Amazon mi farà vedere soltanto dei dischi metal. Da questo punto di vista l'impatto sulla formazione è devastante. Qual è il compito di

Omogeneizzazione sociale e minorenni

La bolla di Amazon

La bolla di internet e la formazione dei giovani

un formatore, di un maestro? E' quello di far scoprire un mondo ma se sei in balia degli algoritmi non scopri più nessun tipo di mondo fuori dai tuoi interessi, magari in formazione.

Si costruisce un'identità in rete?

Si. La costruisci attivamente e passivamente. In rete la costruisci attivamente perché quando stai dentro Facebook lui ti presenta una serie di interessi che devi certificare. Tu entri in Facebook e lui ti chiede: "quali sono i tuoi libri preferiti? I tuoi film preferiti? Le tue citazioni preferite? Le tue trasmissioni preferite?" Di più, "quali sono i tuoi prodotti preferiti?" Ad esempio la pagina della Nutella è una delle più cliccate. In maniera attiva lo fai così.

In maniera passiva c'è Google che prende le tue informazioni nel senso che esiste un concetto in rete, che avrà anche un nome ma in questo momento non so identificarlo come tale, che è quella del "90-9-1". Vuol dire che l'1% degli utenti genera contenuti, il 9% li commenta, il 90% visita questi contenuti e ha effetto su questi contenuti nel senso che visitandoli li valorizza in rete. In rete esiste un'economia della valorizzazione che non è data dalla monetizzazione che non esiste è data da una cosa che Google chiama page raking. Come fa Google a vedere che quella pagina è interessante? Vede quante persone la visitano. E questa cosa viene fatta dal 90% degli utenti che non devono commentare per forza ma il fatto che si vada a visitare, che in qualche maniera la linki, da delle informazioni. Questo è un modo passivo di raccogliere informazioni nel senso che tu costruisci la tua identità passivamente in base alle tue ricerche su Google e alle cose che scegli. E Google comincia a raccogliere informazioni su di te sapendo che cerchi, per esempio "Media Attivismo". Sei andato in quella pagina, non ti piace, Google registra che sei tornato indietro perché non era di tuo interesse e comincia a costruire un profilo su di te. Secondo il motore di ricerca, clicchi, vai su una pagina, Google sa quanto tempo ci stai perché conta la volta che sei andata e la volta che sei tornata indietro. Quante pagine hai visitato di un sito, se le hai condivise. Come si

Identità attiva e passiva in rete

90-9-1

Economia della valorizzazione = page raking

Identità passiva

chiude il cerchio da questo punto di vista? Google fa il proprio Social Network che si chiama Google Plus se tu fai una ricerca, prendi il primo risultato, non ti piace, torni indietro, Google capisce che quello non è ciò che cercavi, segui un altro risultato, lo trovi, ti piace, prendi la url, lo condividi in Google Plus, Google capisce che quella era esattamente la cosa che volevi.

Ma una identità di tipo diverso, non strettamente commerciale, non che serva a Google ma proprio tesa a mostrare agli altri chi sei? Tu hai un'identità sulla rete che è data sì dalla profilazione di Google ma ne hai anche una data da altro. Io conosco M. T. per le sue attività in rete, perché ha questi interessi, perché lo trovo su un sito dove ha pubblicato un certo contenuto. Il tuo nome è associato a un certo tipo di attività. Un credo politico, un modo di agire dentro la società. Anche in quel senso puoi costruirti un'identità in rete.

In questo senso è interessante una cosa che ha molto a che fare con le primarie dei grillini. Cosa fanno? Cinque minuti, cinque! di video in rete molto spesso costruiti con una video camera puntata su se stessi dove teoricamente dovrebbero rispondere a delle domande e che significa che costruisci la presentazione che sia quella che gli altri vedono. In quel caso ha una utilità diretta, vuoi che la gente ti voti quindi devi parlare e dire chi sei. La cosa interessante è che questa cosa qui mica se la sono inventata, esistono una pletora di ragazzini che in rete si scambiano video-messaggi cioè non esiste più che tu ti scambi una lettera, una e-mail che mandi direttamente al ragazzino. **Accendi la webcam e per dieci minuti parli e parli al tuo amico e questo ti risponde con un altro video.** Quindi in quel caso l'identità in rete tu la stai creando in maniera passiva nel senso che pensi di parlare soltanto al tuo amico ma non è vero perché **quel video lo può vedere chiunque.** Però sei consapevole che quello strumento permette di autorappresentarti come vuoi e tra l'altro vedi delle cose che fanno anche ridere. Nel senso che dicono delle cose che tu non diresti mai, e ti dici "ma cavoli, questo qui non lo pensa che

I ragazzini e la web-cam = i bimbiminchia
Ancora identità passiva

chiunque, anche una persona sconosciuta può ascoltare la cosa che stai dicendo in rete?” Ci sono anche dei tormentoni, ne puoi cercare uno che si chiama Gemma del Sud che era una ragazzina che prendeva qualsiasi fatto di cronaca e per dieci minuti lo commentava in rete dicendo spesso anche delle castronerie ma dicendo cose che facevano sorridere e che chiunque, qualsiasi ragazzino pensa davvero, non sogneresti mai che possa dirla con una audience così grossa. Questa ragazzina lo faceva per parlare ai suoi amici soltanto che le altre persone cominciavano a vedere questo video e cominciavano a renderlo virale dicendo “ma guarda che castronerie che dice questa qui” e si è così ingigantita che questa ragazzina ha cominciato a rispondere a commenti che le facevano attraverso altri video spiegando perché aveva detto quella determinata cosa, perché la pensava in quel modo, fino a un certo punto in cui questa ragazzina scompare dalla rete perché viene così subissata da critiche ma anche da veri e propri fans che erano persone sfegatate che aspettavano il video successivo che probabilmente non ha sostenuto l’impatto o più propriamente è intervenuto qualche adulto e ha chiuso tutto quanto. Questo ti spiega come c’è un meccanismo di costruzione dell’identità in rete dove tu sei solo con il tuo computer, c’è un altro libro che si chiama “Alone together”, sei da solo ma c’è un sistema multi asse che tu non vedi che ti costruisce un’identità.

Ma te la sei costruita o te l’hanno costruita gli altri? Gemmadelsud perde l’intenzionalità del suo atto, nel senso che lei voleva parlare con i suoi amici ma quello che è seguito le è sfuggito di mano.

Esatto. Ma è questa la questione. E’ intenzionale ma c’è una eterogenesi delle intenzioni e dei fini. Lei non si aspettava che quella cosa diventasse così devastante però di fatto è così. E’ a tutti gli effetti una costruzione di rete, se tu prendevi la ragazzina che parlava con i suoi amichetti al bar direbbe esattamente le stesse cose con i quattro ragazzini che ha intorno. Il problema di questi tempi è che tu hai una platea. Lei aveva

Sei solo ma un sistema multi-asse ti costruisce una identità

migliaia di contatti e riceveva migliaia di commenti; la rete è allucinante soprattutto per come funziona in questo momento. A me è capitato con i miei articoli su “Il Fatto Quotidiano” perché sei commentato in prima pagina e ricevi trenta commenti al minuto e trenta commenti al minuto significa che tu non hai materialmente il tempo di rispondere a tutti. Lei è diventata una star perché aveva intuito il meccanismo e rispondeva a queste persone ma non con la consapevolezza dell’adulto che risponde argomentando ma con l’incoscienza del ragazzino piccato perché qualcuno non aveva inteso quello che voleva dire oppure che la prendeva in giro per quello che aveva detto. Quella è a tutti gli effetti la costruzione di una identità in rete ma non è una identità consapevole. Poi tu mi dici “ma ci sono altri modi?” certo ci sono persone che si costruiscono delle identità in rete e diventano anche forti. Prendi un ragazzo come Zoro, aveva fatto un sito con la Fondazione Daje, perché diceva che i partiti di centro destra sono tutti fatti dei Think Tank che servono a dare forza al centro destra, allora lui ne voleva fare uno di sinistra e allora ha fondato l’Associazione “Daje” perché lui è un romanaccio. Faceva dei video dove faceva finta di essere un militante della sezione storica del Testaccio che parlava romano, un po’ frastornato dai cambiamenti che c’erano stati nella sinistra. Faceva un sacco di contatti fino al punto in cui Serena Dandini lo ha chiamato nel suo programma. Zoro, che si chiama Diego Bianchi, è una cosa nata nella rete e che è andata in Tv. Non è il primo caso.

Cosa sono i Think Tank?

E’ una Istituzione che forma le idee per un certo contesto. C’è il **Think Tank** del Ministero della Difesa che ragiona su quali sono gli scenari possibili delle guerre nel mondo nel terzo millennio. Il Think Tank dei socialisti è quello che comincia a ragionare su quali possono essere le problematiche del mondo e quali possono essere le idee di un moderno partito socialista.

Ogni corrente del nostro sistema politico ha un Think Tank perché tu hai bisogno non solo

Think tank

di un politico che parli alle platee ma delle idee dietro da costruire per portarle avanti.

Documentandomi, prima di questa intervista, mi sono chiesta quale potesse essere il modello culturale di un media attivista. Se tu mi dici che il media attivismo è una condivisione di informazioni allora i modelli culturali sono tanti quante sono le persone che condividono informazione.

Si, di questi tempi la parola media attivista non significa più nulla di quello che significava negli anni '90 o negli anni '00. Media attivista significa uno che ha pratica di utilizzo di queste tecnologie e le usa per un proprio scopo. Potenzialmente, e questa è la cosa interessante, lo possiamo essere tutti perché abbiamo in mano strumenti che sono stati particolarmente facilitati. Se io ho in mano una cosa che con tre tocchi di dito mi permette di fare un video e con altri due tocchi di mettere quel video in rete consentendomi mille contatti nel primo minuto io sono un media attivista! **Poi cosa io abbia rappresentato con questo video non significa più nulla perché io posso aver fatto un video del mio gattino che suona il pianoforte e quello fa un milione di contatti,** cosa che effettivamente è successa, e viene addirittura messo in onda nel telegiornale del prime time dimostrando cosa gira in rete. Quello non si può non chiamare media attivismo, perché io ho dato tecnologie digitali con una certa conoscenza, perché certo devo sapere che se faccio un video controluce, dove non si vede nulla, questo non farà tanti contatti. Devi avere una certa conoscenza delle cose.

Quindi tu mi stai dicendo che il media attivismo, in se, a parte la condivisione delle cose non ha a che fare con un obiettivo di tipo sociale o politico per forza, per definizione?

Io posso dirti che le persone che vengono dalla mia storia e da quel periodo, gli anni '90 e gli anni '00, mantengono quell'obiettivo lì. Ci sono altri che escono sulla scena adesso, per esempio c'è una bellissima intervista fatta **agli attivisti spagnoli del #14 maggio** che

Quale modello culturale per il media attivista?

Pubblicare il video del gatto è già media attivismo...

ragionano proprio su questi aspetti, anche sulle derive che prendono questi strumenti. A un certo punto gli chiedono: “ma voi come vi rapportate rispetto all’utilizzo e alla diffusione delle immagini, per esempio sui Social Network?” E loro spiegano che tipo di immagini preferiscono diffondere e quali preferiscono non diffondere sui SN. Ti spiegano anche che fanno della vera e propria formazione agli altri per dire “se tu vedi succedere qualcosa in manifestazione, che tipo di foto devi fare, quali sono i tuoi diritti se arriva un poliziotto e vuole toglierti il cellulare di mano” Il media attivismo della terza generazione fa questa cosa qui. E che abbia una utilità sociale, questo è poco ma sicuro. Ma anche senza andare nelle manifestazioni di piazza, ci sono anche le Ong che fanno questo tipo di utilizzo, c’è il mondo del volontariato che fa questo tipo di utilizzo. Il regista che fa foto al migrante che viene imbarcato su Alitalia per essere spedito in Libia e viene particolarmente maltrattato e questa foto fa il giro del web è una cosa di media attivismo e ha sicuramente un valore sociale, non c’è dubbio da questo punto di vista. Però se uno rimane al media attivismo come pratica di utilizzo dei media finalizzato a “qualcosa” non c’è dubbio che anche chi fa il video al proprio gattino è media attivista a tutti gli effetti. Con una differenza, però, che si può inserire nel ragionamento; cosa ti dice YouTube? Io ti do uno spazio dove metti i tuoi video e in prima battuta puoi mettere dei video lunghi massimo 15 minuti. Quando puoi cominciare a mettere dei video molto più lunghi? Quando YouTube vede che i tuoi video sono visualizzati allora siccome tu a YouTube porti soldi perché YouTube nei tuoi video ci mette la pubblicità allora ti do la possibilità di fare dei video più lunghi perché molto probabilmente tu sei una persona capace che produce dei video di un certo interesse e questo mi porta dei soldi. Il terzo stadio del ragionamento di YouTube è che se tu hai un profilo molto visitato comincia a condividere gli utili con te. Per alcuni di questi, fare upload di immagini su YouTube diventa un vero e proprio lavoro. Non dico che ci puoi campare ma sicuramente puoi pagare i costi della tua produzione anche

perché, diciamo chiaro, il video del gattino può avere un effetto e anche amatoriale, forse al massimo dura un minuto ma su YouTube i video che sono visti sono fatti in maniera davvero professionale. Non ti puoi permettere di fare un video lungo un'ora con un cellulare devi farlo con una telecamera digitale, devi avere una attenzione al montaggio, ci devi mettere sotto una colonna sonora e allora non è più una cosa amatoriale ma professionale. Il media attivismo è anche questo? Sì, perché i media attivisti possono anche produrre contenuti professionali.

Il media attivismo che concepisco io, però, ha a che fare con il bene comune, non interessano i soldi. Lo fai perché pensi ci sia un video interessante che le persone devono conoscere. Magari non è neanche detto che lo conosceranno, magari tu hai un centinaio di contatti e sarà scarso il numero delle persone a cui lo hai spedito, però ti interessa che ci sia un concetto di bene comune. Ma questi strumenti servono anche per fare soldi. Giustamente, soprattutto in tempi di crisi, una parte dei ragazzi che, per esempio, partecipa al Festival dei corti di Nonantola interessante perché ti dicono che puoi fare un video di tre minuti, deve avere questo argomento e deve avere questi protagonisti, ti deve raccontare una storia che sta dentro a un genere, per esempio un western o un fantascientifico, però deve avere un elemento di Nonantola. Quelli del Comune di Nonantola tendono a fare il cosiddetto "branding locale" nel senso che poi in rete gira un video che ha a che fare con Nonantola e quindi molte più persone conosceranno Nonantola e vuoi mai che un turista passerà di lì aumentando l'economia locale. Questi sono videoamatori ma non vogliono rimanere videoamatori per tutta la vita vogliono tentare di diventare professionisti, magari pagati. Vogliono tentare la strada magari di essere persone che faranno quel lavoro nella vita e non c'è dubbio che in questo momento sei in una situazione dove serve un contest continuo. Devi saper continuamente dimostrare di essere uno che quelle cose le sa fare in maniera professionale e se la può sfangare in competizione con gli altri. Se ci pensi è la condizione quasi più drammatica che abbiamo

Il media attivista può essere anche un professionista del video

Il senso del media attivismo come "bene comune"

di questi tempi, nessuno ti regala nulla e tu sei costantemente in competizione con gli altri sul numero di visualizzazioni che avrà il tuo video e quello che vince è quello che avrà maggiori visualizzazioni.

Quindi possiamo dividere i media attivisti in due gruppi: quelli che hanno un obiettivo sociale o politico e quelli che dimostrano semplicemente di saper usare questi strumenti da un punto di vista tecnico.

Esatto. C'è un altro aspetto che si differenzia non molto rispetto a una pratica che adesso va per la maggiore, non c'è dubbio che nella mia tradizione se io so qualcosa mi organizzo per trasmettere questa conoscenza mentre il problema di questi tempi è: se io so fare un montaggio, una cosa che ho visto, a un certo punto il video dei ragazzini, adesso esistono programmi per il montaggio che sono addirittura gratuiti, te li danno con il computer, te li fai con due lire. I ragazzini vogliono fare i montaggi dei loro video come li vedono in tv. Un tipico montaggio che piace molto ai ragazzini è quello dei filmati del "Le Jene" che ha un tipo di montaggio molto sincopato con dei tagli di scene in cui introduci delle brevissime clip che non c'entrano nulla e che servono costantemente a riattivare l'attenzione. Quello, dal punto di vista tecnico, è molto complesso saperlo fare. Nella mia tradizione, se io so fare quella cosa lì, la condivido con gli altri.

Condividi la conoscenza...

Esatto! Condivido la conoscenza! Nella mia concezione di media attivista il media attivista è quello che deve essere liberato nei confronti delle persone. Tu vuoi saper fare quella cosa lì? Io te la insegno e te la insegno liberamente non solo gratis, proprio liberamente. Ma se tu ragazzino insegni questa cosa all'altro, siccome quello è un competitor saprà fare una cosa che sai fare anche tu e quella cosa che sai fare tu non avrà più valore sul mercato XXXX e globale, questo è drammatico. Significa che c'è una selezione basata su un profilo professionale che sostanzialmente ti

Libera condivisione dei contenuti vs legge di mercato

dice “se tu vuoi spiccare rispetto agli altri, quello che sai fare tu non lo devi più condividere”. Questa è una rottura radicale, verticale rispetto a qualsiasi concezione di media attivismo ho visto negli anni passati.

Il valore di mercato della conoscenza si oppone ai principi del primo media-attivismo

Cade la filosofia che sta dietro all'eliminazione del copy right...

Il copyright non dice che se tu hai una conoscenza la devi condividere. Il copyright ti dice che è una buona pratica condividere le conoscenze. Il software libero si può vendere mica lo devi dare per forza gratis e soprattutto forte del fatto che il software deve essere libero ma devono essere pagati i servizi per i quali le persone lo utilizzano. Ma questo non significa che nel media attivismo dove l'obiettivo non è vendere una cosa ma condividere una cosa per il bene comune, se tu quella cosa la sai fare la devi condividere con gli altri. In realtà questa cosa è ambivalente perché io ho fatto l'esempio del montaggio stile “Le Jene” però in molti altri casi non è così... per essere ancora chiari un altro motivo di competizione tra le persone può essere avere un blog. Se tu scrivi dei testi di 15 pagine annoi le persone e non ti leggerà nessuno ma se hai una scrittura brillante ovviamente emergerai. Ed è interessante che sulla rete ci sono anche brevi clip di persone che ti insegnano ad aprire un blog, ti insegnano come si posta qualcosa o si mette su un'immagine. Quelli lo fanno, praticamente, per gli altri. Io molto spesso non ho tempo di spiegare agli amici come si fa ad aprire un blog ma vado su YouTube, cerco come si gestisce un blog, il primo video che trovo generalmente è buono e gli giro quello e sono sicuro che gli darà le risposte che io non ho il tempo di dargli. Questo mi sembra interessante perché è una condivisione di conoscenze e in questo caso il meccanismo della competizione non funziona. Effettivamente chi lo ha fatto voleva che le persone potessero avere il blog. Che poi, se tu mi rispondi, “avere un blog cambia la vita alle persone?” la risposta è “nì”, ovviamente.

Come il Blog dei ragazzi di Ad Est, hanno lavorato prima su cartaceo e poi sono usciti

in rete e sono tra coloro che sono riusciti a fare arrestare Cuffaro. Dipende dall'uso che fai dei mezzi.

Si, dipende da cosa ci fai.

Al momento sto approfondendo una linea di tendenza che passa attraverso il sistema di **Anonymous** che è un corpo elettivo... a volte compaiono sui giornali per qualche azione eclatante, viene bloccato il sito di Trenitalia e quindi è stata colpa di Anonymous. Sono ovviamente degli smanettoni, sono sicuramente persone di grande conoscenza che probabilmente lavorano nel campo dell'HiTech ai massimi livelli che fanno queste cose, per esempio per la protesta contro la Tav viene bloccato il sito di **Trenitalia**. E' una operazione che viene fatta perché i giornali ne parlino, tant'è che il sito di Trenitalia non subisce danni, viene bloccato per un'ora però poi succede che i giornali ne parlano. Non significa nulla, poi ci sono almeno due libri che sono usciti in questi mesi, uno di Carola Frediani e l'altro di Antonella Beccaria. Sono persone che si stanno ponendo il problema di come utilizzare la tecnologia per fare anche azioni dimostrative. Adesso, che io sappia, ma sto cercando di approfondire questa cosa, **le stesse persone pensano che sia una tattica che ormai si sta bruciando nel senso che tu non puoi stare tutta la vita a fare proteste bloccando dei siti perché a un certo punto non avrà più nessun tipo di effetto**. Stanno pensando a come creare nuovi strumenti che vengano incontro a nuove esigenze, per esempio **Anonymous si sta occupando di ristabilire la rete in Siria che nei giorni scorsi è stata tagliata**. Sta pensando a nuovi strumenti che permettano alle persone di **utilizzare i social network senza essere profilati in maniera selvaggia**, sta pensando a una serie di cose da questo punto di vista. Credo che questa sia la linea di tendenza più interessante nel senso che oggettivamente io posso pure stare su Facebook laddove posso condividere le informazioni per evitare gli errori più madornali ma alla fine se io sto su Facebook anche gli altri devono stare su Facebook per seguire me e quindi io creo

[Anonymous](#)

[Nuovi obiettivi di Anonymous:
dalla protesta alla ristabilizzazione della rete
nei Paesi con regime, protezione dalla
profilazione](#)

sostanzialmente le condizioni per farmi mettere la gabbia intorno. Fino a quando questa cosa qua sarà in questo modo non se ne esce. E c'è un motivo per cui le persone si profilano anche in Facebook; tu stai lì perché lì ci sono i tuoi amici se non fosse così non avresti nessun motivo per essere lì. Perché alla fine si sfrutta il bisogno di contatto di connessione con gli altri. Quando ci saranno le condizioni per le quali esiste un Social Network alternativo io prenderò tutta la mia serie di contatti e li sposterò altrove. Se vuoi creare un meccanismo quasi di mercato dove la mia privacy viene rispettata e io posso portare i miei contatti da un'altra parte viene rispettata allora io mi sposto con tutti i miei contatti forse qualcosa potrebbe cominciare a cambiare. Quello che c'è di fondo è che noi viviamo in una situazione dove questa cosa qui viene gestita con dei monopoli. Dal mio punto di vista è ancora tutto molto nebuloso. Se leggi il libro di Ippolita loro ti dicono che non è possibile; il compito classico del media attivista è prendere una tecnologia e rivoltarla per farle fare qualcosa per cui non era stata pensata. Allora il fax non diventa più lo strumento unico per mandarsi dei preventivi ma anche per mandarsi degli appelli dei pacifisti degli anni '90. Internet non è più uno strumento per mandarsi delle ricerche universitarie ma diventa un bollettino per parlare per esempio della situazione delle carceri negli Stati Uniti. Adesso quelli che hanno scritto "Nell'acquario di Facebook" dicono che questa cosa non è più possibile. Cioè sono strumenti così totalizzanti che tu non li puoi prendere e trasformarli in qualcosa con tutt'altro fine. Però ti rendi conto che non stiamo più parlando di tecnologie, stiamo parlando di sociale, di reti, relazioni, modelli di relazione dove io mi fermo perché rimango un informatico. Sì, sono curioso e leggo anche cose di antropologia, di sociologia però mi fermo lì. A quel punto è compito di altri continuare a fare una riflessione da questo punto di vista.

Per questo lavoro di ricerca sto seguendo dei ragazzi i quali hanno, tutti, un profilo su Facebook. Hanno una pagina che non è quella classica del ragazzino che condivide

Facebook sfrutta il bisogno umano di socialità

Fondamentalmente dell'intrattenimento ma, avendo una attività di tipo sociale e politico, la comunicano anche su questo Social Network. Se scorri le loro pagine scopri, per esempio, che c'è una manifestazione. Uno dei ragazzi è impegnato in un sindacato e ha portato il Segretario Nazionale a scuola a parlare con gli studenti. Nelle pagine di questi ragazzi non c'è quasi nulla che riguardi l'intrattenimento, a parte qualche commento sulla squadra di calcio o di basket...

Ma quella è la tua bolla.

Ma se ci riferiamo al discorso appena fatto sulla modifica dell'utilizzo di un mezzo pensato per uno scopo e utilizzato effettivamente per altro, pensi che loro stiano facendo questo o no?

Quelli di Ippolita potrebbero dirti che non lo stanno facendo, che si stanno ingabbiando. Se leggi Riccardo Luna ti dice una cosa completamente diversa. Quelli di Ippolita sono tecno-scettici, Riccardo Luna è un tecno-entusiasta che pensa che questi ragazzini stanno facendo la rivoluzione. Quelli di Ippolita pensano di no.

Media scettico sui profili dei soggetti di ricerca

Si stanno facendo semplicemente profilare sotto un altro tipo di interesse?

Si. La cosa su cui ragiono ma non mi sono ancora fatto una particolare idea, leggendo e mantenendo come unico atteggiamento la mia curiosità intellettuale, è che purtroppo sono vera l'una e l'altra cosa. Le due cose convivono. Tu non puoi sapere come si possono trasformare le cose. Però posso dirti che a Internazionale ho visto 5, 6 anni fa, la testimonianza di un dissidente cinese che mi è sembrata molto interessante. Loro hanno una situazione della rete che è completamente blindata. Se tu fai il dissidente lì e cominci a usare questi strumenti per diffondere messaggi vieni immediatamente identificato. Questo ragazzo spiegava come loro usavano un messaggio in codice. C'è una metafora

sulle anatre; nella loro cultura c'è molto l'utilizzo di queste immagini allora un'anatra con una certa conformazione che fa un certo tipo di volo, che apre in un certo modo le ali, significava una certa azione da compiere. Il codice veniva cambiato ogni volta. Questo per un pezzo è servito a evitare i controlli pervasivi del sistema poliziesco che hanno dalle loro parti. Però mi ha colpito un'altra cosa, lui dice, giustamente, che è vero che in Cina c'è un sistema pervasivo ma c'è anche un forte appoggio della maggior parte della popolazione nei confronti del governo. Perché? Perché dal 2001 il governo sta facendo uscire fette della popolazione dalla povertà, poi lascia perdere che fanno gli accordi per cui la fabbrica dove producono l'I-Phone ci sono gli operai che si suicidano. Dal punto di vista dell'analisi classica dell'economista che crede nell'economia organizzata, questi effettivamente stanno facendo uscire la maggior parte della popolazione dalla povertà e hanno un grosso consenso. La cosa interessante che quel ragazzo spiegava era "guardate che nonostante ve la dicano in un certo modo, non è vero che in Cina le persone protestano. Però può succedere una cosa interessante, io posso essere una persona che ha un Blog e racconto i miei fatti. Anche i cinesi hanno dei sentimenti e useranno il Blog per dire "oggi sono uscito con la mia fidanzata, abbiamo visto un bel film, siamo andati a cena". Le persone normali usano il Blog per queste cose. Siamo noi che vogliamo usarle per altri motivi, ma le persone normali le usano giustamente per queste cose. Quando sono cambiate le cose? Quando le persone che usavano questi strumenti a un certo punto vedono un poliziotto che picchia selvaggiamente un'altra persona in strada e scrive questa cosa con la maturità di uno che vede questa cosa e rimane inorridito e siccome ha solo questo strumento per comunicare questa cosa e vuole comunicarlo con gli altri usa quella maniera nel modo più naturale possibile ed è questa naturalezza che è lo scarto ed è la buccia di banana su cui cade la censura più pesante. Perché, se tu poi censuri quel Blog, non stai censurando il Blog di un dissidente, stai censurando il Blog di

una persona normale che ha visto una cosa che lo inorridisce e che in altri momenti avrebbe scritto solo della fidanzata e delle cose che gli piacciono e mandi un segnale alle altre persone che non si stanno andando a cercare il testo di un dissidente ma stanno leggendo il testo di una persona normale che queste cose sono calate dall'alto e non devono avere nessuna forma di discussione. E questo, dal punto di vista dell'ordine sociale, è molto più devastante dell'attività di un media attivista classico. Nel senso che questo non è un media attivista ma uno normale che nella sua normalità vede una cosa che non gli piace. Ne parla con gli altri che non sono dissidenti e non hanno motivo di contestare il governo. Ne parlano con altri e cominciano a essere critici. Lui dice che la maggior parte delle sommosse, quando sono venute, lascia stare che sono anche state sommerse nel sangue, sono nate in questo modo da persone normali che non avevano motivo di essere critici nei confronti del governo. Lui poi citava il caso di un poliziotto ma spiegava che è molto più forte nei casi di corruzione. In Cina hanno problemi con la corruzione spaventosi, a tutti i livelli, dal locale fino al governo centrale. E questa cosa non è tollerabile e alcune volte, diceva, il governo ha utilizzato queste forme di dissidenza per andare a prendere i corrotti, non andava a prendere il cittadino che si era lamentato. Era una denuncia sociale e questa cosa è molto interessante. Io penso che, e se vuoi è la suggestione più forte che io ho da sempre è che se tu dai degli strumenti di liberazione alle persone, le persone possono fare delle cose sconvolgenti con questi strumenti. Poi, ti dico, che questo possa sempre succedere non è vero. Soprattutto io non so quali sono le condizioni per le quali le persone possono fare delle cose davvero utili. So che se mantieni delle relazioni sociali, se spieghi delle cose alle persone e le rendi consapevoli delle cose che hanno in mano sono capaci di fare delle cose che sono molto interessanti. Anche perché, guarda ti dico, l'altra questione del media attivista è che continuamente, se tu fai delle cose ti metti in mostra tu. A me non è mai piaciuto mettermi in mostra ma so benissimo che ho acquisito una certa visibilità anche per le cose che ho

fatto, ma non era quello l'obiettivo anche se di questi tempi, oggettivamente, se fai delle cose ottieni anche la tua visibilità personale che puoi spendere in qualche modo. Se io scrivo una cosa vengo riconosciuto perché l'ho scritta io. Questa cosa è inestricabile a meno che tu non la fai in una forma che alle persone permette di dire "ok, questa cosa l'hai detta tu però permetti anche a me di diffondere una informazione che ci è utile" allora sì. Allora mi sento di aver fatto qualcosa di utile.

Secondo te, qual è il futuro del media attivismo?

Il futuro del media attivismo, di questa parte del mondo, è rendere consapevoli le persone delle distopie tendenziali della società dell'informazione verso la quale stiamo andando.

Il futuro del media attivismo

Quando parli di "questa parte del mondo" intendi l'Europa?

Europa e l'Occidente in generale. Poi in altre parti ci saranno altre forme di media attivismo che hanno altri obiettivi. Abbiamo anche una fase dove ci stiamo organizzando nel senso che è ovvio anche che gli attivisti tunisini si sono rifatti a cose che vedevano in Occidente, come io mi sono formato sulle letture che ho fatto che venivano da oltre oceano. Però la cosa che se vuoi ti interessa è che così ti senti parte di una comunità transnazionale nel senso che hai fatto le stesse letture, hai recepito le stesse cose, fate le stesse pratiche. Ti senti anche di dire che se questi avranno dei problemi so come dargli una mano e questo ti fa sentire utile. Oggettivamente, però, loro hanno tutta un'altra strada da fare; noi abbiamo una economia matura che ha esigenze diverse rispetto alle loro. Loro dovranno sicuramente costruire il loro mondo, io spero più conformato ai loro bisogni reali locali perché questo è l'altro elemento forte. Mi aveva colpito una cosa a metà degli anni '90, c'era un mio amico che si chiamava Candalli che seguiva Tito Sesame che è questo padre comboniano a Nairobi che aiutava i ragazzini nelle XXX (manca in registrazione) che erano

Gli obiettivi del media attivismo cambiano in funzione della situazione geo-politica

questi ragazzini che sniffano la colla per resistere ai morsi della fame che vivevano in un contesto sociale di violenze inaudite e questo usava Peace-Link per dare una mano a queste persone. Insegnava loro a fare i primi siti web negli anni '90 che era una cosa che era di forte visione del futuro. Lui insegnava a fare i siti usando certi colori e, invece, giustamente, in Africa hanno altri colori e facevano i siti con i loro colori. Allora quando tu cominci a concepire una tecnologia dove tu gli insegni le basi e questi ti prendono questa tecnologia e la utilizzano secondo i gusti e la loro cultura locale allora ti sembra di aver fatto qualcosa di giusto.

Parliamo di modifica delle interfacce?

Si. Le interfacce sono un modello di gabbia enorme, c'è una cultura di genere dietro le interfacce, c'è un pensiero femminista che ragiona su queste cose qua sul fatto di come certe interfacce fatte in un certo modo che sono un problema rispetto al XXX delle donne. Uno si domanda perché ci sono pochi amministratori di sistema donne e c'è tutto un ragionamento fatto da un server web delle donne di Bologna che ragiona su questa cosa qua. Oggettivamente quella cosa non mi riguarda come genere ma mi incuriosisco anche io e mi faccio delle domande. E' ovvio che un certo tipo di linguaggio su come si rapportano queste cose è includente per alcuni ed escludente per gli altri e ogni volta devi stare sul confine di questi conflitti che a volte ti scoppiano di lato, avanti, dietro. Non te ne rendi conto e ti rendono tutto molto così

¹ Di Corinto A., (2002), *Hactivism, La libertà nelle maglie della rete*, Roma, Manifestolibri

² Pasquinelli M., (2002), *Media Activism strategie e pratiche della comunicazione indipendente*, Roma, DeriveApprodi.

³ Prodotti dell'ingegno che non sono definiti proprietà intellettuale perché chi si occupa di questi temi sostiene che la proprietà intellettuale è un ossimoro, un'idea non è proprietà di nessuno, al massimo sono un prodotto sociale nato dall'ingegno di più persone alle quali riconosci una paternità che però perdono quando diventano di pubblico dominio.

Intervista A. G.

Ti definisci un media attivista? Che cosa è il media attivismo secondo te? Quello che fai lo definisci media attivismo? O gli dai un altro nome?

La mia storia è stata bellissima perché è sempre stata una **storia di gruppo**. E' **il luogo in cui siamo nati che ci ha resi quelli che siamo**. Se non fossi nato in Sicilia, se non fossi nato in quel paese, non avessi avuto dei **riferimenti etici alti**, poi il bello della storia ti passa attorno. La nostra storia è stata quella di **Raffadali, una delle poche enclavi rosse in una provincia di 53 Comuni dove 37 erano governati dalla mafia**. Uno dei pochi Comuni che erano fuori è stato il mio che comunque è stato un Comune di **lotte contadine, di partigiani che venivano dal nord**. Un Comune che aveva rappresentato quello che poteva essere la diversità in termini di Sicilia. Quando poi toccherà a noi, negli anni '90, raccogliere quella eredità ci troviamo in un situazione pessima, cioè quella generazione dei nostri genitori che hanno avuto nella generazione dei nostri nonni le lotte di orgoglio si è arresa e hanno aperto la porta a quella che poi era la mafiosità e alla famiglia Cuffaro.

Quindi, quando nel '98 c'è il passaggio del primo governo del centro sinistra oltre quello eletto due mesi fa con Cuffaro che passa dal centro destra al centro sinistra lui chiede di diventare il punto di riferimento di quel paese e gli lasciano 'sta storia. Noi già, ora io parlo di me mentre continuo a dire che questa è una storia di gruppo, ho fatto le Frattocchie, figlio di Partito...

Cosa sono le Frattocchie?

Le Frattocchie sono le scuole del Partito Comunista. A 13 anni mio nonno comunista e mio padre mi mandavano per alcuni periodi lì a studiare, politica, comunicazione...

Come una scuola superiore?

Era la scuola del Partito. Abbiamo cominciato lì a fare politica, a fare informazione. **Era una**

cosa puramente ideologica. Quello che ci raccontavano noi portavamo avanti. Quando

[Definizione di media attivista e media attivismo secondo l'intervistato](#)

[Influenza del territorio sulla scelta di essere media attivista](#)

[Riferimenti etici](#)

[Lotte contadine e partigiani](#)

[Formazione delle giovani generazioni, Frequentazione della scuola di Partito su indicazione del padre e del nonno](#)

Ideologia di Partito

la vita ci è venuta incontro, con l'arrivo di Cuffaro e tutti quelli che erano stati di sinistra fino a quel momento diventarono tutti cuffariani noi eravamo un gruppo di ragazzini poco più che ventenni con la grandissima fortuna di ritrovarci una comandante partigiana di 83 anni¹ che ci indica la via. E lì noi diventiamo media attivisti. Non lo diventiamo perché ci vogliamo diventare ma è l'unico modo per dire di essere liberi. La cosa bella è che avendo avuto quel grande riferimento etico, noi siamo la generazione delle stragi, la mafia noi l'abbiamo conosciuta non perché ce l'hanno raccontata ma perché sono esplose due bombe che hanno portato via Falcone e Borsellino e tutti gli uomini di scorta. Da noi fino a quel momento la mafia era qualcosa di intangibile. Lo dico in un paese comunista, in cui i pentiti di mafia dicevano che la mafia non aveva mai infilato un piede dentro al Comune. Però anche in quel contesto in cui l'antimafia era molto pesante, per noi 16enni 17enni la mafia era un'idea, una parola. Diventa un fatto quando saltano in aria quelle persone. E lì decidi e la scelta è stata quella di essere diversi, perché abbiamo fatto quella scelta non lo so. Allora cominci a cercare i mezzi per farla e la cosa ancora più bella della nostra storia è che quel mezzo non ce lo regala la nostra gioventù. Non è che utilizzare internet, la stampa, il giornale era una scelta nostra. Fu sempre la comandante partigiana che a 83 anni e avendo capito lei da toscana che il potere in quel caso denominato mafia era fatto di lotte simboliche secondo la sua idea avere un giornale locale un mezzo, un media che è dentro il posto in cui c'è il legame tra il potere politico e la mafia e il potere della mafia in quel momento era in Regione ed era Salvatore Cuffaro² che lì ci fosse un media di base che potesse parlare male del presidente della Regione era per quel simbolo di mafiosità una devastazione e infatti così è stato. Lì nasce la nostra storia, di analfabeti, giornalmisticamente parlando perché ognuno di noi veniva dalla sua storia artigiani, disoccupati, universitari,

nessuno di noi era preparato all'impresa ma l'abbiamo fatta. L'abbiamo fatta. Per un periodo. era assolutamente inutile perché

Infiltrazione mafiosa nel territorio

Riferimento etico, la partigiana 83enne indica la via

Inizio attività di media attivismo come "unico modo per essere liberi"

Esperienza diretta di episodi mafiosi, la morte dei giudici Falcone e Borsellino

Si diventa media attivisti per essere "diversi"

Il giornale locale come strumento di lotta simbolica interno al territorio mafioso.

Gruppo composto di gente comune

quando con un giornale dici che la mafia è una montagna di merda vabbé è bello, però è inutile perché il mafioso lo sa, ci si fa una risata e ti tiene anche come simbolo per dimostrare agli altri che c'è democrazia. Non c'è la mafia in quel paese perché? Perché si può dire che la mafia è una montagna di merda. Dopo di che abbiamo cominciato a fare quello che i Maestri ci avevano insegnato e cioè che la mafia è sì una grande montagna di merda ma anche una grande montagna di soldi. Abbiamo cominciato a piazzarci dentro agli uffici tecnici del paese facendo saltare gli affari e lì siamo diventati realmente qualcosa di pericoloso. La nostra storia non nasce da una necessità ideologica nasce dalla necessità di dover rispondere a un'offesa che per noi era non poter dire quello che pensavamo. Tutto quello che noi abbiamo fatto negli anni è stato solamente per poter dire quello che pensavamo. E la reazione è stata quella molto più cattiva. Quando cominci a toccargli i soldi allora cominciano a diventare cattivi e quindi tutto quello che era il tritacarne della mafiosità lo abbiamo vissuto ma era per un'idea di un'altra società che volevamo. Dicono sempre che per la mia generazione, che poi è anche la tua, quella che non ha ancora quarant'anni ma ha superato i trenta, che ha visto il muro di Berlino crollare perché gliel'hanno quasi raccontato che noi rimpiangiamo quello che non abbiamo visto e non è così. Il mio Paese, quello piccolino siciliano, quando io ero piccolo aveva il teatro comunale, la banda musicale, il gruppo folcloristico, aveva un villaggio che tutti gli anni raccoglieva tutti i figli del paese che fossero figli di contadini, che fossero figli di professori o di notai. Era una città diversa. Quando hanno vinto loro, hanno chiuso il teatro hanno chiuso tutto quanto, il villaggio... perché quel luogo doveva diventare non più un luogo di socialità ma una serie di bisogni individuali che potessero loro gestire. Il bisogno individuale è molto più facile da gestire del bisogno collettivo. Io rimpiangevo quel modello di società. La nostra attività era mirata a fare un altro modello di società e dopo la fase iniziale noi

abbiamo sempre cercato, oltre alla critica al potere, di costruire quello che potesse essere un altro modello di società. Abbiamo

La mafia consente la critica dell'organizzazione per dare una parvenza di democrazia e dimostrare di non esistere

Riferimenti etici

Interventi atti a fermare le attività economiche della mafia

Libertà di pensiero

Rischio e minacce

Accettazione del rischio in favore dell'ideale

La mafia attacca la socialità, l'ideale è messo in crisi

Diventa media attivista per perseguire l'ideale di un diverso modello di società

Critica e progettazione

utilizzato tutti gli strumenti che ci potevano permettere di farlo, la stampa, internet. Tutto quello che fosse libero che fosse accessibile. Non era una scelta ideologica, quello era il costo, quello ci permetteva di fare anche perché la capacità di chi aveva 30 anni era maggiore di chi ne aveva 50 e lì non ci potevano contrastare. Eravamo migliori noi. Anche perché nei canali ufficiali noi non ci potevamo entrare perché loro erano più potenti. Abbiamo fatto quello che dovevamo e ti posso dire che non è stata una brutta scelta perché alla fine della fiera quella struttura di potere è crollata attorno al loro capo e la nostra piccola struttura di opposizione e di nuova forma di comunicazione ancora è viva. Compie 10 anni, ha 60 redattori in giro per l'Italia quasi tutte donne quindi probabilmente l'idea era quella giusta ma, appunto, non è stata una scelta mirata. Ci siamo trovati, l'abbiamo dovuta fare.

Ti posso chiedere in che modo sono diventati cattivi?

Risata di imbarazzo, colpo di tosse

Possiamo anche lasciare stare, fermami se mi ritieni indiscreta.

No, no. Ne possiamo parlare. Tanto la storia oramai è finita quindi la possiamo anche raccontare. Sono diventati cattivi perché quando gli abbiamo toccato i soldi abbiamo dimostrato che ... come te la posso raccontare? Te la racconto come un film. La scena dei 100 passi che è stato visto dappertutto. Era l'idea per cui viene il giovane ragazzino alla radio poteva prendere per il culo il capo mafia andando a toccare l'intoccabilità del potere mafioso che quello c'ha, il mafioso non deve essere toccato. Il politico collegato alla mafia non può essere toccato quando le cose sono unite diventa ancora peggio. Quando noi abbiamo cominciato a toccare sia i soldi dimostrando che si potevano prendere e si potevano evitare le ruberie e abbiamo toccato direttamente il capo la reazione è stata quella selvaggia per cui noi abbiamo vissuto tre anni dal 2006

intimidazioni, minacce, abbiamo ricevuto i bossoli a casa, i tentativi di violenza fisica, Scelta del media: libero, gratuito e accessibile

Scarto generazionale nell'utilizzo della comunicazione

Disequilibrio di potere

Raggiungimento dell'obiettivo

Nuova forma di comunicazione

La scelta di essere media-attivisti è una scelta dettata dalle circostanze

Minacce dalla mafia

ripetuti danneggiamenti ai nostri mezzi. Cioè tutto quello che era nel tritacarne della mafiosità. Sono diventati cattivi. Perché non potevano permettere che una parte di ragazzini che non avevano niente da guadagnarci, perché avevano solo da perdere, potesse dimostrare agli altri che si poteva resistere. Cioè, non è che si vendono tutti. Le condizioni ci sono. C'è chi si vende e va dall'altra parte e chi resta in una zona grigia. E con coraggio di prendere posizioni e poi sai da me, in gran parte del meridione ma lo sto notando anche qua al nord, il quieto vivere è una cosa che tutti auspicano. E alla fine c'è anche la parte assolutamente, come posso ti posso dire, uno dice "ho provato, non ci sono riuscito, sono tutti uguali, me ne sto dalla mia parte". Noi dimostriamo che ci può essere un'altra parte. Quindi nel tempo tante persone hanno cominciato ad alzare un po' la testa e dovevano fargliela abbassare, perché non ci potevamo permettere noi, che non eravamo niente secondo loro, eravamo ricattabili, minacciabili, senza lavoro, di poter alzare la testa c'era il rischio che lo facessero in tanti. E c'era il rischio che lo Stato, che in quel momento era totalmente inerme... io faccio sempre l'esempio che Cuffaro, che non è poi lui era quello che rappresentava, in quel momento era assolutamente intoccabile dappertutto perché era la rappresentazione di un partito che in quel momento poteva decidere le sorti al livello nazionale e su quella persona per molti anni si sono chiusi gli occhi. Quando prese il suo primo rinvio a giudizio era il 2005 e si votò una mozione di sfiducia all'Ars su 30 persone all'opposizione lo votarono in 3 e tutti gli altri non la votarono e c'era gran parte di quella classe politica che ora andrà al Governo del Paese, nel Partito Democratico, Angelo Capodicasa, Crisafulli, eccetera eccetera, grandi esponenti della sinistra, quindi lui era intoccabile. E la reazione fu quella, scatenarono su di noi quello che c'era da scatenare. Tu fai conto che in quel momento si incastra un'altra grande situazione economica: il piano dei rifiuti siciliani. Cuffaro imbastisce questo grande maxi-piano della gestione dei rifiuti con poteri commissariali. Praticamente lo Stato

dava al Presidente della Regione la possibilità di fare quello che voleva derogando anche

[La mafia si sente minacciata](#)

[La scelta di una posizione](#)

[La scelta di una posizione](#)

[Connessione mafia-politica](#)

[Interessi finanziari della mafia](#)

scelte continuavano a non avere niente di mirato, utilizzavamo quello che era

alle leggi prefettizie cioè il Presidente della Regione, il Commissario straordinario nell'emergenza rifiuti poteva fare quello che voleva. Imbastisce questo maxi-piano con mega inceneritori capaci di bruciare il 120% dell'immondizia prodotta e 22 mega discariche grandi come infiniti campi di calcio. Alla fine quel piano che solamente a guardarlo sembrava una cosa spropositata, non c'è bisogno di essere tecnici, era un piano costruito per far fare il movimento terra alle mafie. Punto. Ma era chiarissimo. Solo che al momento gli unici a resistere fummo pochissime associazioni locali. Veramente poche. C'era un professore di scuola elementare di Aragona si chiama Caltagirone, un paesino, vicino ad Agrigento, una barista di Casteltermini Tiziana Capodici dove doveva nascere uno degli inceneritori e i gruppi di giornalisti locali. Quella fu la prima resistenza iniziale e quel progetto che era di 20 milioni l'anno per 20 anni era un progetto che era chiaramente riferito alla criminalità e agli amici degli amici. In quel momento scoppiò veramente l'inferno. In quel momento c'era paura di tornare a casa, in quel momento i bossoli non si contavano più, le lettere minatorie non si contavano più. Quel piano è stato fatto saltare e soddisfazione vuole che neanche due anni fa il pentito Di Gatu uno dei maggiori pentiti di mafia siciliani dichiarò: "quel piano fu scritto dalle mafie e consegnato alla Regione per farla approvare". Cosa bella però sarebbe andare a riprendere tutti i giornali dell'epoca e sentirci tacciare come quelli che erano contro il progresso dalle stesse persone che poi hanno festeggiato la condanna di Cuffaro. In quel momento utilizzavamo tutti i canali che avevamo e la rete fu uno degli unici canali che ci permetteva di stare in contatto. Tieni presente che volevano costruire un inceneritore su un fiume, proprio su un fiume il Platani. Un altro doveva nascere a Paternò, vicino Catania dentro un sito di interesse comunitario. Un altro su un colle di Bellalampo a Palermo che è già una grande discarica. I movimenti si unirono grazie alla rete, anche quella volta utilizzammo l'unico mezzo che era accessibile. Tutte le nostre

La "Resistenza" al business mafioso

Modifica del medium in base alle nuove esigenze

Modifica del medium in base alle nuove esigenze

nacque in un paese in cui non doveva nascere. Secondo le logiche della gente assolutamente disinteressata, invece fu il Comune che fece

accessibile. Poi ci siamo riusciti, facemmo rete veramente in tutta la Sicilia a smantellare nell'arco di due anni quel piano che poi non si fece più. Lì la mafia si incazzò un bel po'.

Raggiungimento dell'obiettivo anche attraverso il medium

Come avete usato la rete? Cosa avete fatto?

La rete fu utilizzata per mettere in contatto i vari comitati perché lì ci fu l'occupazione del Comune di Aragona ... fu quella la cosa centrale, quel Comune non fu scelto a caso da ... Non so se fu Cuffaro direttamente o qualcuno che lavorava per lui. Scelsero i Comuni dei siti dove c'era gran parte della parentela per avere minore attrito con la popolazione. Scelsero dei siti sicuri. Quel Comune era il Comune dove c'era la cognata della famiglia Cuffaro, la famiglia Chiarelli, il Sindaco era un fascista, una persona che aveva il busto di Mussolini in casa quindi lì non si aspettavano assolutamente resistenza. E, infatti, fu il Comune che resistette di più! Con l'occupazione del Comune che durò 60 giorni.

La rete sociale come strumento di lotta

Come lo occupaste?

Occupammo la sala del Consiglio Comunale per 60 giorni.

Consecutivi?

Si.

Tutti voi ragazzi?

Tutti noi ragazzi e gran parte dei vecchi del paese. Fu una delle esperienze più belle della mia vita. Perché si vedeva la popolazione che era con noi. Per esempio il fornaio chiudeva alle 7 e portava le pizze rimaste dentro la sala del Consiglio Comunale. La mattina ci portavano la colazione. Mi ricordo un poliziotto che la mattina veniva in divisa a controllare l'occupazione e la sera veniva in borghese a occupare il Comune. Fu una delle esperienze più belle che ricordo perché

La protesta coinvolge generazioni diverse

stare dentro al nostro giornale voleva dire stare esclusi dalla vita civile, sociale e politica

più resistenza. L'altro fu Casteltermini, altro feudo dell'UDC all'epoca, dove nacque la resistenza... perché dove c'è comunque una motivazione la gente si mette assieme. Non è vero che la gente è disinteressata è che deve trovare un motivo per lottare assieme e deve capire che non siamo tutti uguali. E qualcuno fu meraviglioso. E' una storia che mi pento di non aver scritto perché era da raccontare. L'odore, tutta l'intera piccola comunità, essere tutta là, viverla. Lasciammo il Comune dopo 60 giorni con gli stessi uomini della pubblica sicurezza che stracciavano le denunce che ci avevano fatto. Che si vergognavano di averle fatte i primi giorni. Era bellissimo. La rete fu utilizzata così, fu utilizzata per mettere in rete i comuni della Sicilia che resistevano. Poi venne un professore dall'America, non ricordo il nome, che lavorava all'allora sperimentale piano di rifiuti zero e fu non solo una grande crescita dal punto di vista sociale, sono persone con cui ho vissuto due anni assieme perché quella battaglia durò dal 2003 al 2006 però anche il livello di crescita culturale, di mezzi perché volevamo sperare che c'era un altro mondo possibile. Che la gestione dei rifiuti non doveva essere soltanto quella di bruciare ma che potevano essere riciclati. Cosa che magari nel nord la fanno da una vita ma che da noi giù era totalmente una cosa nuova. Lo abbiamo fatto per questo, per spiegare che c'era un altro mondo possibile. E ci siamo riusciti perché oggi in Sicilia i Comuni che hanno la maggiore raccolta differenziata sono quei Comuni che hanno visto quel tipo di battaglia che fu una battaglia popolare. Fu veramente una battaglia popolare. Abbiamo vinto per quello, perché abbiamo usato un mezzo che fu la rete che loro non potevano utilizzare.

Quindi la scelta della rete dipende da una questione generazionale?

Fondamentalmente sì. Assolutamente sì. E' una gran barzelletta quella dei ragazzi, io ho avuto sempre problemi con la generazione dei miei genitori. Non ho avuto mai problemi con la generazione dei ragazzi. Esempio nostro,

La motivazione della protesta

La rete sociale come strumento di lotta

La speranza di un altro mondo possibile

Il mezzo come strumento generazionale di lotta

Fiducia nella nuova generazione

chiedere sponsorizzazioni perché non ci avrebbero sponsorizzati e quindi era tutto di

di quel paese. Assolutamente. Voleva dire essere tagliati fuori. E' un paese del meridione dove tutto è in mano al pubblico, non abbiamo imprese private che da uno sfogo nel lavoro. Noi tutto in mano al pubblico. E ancora peggio, è tutto in mano alla politica perché anche se vuoi ... hai necessità di essere ricoverato dentro un ospedale se non hai l'amico che ti ci porta aspetti sei mesi per andarci. Tutto è in mano al pubblico. E in quel contesto in cui la generazione dei miei genitori aveva avuto tutto ... I miei genitori hanno preso un paese che era stato riportato ai livelli di un paese del nord Italia dagli analfabeti che erano i miei nonni durante le lotte contadine e quando ci fu da affrontare il problema si arresero. Si arresero, in maniera molto vigliacca. Lì i ragazzi sono stati spettacolari. E quando parlo di noi, noi avevamo 22, 23 anni ma quando abbiamo cominciato poi la parte seria della partita eravamo ragazzi di 14 anni e quando hai 14 anni e dai 14 ai 24 non vedi altro che minacce, intimidazioni e resisti è perché fai una scelta. E quella generazione è spettacolare, io non ho mai avuto problemi con loro. Nella partita dei rifiuti in tutto quello che abbiamo fatto dopo. Se dai indicazioni, se vedi che... ci puoi credere in qualcosa i ragazzi lo fanno. Con la capacità maggiore è che hanno una capacità di utilizzo degli strumenti innovativi che è assolutamente superiore a quella degli altri. Noi abbiamo gestito un giornale per 10 anni in maniera totalmente autofinanziata, distribuito di notte, abbiamo vissuto perché c'era gente che ci voleva credere.

Delusione nei confronti della generazione precedente

Scelta operata in età adolescenziale

Generazionalità dei mezzi

Ad Est era cartaceo?

Si

Come è avvenuto il passaggio a Blog?

Nel 2007. Anche lì c'è stato un fatto abbastanza particolare. Sono giorni di vita vissuta ed è difficile ricordare tutti i pezzi. Siccome il giornale ce lo siamo sempre pagati noi, non potevamo andare in edicola perché non ci avrebbero comprati, non potevamo

l'avrebbero bruciata nell'acido, quindi...

Mancavano soldi perché non avevamo più

tasca nostra. Abbiamo vissuto anche grandi periodi di mancanza di fondi. E lì c'è un fatto ancora più particolare perché si candida il fratello di Cuffaro come Sindaco ...

A Raffadali?

Sì, e ci viene chiesto quasi di lasciar perdere perché avremmo perso. E una buona parte della politica, quella che era rimasta dall'altra parte della famiglia Cuffaro quasi accetta la resa. Ancora una volta, invece, i ragazzi decidono di farla la partita. E infatti una partita di 40 giorni di campagna elettorale un gruppo di ragazzini tra l'altro finita anche non malissimo perché dallo zero che avevamo siamo arrivati al 42. Lì, però, c'è un'offesa, un'offesa feroce e cominciano le lettere minatorie alle nostre famiglie.

42? Punti percentuali? Vi siete presentati come lista?

Sì, abbiamo fatto un Comitato Giovani per Raffadali. Eravamo noi, e la cosa bella di quella partita, per continuare a dire delle differenze generazionali, è che molti figli erano con noi e molti padri erano con loro. C'era questo clima di tensione, è una cosa che ricordo ancora, non me lo dimenticherò mai, c'era un signore lui aveva un gran bisogno di soldi perché era un povero disperato e mandava suo figlio a stare con noi quasi a lavarsi la coscienza. Io fui costretto a fare questo ma tu vai a fare altro. E continuava a farlo venire, anche l'altro figlio un po' più piccolo quando veniva in un comitato che avevamo creato proprio davanti al Comune, continuava a dirgli: "tu non devi essere come me, devi essere come loro" Ed era tremendo sentirlo da un padre però è anche l'idea che si potesse cambiare qualcosa. E lì, finita quella partita che abbiamo perso, perché la nostra è una storia di grandi sconfitte, ne abbiamo vinta una e le abbiamo vinte tutte però per 10 anni abbiamo solo perso ci fu poi una reazione ancora peggiore. Cominciarono ad attaccare le nostre famiglie, cominciarono ad attaccare mio nipote che aveva due anni, mandavano lettere a mia sorella che

Impegno politico

Minacce

che ventenni. Alla fine di questo gran giro che si fanno in Sicilia fanno una mappatura ed

niente per cui i fondatori ci siamo spostati in giro per l'Italia per avere soldi per continuare a finanziare il giornale e dare un minimo di tranquillità anche a quello che restava delle nostre famiglie perché le nostre famiglie hanno dovuto pagare il prezzo più alto di quello che facevamo noi. Quindi qui nasce l'esodo di molti di noi. Che poi è un esodo calcolato perché siamo riusciti sempre a tenere la struttura. Faticando. Faticando tantissimo però l'abbiamo tenuta. E sì, i ragazzi, i miei coetanei sono stati molto molto molto più coraggiosi, strutturati, rispetto alla generazione dei miei genitori. Non hanno mai mollato un centimetro. Lo posso dire con grandissimo orgoglio che chi ha cominciato 10 anni fa è sempre rimasto. Non hanno mollato un centimetro. Mentre gli altri scappavano, non hanno mollato un centimetro. Però l'ho sempre trovato questo. Io non ho mai visto una difficoltà di azione nei ragazzi. E' da dargli un'alternativa, è da dimostrargli che si può fare e magari dargli anche un esempio, che si può fare. Dopo di che sono spettacolari.

L'attivismo della nuova generazione

Fiducia nella nuova generazione

Lo spostamento a Bologna avviene per una esigenza di sopravvivenza...

Si.

Seguendoti però, vedo che tu continui a lavorare. Stai lavorando con un dossier sulle mafie in Emilia Romagna

Quella è un'altra storia carina. La storia delle mafie resta sempre una storia internazionale, non è una cosa che non nasce... a noi ci hanno sempre raccontato che nasce in regione e resta lì. C'è questa grandissima... la racconto sempre nelle scuole quando ci vado ed è la cosa che mi diverte di più. Sono un volontario quindi ci vado a rubare tempo al lavoro materiale... La prima commissione anti-mafia in Sicilia arrivò nel 1870 grosso modo o '71, ed erano due piemontesi, Sonnino e Franchetti. Quindi il problema delle mafie in Sicilia è conosciuto dall'Unità di Italia. Che fanno questi due, ragazzini tra l'altro, erano due conti piemontesi poco più

escono con un documento che sembra una barzelletta però influenzerà quasi 100 anni.

Loro dicono “non esiste la mafia in Sicilia perché il siciliano di per sé è portato a delinquere. Quindi, essendo insito nel siciliano essere portato a delinquere non può associarsi per far del male, lo fa perché è una bestia!”

Quasi lombrosiani!

Lo banalizzo, però è così. Secondo loro, nel 1870 in Sicilia la mappatura dei capimafia erano notai, dottori, medici. Era la grande borghesia siciliana. Questa grandissima barzelletta reggerà per quasi 110 anni perché la prima legge contro la mafia in Italia nasce con l'omicidio La Torre dell'82 e con il maxi processo dell'86. Se vai nel 1960 e '70 vedrai delle sentenze di Tribunali italiani che si ricollegano, per assolvere i mafiosi, alla Sonnino – Franchetti del 1870. Era un bluff, uno straordinario bluff che però ha resistito 110 anni fino alle stragi.

Fino a Falcone e Borsellino? Fino a quando Borsellino non ha pensato di andare a controllare i traffici economici?

Sì! Fino a Falcone³ e Borsellino⁴. Reggerà perché la storia delle mafie in Sicilia e in Italia è una storia di grande economia, lo è sempre stata, si è sempre nascosta. Una cosa bella da vedere che si trova in un libro molto carino è di Salvatore Lupo uno dei più grandi storici italiani che la stessa mappatura che c'era nel 1870 della mafia palermitana resisterà fino al 1944. Con in mezzo Mori, con in mezzo tutte queste cosiddette repressioni contro la mafia che hanno sempre represso la mafia militare ma mai quella intellettuale ed economica. Non è mai stata repressa, dopodiché c'è l'accordo del 1944 con lo sbarco in Sicilia favorito dalla mafia italo-americana per vendetta contro il fascismo e la strutturazione della mafia economica che conosciamo. Una grande sconfitta solamente con le lotte contadine nei quali i contadini spaccano le reni alla mafia campestre che si trasforma e diventa mafia economica. 1955. cresce lì. Quella

grandissima barzelletta che la mafia è la coppola storta che ti fanno vedere in tv è una barzelletta. Mafia economica, da sempre e dappertutto. Anche in Emilia Romagna

Perché proprio l'Emilia?

Perché è una Regione ricca. Ma non è che la racconta Fava che è un siciliano, la cosa che ci rispondevano fino a 5 anni fa era che eravamo mitomani che vedevano la mafia ovunque, ma Carlo Lucarelli in "Un giorno dopo l'altro"⁵ che è un libro del 1990 racconta perfettamente come sorvegliati speciali tenuti in questa Regione, 3652 dal '58 al '94, hanno fatto di questa terra il luogo perfetto dove fare il grande ciclo di soldi perché è una terra ricca.

Quando sono arrivato qua, era il 2007, ho avuto la sensazione di capire quale fosse la sensazione degli emiliani di fronte alla mafia che c'era, c'era da anni, c'era da decenni e ricordo che se parlavo di alieni anziché della mafia, la gente credeva più agli alieni che alla mafia. Come è nato questo tentativo, perché quando sono arrivato qua ero in una fase di devastazione fisica e psicologica terrificante. Licenziato dalla Regione, fuori mandato, non avevamo un soldo per campare il giornale quindi abbiamo dovuto materialmente utilizzare le mani per avere soldi però l'idea era sempre quella, di riuscire a creare qualcosa. E con un po' di ragazzi negli anni e abbiamo trovato una rete di Associazioni in giro per l'Emilia per vedere come girava. E questa poi sbocca in una serie di piccole lezioni nelle scuole, approfittando delle occupazioni perché in questa Regione, che fosse Ravenna, che fosse Reggio Emilia, che fosse Modena, che fosse Bologna fino a qualche anno fa di mafia non se ne parlava. E quindi abbiamo approfittato di quei ragazzi che andavano nel sud dell'Italia, specialmente nei terreni confiscati che rientrano e volevano fare la piccola conferenza nei confronti dei loro coetanei. E noi li entravamo con le storie che sapevamo della mafia in Emilia: Gruppo Ferruzzi, Raul Gardini, già negli anni 80 facevano gli affari con la famiglia dei Buscemi che era il "ministro dei lavori pubblici" dei Corleonesi.

Ricerca fondi per la realizzazione del giornale

Coinvolgimento dei giovani

Lezioni nelle scuole

Silenzio sull'argomento mafia

Coinvolgimento di giovani a parlare con i coetanei

Ferruzzi?

Gruppo Ferruzzi, sì. Nel 1984 il primo grande collegamento fra la mafia e la grande economia e Gruppo Ferruzzi fa un accordo con la famiglia dei Buscemi, siciliani. Buscemi era il ministro di Cosa Nostra per i lavori pubblici. Gruppo Ferruzzi solleva le aziende dei Buscemi facendole proprie quindi evitandogli il sequestro da parte dello Stato in cambio il Gruppo Ferruzzi va in Sicilia a fare gli appalti e la famiglia Buscemi entra in Emilia Romagna e in Toscana con le cave di marmo di Massa Carrara. 1984. Il primo grande accordo che nasce fra economia e mafia che io ho potuto studiare nasce lì. Tanto è vero che le più grandi aziende che fanno affari in Sicilia e hanno appalti in Sicilia sono tutte emiliane. E sono quasi tutte Coop, tra cui la CMC di Ravenna che ha vinto l'appalto per la progettazione del ponte sullo stretto. Però lì nasce, ed era una cosa nuova. Le sparatorie a Modena ci sono nel 1991 in Piazza La Pomposa. La creazione delle bische clandestine è del 1980. Quindi erano tutte storie che già c'erano però non potevi raccontarle perché nessuno ti credeva. Ricordo ancora una delle ultime cose che ho fatto per "l'Unità" fu andare a un incontro fra Tosi e Cofferati. Il Sindaco di Verona e il Sindaco progressista di Bologna e lì in concetto di verità era su quanti sgomberi avevano fatto nei campi Rom e come li avevano fatti, per cui Tosi li aveva fatti con i manganelli e, quindi, era conservatore. Cofferati lo aveva fatto mandando i vigili urbani e quindi era progressista. Alla domanda "c'è la mafia in Emilia?" dicevano "No, è un problema degli altri". E lì abbiamo cominciato a studiare. Poi la grande fortuna quale è stata? E' stata che io ho vinto, assolutamente inaspettato, il Fava per il giornalismo 2011, la prof.ssa Stefania Pellegrini dell'Università di Bologna da anni faceva seminari, aveva la necessità di "aiuto" per trasformare i suoi seminari in un corso di studi, gli offro il mio e mi affidano il laboratorio di giornalismo e nasce il Dossier sulle Mafie in Emilia⁶ ancora una volta con grandissima sorpresa dei ragazzi, perché mi

dissero “i ragazzi fanno questo laboratorio esclusivamente per i 3 crediti, quindi non ti aspettare niente da loro” tant’è vero che due anni a mezzo dopo quei ragazzi da cui non avrei dovuto aspettarmi niente fanno tutti attività anti-mafia, hanno cominciato quasi tutti a fare i giornalisti e i due Dossier che sono usciti negli anni sono fonte piena per poliziotti, magistrati, stampa, tutti. Questi ragazzi da cui non dovevo aspettarmi niente hanno realizzato 120 pagine di Dossier tra cui una mappatura precisa delle mafie per ogni provincia che viene utilizzata anche dalle Forze dell’Ordine. L’idea è stata messa sul campo e vissuta realmente con i mezzi che avevamo. Il problema dei mezzi è la curiosità. Il Dossier di quest’anno 2012 basato sulle mafie straniere veniva dalla curiosità. Com’è che la mafia è cruenta, come ‘Ndrangheta e Camorra, non tanto più Cosa Nostra possono permettere a mafie straniere di utilizzare il territorio liberamente? Perché fanno gli affari insieme, quindi vuol dire che il traffico di stupefacenti sub-appaltato dalla ‘Ndrangheta alla mafia albanese a Modena vuol dire i traffici di armi della ‘Ndrangheta in Albania. Vuol dire che la prostituzione sub-appaltata alle famiglie nigeriane di questa Regione vuol dire il traffico dei rifiuti tossici in Nigeria. Questa Regione è utilizzata come porta di entrata di traffici internazionali che porta Bologna città e alcuni posti come Bentivoglio come capitali mondiali del narco-traffico. Le scene che vediamo nei film come Scarface⁷ a Los Angeles o a Chicago le facevano a Bentivoglio non più di due anni fa, queste identiche scene con tutti i capimafia che si riunivano a gestire la cosa. Tutto questo nasce dalla voglia dei ragazzi di fare. La curiosità. La cosa più bella dei ragazzi è la curiosità. Se la lasci libera, se non gli poni schemi... anche perché poi, come fai? io ho 37 anni, chi ne ha 20 ha molti più neuroni di me! Quindi se loro hanno un’intuizione è bene seguirla. Noi possiamo dare i mezzi, come seguirla, la credibilità per andare a parlare con magistrati e poliziotti, come da qualcuno che c’è passato, però loro mettevano qualcosa. 111 pagine che sono lì, un lavoro per tutti. Abbiamo scelto di non essere assolutamente né registrati né di pubblicare perché quel

Fiducia nella nuova generazione

Libera circolazione della informazione

lavoro deve essere di tutti e deve essere gratis.
Disponibile a tutti.

Ti definisci un media attivista? La sensazione che ho ascoltandoti è che fondamentalmente avreste svolto la vostra attività con qualsiasi mezzo di comunicazione voi aveste avuto a disposizione. Dalla tavoletta di cera a Facebook. Di per sé la rete è proprio solo un mezzo?

Si, ma vedi, questo è un Paese anestetizzato se ci pensi. L'idea per cui ti devi giocare la partita sui mezzi anestetizzati ... il grande problema di questo Paese è sempre stato il giornalismo ...

In che senso i mezzi sono anestetizzati?

Sono anestetizzati perché controllo della stampa, cioè dei grandi mezzi di comunicazione è da sempre anestetizzato in questo Paese. I grandi mezzi di comunicazione sono sempre appartenuti a famiglie che rispondevano al potere politico. Un esempio, quando la famiglia Presenti decide di fare l'affare sul ponte sullo stretto la prima cosa che fa non è acquisire ingegneri, geometri che possano fare il progetto. No, la prima cosa che fa è acquistare i giornali del Meridione in modo da presentare un progetto nell'arco dei 20 anni che nessuno ha visto, nessuno ha sentito, nessuno ha mai toccato, nessuno ha mai realizzato però tutti lo avevano presente perché glielo raccontavano ogni giorno dalla stampa. Stampa che era asservita a un progetto che era un progetto editoriale. Berlusconi è venuto dopo ma non è che ha fatto delle novità. Quando, in quel momento, uno strumento, qualsiasi strumento ti permette di poter dare un'altra informazione, è benvenuto. Fosse stata la tavoletta o il giornale locale che è la cosa più vecchia del mondo, il cartaceo o Facebook quello ti permetteva comunque di scappare via dai mezzi di comunicazione ufficiali per non parlare poi delle televisioni che da sempre sono a servizio di qualcosa o di qualcuno tranne che della popolazione.

Sfuggire ai media "anestetizzati" e controllati

I nuovi mezzi di comunicazione servono a sfuggire ai media "anestetizzati" e controllati

Quindi fondamentalmente, il fatto che Internet rappresenti un modo veloce per trasmettere informazioni da un capo all'altro del mondo non vi interessava.

Quello che vi interessava era avere un mezzo che sfuggisse al controllo di una generazione che non lo sapeva usare. Vi interessava trasmettere, creare una vostra rete in un sistema non controllato...

Assolutamente si

Ma questo non voleva dire escludere anche chi, tra quelli che vi seguivano, apparteneva alla generazione più anziana?

No. Questa è una cosa da poter smontare. Vittoria Giunti aveva 83 anni quando l'ho conosciuta, la persona più giovane che avessi conosciuto. Mai paura di una novità, mai paura di mettersi in gioco, mai paura di chiedere perché. Un'altra persona molto giovane che ho conosciuto era mio nonno, analfabeta, contadino, figlio della terra, bruciato dal sole però era di una curiosità devastante. Era di una curiosità devastante. Non restavano esclusi, no. Ti dico un verbo che viene dalla mia –purtroppo- formazione, noi facevamo guerriglia. Facevamo quello che potevamo. Il mezzo furono le mail che non erano controllabili, poi furono il giornale cartaceo distribuito di notte perché arrivava comunque in casa, poi viene internet, viene Facebook⁸, viene Twitter. Comunque era la ricerca di un mezzo che riuscisse a scavalcare di continuo in velocità, perché dovevamo scappare sempre, la potenza di chi ci reagiva. Era lì, dopodiché ho sempre avuto molti pochi problemi con chi era curioso perché chi è curioso ti viene dietro, non ha paura delle novità. Cosa che invece l'altra parte aveva e tanto perché non ha mai cercato di adeguarsi. Noi non avevamo neanche una lira, continuo sempre a dirlo, pochissimi mezzi ma il giornale lo abbiamo sempre stampato in 62 numeri. L'altra parte aveva un potere economico che potevano stampare un giornale solo per fare un favore ma non sono mai riusciti a farci concorrenza su quel campo. Perché non riuscivano a mettere qualcosa di

La generazione degli anziani come riferimento

La generazione degli anziani come riferimento

Fare guerriglia

concreto, qualcosa di credibile su foglio di carta. Ci hanno provato, in tutti i modi. Dopo due numeri chiudevano. Perché non riuscivano ad avere le idee, con le radio fu la stessa cosa. Le radio libere degli anni '70 ebbero una apertura di libertà incredibile.

Come ora le radio web, non riescono a venirci dietro perché comunque il mezzo ... Ora stiamo aiutando a crescere una radio web che è la naturale proseguimento del giornale del Blog. Non riescono a venirci dietro, non hanno l'entusiasmo, non hanno le idee per venirci dietro.

Lo strumento comunicativo per voi è proprio un'arma...

Si, riesci a essere sempre un passo avanti. Riesci a incuriosire chi viene dopo. Ti tieni quelli che hanno cominciato, mantieni chi è curioso, continui a dare mezzi alle nuove generazioni e sono loro... se c'è un ragazzino di 16 anni che gioca con un iPod e io non so neanche come pronunciarlo e gli do un giornale cartaceo, gli sembra vecchio. Fatelo per radio, così puoi sperimentare tutto quello che vuoi. Lo metto dentro, gli do il mezzo necessario per farlo, quello che non abbiamo avuto noi perché noi il mezzo ce lo siamo costruito e cominci a vedere lui cosa pensa. Segui i meccanismi mentali loro. Non possiamo rimanere fermi alle nostre idee, sarebbe la cosa più sbagliata del mondo. Il giornale cartaceo di 10 anni fa aveva un valore che ora ha perso totalmente. Ora c'è un altro strumento. Siamo sempre noi ma quello strumento permette di scappare all'assuefazione dei nostri mezzi di stampa.

Ti definisci un media attivista?

Lo sono stato...

Tuo malgrado?

Era il mezzo che ci permetteva di stare a galla. Non è stata mai una scelta. Continuo sempre a dirlo se non avessi conosciuto Vittoria avrei fatto scelte diverse. Probabilmente. Quello è stato e continua a essere quello. Come capisco ora con il lavoro sulle mafie nel Nord che se non troviamo un

Modifica continua del mezzo in base alle esigenze di fuga

Formazione delle nuove generazioni

Il mezzo non è mai stata una scelta

La Motivazione nell'incontro con una partigiana

mezzo di diffusione diverso rispetto a quello che può essere anche Internet, resteremo di nicchia tutta la vita. Per cui, noi abbiamo stampato il Dossier a luglio, pubblicato sui siti locali lo hanno scaricato in 20000 in un arco di 4 mesi. Grandissimo risultato. Però se tu pensi che Il Resto del Carlino a Bologna solamente lo leggono 40000 persone in un giorno vuol dire che non abbiamo fatto niente. **Noi dobbiamo sperimentare qualcosa che ci permetta di uscire ancora di più altrimenti rischiamo di fare dei lavori che rimangono solamente nostri.** Il bello è innovarsi sempre ed essere sempre un passo avanti rispetto agli altri. **E allargare la rete, qualsiasi sia la rete.** Continuo sempre a dire che per il primo Dossier sulle mafie in Emilia, il mezzo di diffusione più ampio che abbiamo avuto è stato il circuito degli Scout. Ci hanno ospitati ovunque e siamo andati ovunque ma il circuito che ci ha dato più spazio è stato quello degli Scout emiliano-romagnoli. Cosa lontanissima dalla mia cultura che continuo a restare un uomo di sinistra abbastanza estrema. Ma devo ammettere che il mondo cattolico di base delle Acli ci ha dato uno spazio incredibile che altri non ci hanno dato. **Quindi sì, probabilmente. Sono un media attivista ma è solo un mezzo che ci consente di portare avanti un altro modello di società.**

Marco Trotta, l'altro testimone privilegiato che ho intervistato per questa ricerca, nasce da una storia diversa. E' un informatico e da tale si è trovato nella condizione di conoscere lo strumento dal punto di vista tecnico. Lui paragona il media attivismo a una automobile: i primi a guidarla sono stati coloro che l'hanno costruita, progettata. Quindi i primi media attivisti sono stati i vari Bill Gates, Steve Jobs... Dopodichè l'automobile è stata guidata dai meccanici che erano coloro che potevano ripararla; il passo successivo è stato che l'utilizzo dell'automobile è divenuto così semplice che tutti la possono guidare anche se non ne conoscono la meccanica. Applicando questa metafora all'utilizzo dei media, tu dove ti posizioni?

Oh! Io ho avuto sempre delle belle idee! Ma sono un ignorante informatico di livello

Esigenze di mezzi nuovi

Rete sociale come base dell'attivismo

I media sono solo un mezzo che consente di portare avanti un altro modello di società

stratosferico. Però la grande fortuna è che la mia è una storia di gruppo e ci sono state una serie di intelligenze che si sono messe assieme dividendosi i ruoli per cui l'idea del giornale, impostazione, grafica, nascono da me. Poi c'erano altri che la realizzavano. Detto questo, c'era bisogno di sapere come funzionava la macchina per abbattere i costi e ho dovuto imparare pure quello. Dopo abbiamo inventato qualcosa di nuovo.

Per esempio?

L'impostazione grafica del giornale, così come la vedi, nasce da una impostazione totalmente nuova. L'utilizzo dei primi programmi assolutamente indipendenti l'abbiamo fatto noi perché costavano poco. La nostra scelta dei media è sempre poco ideologica, continuo a dirlo. Allora la rete era il mezzo che ti consentiva qualcosa in più. Come la prima web-radio, l'abbiamo fatta noi.

Come si chiamava?

“Ora d'aria” ci permetteva di non avere le spese della radio su frequenza che Berlusconi è stata la più grande intelligenza degli anni '90 perché quello che fece non fu prendere le televisioni, fu prendere le radio perché come strumento di libero pensiero è molto più pericoloso della televisione. La radio è parola, ti entra nel cuore. La televisione è immagine, la dimentichi dopo 3 secondi. Lui è stato un genio. La Legge Mammi serviva per chiudere le radio, lo hanno capito in pochi, e la cosa che più faceva rabbia era che tutte le radio erano di proprietà dell'altra parte politica che se le fecero chiudere tutte. Quindi il mio utilizzo della tecnologia è equivalente a quello che ti serve, Facebook fu il modo in cui ci siamo salvati da una delle più pesanti crisi economiche che abbiamo avuto. Ci permetteva di raggiungere l'universo-mondo e soprattutto ci permetteva di ri-collegare tutti quei frammenti, tutti quei fili che negli anni si erano dispersi. Noi siamo tutti emigrati. Distanti. Quella macchina, quel mezzo ci permette di stare nuovamente insieme, di fare gruppo, creare comunità. Quello che ci ha sempre salvati è stato essere una grande

Rete di intelligenze a lavoro

Utilizzo di software open source

La scelta del mezzo non è ideologica

Pionieri della web-radio

Pareri su radio e tv

Ruolo social network

Facebook consente di riunire il gruppo disperso per le minacce mafiose

Ruolo della rete sociale

comunità. Piccola, mal ridotta, ma una grande comunità. Una serie di mani che si aiutavano. E quindi, sì, io sono uno dei meccanici che riesce ad aggiustare ogni volta il mezzo e a farlo partire da capo. Non ho la genialità di chi le inventa, non ho la genialità di chi lo rimette sul campo però ho la praticità di chi riesce sempre ad aggiustarlo. Quello che sta in mezzo.

Qual è il senso che tu dai a questa cosa?

Il senso è che noi ci perdiamo spesso, troppo, nei nostri sogni. C'era una bellissima frase che diceva sempre Vittoria "Bisogna coniugare concretezza e utopia" se sei concreto ma non hai un sogno, resti là. Se hai un sogno ma non sei concreto finisci di restare là. Quindi noi abbiamo coniugato una grande idea, che era quella di andare oltre una concezione padronale della vita pubblica a quella che potevi dire la propria coniugandola con una grande concretezza. Continuo sempre a dirlo, a noi hanno insegnato, agli inizi degli anni '90 che bisogna sapere tutto sul Chapas e sulla Palestina e magari non sapevi che a 300 metri da te si moriva di fame, nel quartiere popolare del tuo paese. Così noi abbiamo coniugato il fatto di sapere, di cercare di fare uscire dal bisogno il quartiere del tuo paese all'idea che probabilmente fare quello permetteva di costruire una cosa migliore. Il senso era lì, coniugare un gran sogno al miglioramento reale del posto in cui vivevi. Il miglioramento non è solamente quello economico, sennò andremo indietro agli altri dietro al benessere. Il miglioramento è quello civile. La generazione dei miei nonni faceva la fame, mio nonno fu venduto a sei anni come uno schiavo, "addruato", affittato, non c'è un termine in italiano, il siciliano è una lingua quindi è difficilmente traducibile. La situazione era: famiglia di contadini numerosissima, un figlio veniva dato via, a fare altro, per guardare un gregge di pecore. Trovò nelle lotte contadine un modo non solo di rivale ma che gli permetteva di essere diverso. E lui continuava sempre a dirmi: "Io sapevo che sarei nato, cresciuto e morto analfabeta ma sapevo che con le mie azioni mia figlia sarebbe diventata professoressa e mio nipote sarebbe stato un uomo libero".

Ruolo di "meccanico"

Il senso dell'attività di media attivista

Il senso dell'attività di media attivista

Senso del miglioramento civile

Gli anziani come punto di riferimento morale e civile

Quello era il grande senso. E' che noi che eravamo analfabeti a livello tecnologico, giornalistico, politico, umano, sociologico, era quello che ci raccontavamo abbiamo vissuto la nostra vita con le cose che ci raccontavano, e ci trasformavamo in qualcosa di diverso, cercavamo di cambiare, utopisticamente, sapendo che saremmo rimasti lì, noi. Però la cosa bella la sai qual è?

Qual è il senso di tutta questa storia? Che mentre noi nel 2003 scrivevamo che un appalto era truccato eri vittima di un'intimidazione dieci anni dopo i ragazzi che lo scrivono lo possono scrivere liberamente perché nessuno dopo il lavoro che abbiamo fatto si permette di pensare a fargli una intimidazione. Noi siamo rimasti lì.

Parliamo sempre a Raffadali? O non lo fanno neanche a Bologna?

No, lo fanno dappertutto ormai. Aver fatto quello, in quella generazione, in quella maniera, ci permette, sia a Raffadali che a Bologna a Santa Elisabetta, dove abbiamo costruito delle storie, dove abbiamo vissuto la nostra vita... è che noi siamo rimasti lì, perché noi siamo rimasti analfabeti come lo eravamo 10 anni fa ma chi abbiamo fatto crescere dopo, è cresciuto in un contesto che è migliorato nel tempo. La nostra partita l'abbiamo vinta, il senso era quello, creare per gli altri quello che noi non avevamo avuto.

Come così è in Emilia Romagna, aver creato, per chi domattina vuole collegarsi a internet una banca dati sulle mafie che due anni fa non c'era e da domattina se vai da qualsiasi parte non ti possono dire che la mafia in Emilia Romagna non esiste ed è un problema degli altri, ti devono dire perché non l'affrontano, politici, imprenditori. Abbiamo cambiato il contesto della storia e noi siamo rimasti lì, però il problema della vita non è che nella vita devi emergere eccellere, no. Il problema nella vita è che a chi viene dopo devi lasciare qualcosa di migliore. Utopia. E' bella così.

Io credo nell'utopia. Quando mia madre è nata le donne non avevano diritto di voto. Ora lo diamo per scontato. Se non persegui l'utopia non la raggiungi...

Il lavoro, a distanza di 10 anni, consente alla nuova generazione di parlare liberamente di mafia senza timore di intimidazione

La consegna del testimone alla nuova generazione

La consegna del testimone alla nuova generazione

Diciamo che è stata anestetizzata per anni. Utopia, il senso è quello.

Che idea hai del media attivismo in Italia? Voi state coinvolgendo molti giovani, il che mi fa tornare ai dati sui giovani che ti riferivo all'inizio che rappresentano i giovani come degli inebetiti davanti alla tv, ma in realtà li racconti come recettivi di fronte a un contenuto quando gli si da un senso.

Questi sono pensieri miei. Io sono un pessimo cuoco quindi non faccio ricette. Non possiamo dimenticarci che abbiamo vissuto dal '90 un bombardamento che ha totalmente cambiato i valori di questo Paese. Molti dicono che risalgono anche agli anni '80 con la "Milano da bere", il benessere che cambiava lo stare assieme. Però il bombardamento che ha ricevuto questa generazione è tremendo, terrificante. La donna è diventata solamente un simbolo, se non sessuale, solamente un simbolo che se non sei figa non riesci. Se l'uomo non è perfetto, non è depilato, non riesce... I concetti sono totalmente mutati con grande responsabilità di tutta la struttura politica di questo paese. Anche la struttura sociale, anche la struttura mediatica. Quindi quel bombardamento che ti portava a essere singolarmente davanti alla vita e non più come gruppo è un bombardamento che non possiamo dire che non è esistito. E' esistito. E ha sconvolto quello che era il mondo della scuola, chiuse le sedi di partito, chiusi gli oratori, chiuse le scuole, i luoghi dove poter rimanere assieme sono praticamente scomparsi. Specialmente nel massacro della scuola, Calamandrei non nel '54 era geniale dicendo che avrebbero fatto quello, aver portato la scuola a essere luogo di... in cui bisognava eccellere e non più stare assieme. L'idea dell'eccellenza è una follia, in cui tu eccelli e sei il simbolo, puoi guardare tutti dall'alto in basso e sei Dio, quelli che restano in basso, cosa sono? Magari quello che resta in basso è il figlio dell'operaio che non può mangiare è il figlio dell'emigrato che non può mangiare e quindi non riesce a eccellere, quindi quello è un reietto. E' questo contesto che per 20 anni è durato è normale che abbia

Bombardamento mediatico negativo per i giovani

Individualismo vs collettivismo

Mancanza di luoghi di aggregazione

Rifiuto del concetto di eccellenza

inciso profondamente nei riguardi di un ragazzo che cresceva. Non aveva più ideologie, non aveva più i muri che li separavano non aveva più niente. Aveva tutta una società che gli diceva che di per sé era escluso se non apparteneva ad alcune altre parti della società. Tutta l'esperienza continua a dirlo, quando riesci a incanalare, qualcuno di onesto, i ragazzi diventano qualcosa di eccezionale. Te la faccio sulla mia esperienza siciliana, i ragazzi di "Addio pizzo" sono tutti ragazzi che hanno sconvolto una attività storica della mafia siciliana che è quella del pizzo. "Ammazzateci tutti" in Calabria, sono tutte ragazzine. Le nostre esperienze sono tutte di ragazzi. Le centinaia di esperienze di gruppi musicali, di gruppi teatrali in un contesto in cui la cultura è diventato un dramma in questo Paese in cui sei fai cultura sei un degenerato, chissà a cosa pensi. Hanno resistito perché avevano un motivo per stare assieme, la nostra esperienza era esclusivamente un motivo per stare assieme. Dopodiché nascono quei rapporti di amicizia, di stima e di idee che diventano collante di un gruppo di persone. E il collante è una cosa fondamentale, continuo sempre a dire che la reazione più bella all'antisocialità degli ultimi 30 anni sono stati i ragazzi, i movimenti studenteschi, mai come ora. Non ce ne è mai stati in Italia tanti come ora un tentativo di reazione c'è trovano un muro quasi invalicabile nella concezione che ormai abbiamo di politica. Di ragazzi svogliati ne ho visti veramente molto pochi. Quando sono stati indirizzati, o quando abbiamo chiesto loro "ma cosa volete?" e loro hanno potuto esprimere quello che volevano e li abbiamo aiutati a farlo hanno sinceramente creato qualcosa di meraviglioso. Questo Paese ha una struttura di associazioni di base che è meravigliosa ed è tutta gente che si è messa assieme perché aveva voglia di farlo poi che ne abbia avuto la struttura, la possibilità, l'aspirazione poco importa, ma secondo me la generazione che ha fallito è quella dei 50enni non dei ragazzi di vent'anni.

Sei proprio arrabbiato con la generazione dei 50enni...

Incanalare le energie dei giovani

Esperienze culturali in contesti problematici

Giudizio sui movimenti studenteschi

Fiducia nella nuova generazione

Tantissimo. Tantissimo, perché loro non avevano motivi per scappare. Loro erano quelli che hanno vissuto il meglio di questo Paese, sono diventati opulenti e poi sono scappati e ci hanno lasciato le macerie da ricostruire ed è stato faticoso ed è faticoso tutt'ora ricostruire perché ci manca proprio un pezzo di socialità di questo Paese. E loro avevano tutto, non avevano più fame. Il loro problema è che non avevano più fame. Questa è una questione che è difficile da affrontare ma è questa. In questo momento e in questa Regione che è una delle più ricche d'Italia come in Piemonte, come in Lombardia, le migliori strutture di anti-mafia militante sono tutte in mano ai ragazzi. Stampa anti-mafiosa a Milano sono tutti ragazzi di 20 anni ed escono dall'Università con Nando Dalla Chiesa. A Bologna con l'Università, a Ravenna escono da sperimentazioni di associazioni di base, così come Modena ... Dappertutto, in Sicilia, "Libera", sono tutti comitati che nascono dai ragazzi. Saranno acerbi, saranno spesso poco concreti però ci sono. Però ci sono e trattano un tema abbastanza particolare. Il gioco finisce quando cominciano ad arrivare i bossoli e in questa Regione i bossoli ci sono 8 giornalisti minacciati dalle mafie.

Parliamo di Emilia Romagna?

Sì, 8 giornalisti minacciati dalla mafia. Molti di più di quanti ce ne sono in Sicilia in questo momento.

Il focus si è spostato qui ora?

Il focus si sta spostando qui perché materialmente il dramma è che la montagna di soldi che ha accumulato la mafia negli ultimi anni, mentre fino a 5-6 anni fa prima della crisi si mischiavano con un mare di soldi che giravano nella ricchezza di questa Regione ora i soldi visibili sono rimasti i loro e si vedono troppo, nella ricostruzione, nella gestione degli appalti, dei servizi, non riescono più a smaltirli. In realtà è quello il gran dramma che hanno, si vedono e vedendosi se qualcuno è curioso esce fuori. Questi giornalisti minacciati dalle mafie sono

Critiche verso la generazione dei genitori

Fiducia nella nuova generazione

quasi tutti sopra i 35 anni, questi giovani che non vogliono fare non esistono un gran ch .

Otto Saviano, praticamente.

8 brave persone.

Saviano ha affermato che non aveva la pi  pallida idea che il suo libro sarebbe diventato ci  che   diventato e che forse non lo avrebbe neanche scritto se lo avesse saputo.

E' probabile. Il conto che avremmo dovuto pagare pegno era nelle cose ma non ci immaginavamo di dover pagare tanto pegno.

In che senso "nelle cose"?

Ma che si dovesse pagare pegno, un minimo di esclusione sociale, essere ghettizzati come quelli che non ci stavano era previsto, era nelle cose l'idea che dovessimo pagar pegno ma cos  tanti anni no. Per  la nostra   una storia a lieto fine perch  alla fine il nostro drago   finito in carcere quindi dal giorno dopo siamo diventati beniamini e mi ha dato pi  fastidio essere diventato il beniamino il giorno dopo!   stato l'arresto di una persona che umanamente pu  anche dispiacere perch  poi alla fine quell'arresto per noi dimostr  l'idea che per tanti anni la nostra Regione fosse stata un caposaldo delle mafie in maniera che fa abbastanza male perch    vero che siamo una terra di mafia ma siamo anche una terra di anti-mafia abbiamo lasciato tanto di quel sangue in giro che probabilmente essere rappresentati direttamente da un presidente collegato alle mafie era una cosa che faceva male. Per  riportando il discorso sul nord Italia rischiamo tra qualche anno di essere nelle stesse condizioni se non si pone un freno ora. Quei bisogni, cos  come venivano realizzati in Sicilia dalle famiglie di Cosa Nostra ultimamente cominciano a essere realizzate in Emilia dalle famiglie della criminalit  organizzata. Quando una persona ha fame ha poche scelte e si appoggia dove pu  trovare qualcuno che possa garantirlo. E in questa Regione si comincia ad avere fame, cos  come in Piemonte, in Lombardia e in Liguria. E' un freno che va posto

Dove c'  mafia c'  antimafia

La mafia si sposta in Emilia Romagna

immediatamente e ancora continuo a dire che in questo momento il freno lo stanno ponendo le associazioni di base. Lo sta ponendo internet, lo stanno ponendo il mezzo degli e-book che ti permette di stampare un libro senza spendere tanti soldi e che sarà una cosa che faremo nel brevissimo lo permette la diffusione del nostro dossier che viene diffuso esclusivamente tramite internet perché non c'è la possibilità di poterlo stampare in altri modi quindi quel mezzo c'è e quello utilizziamo. C'è una bellissima frase di "La Repubblica" che pur di non citarci dice "tratto da un dossier che rimbalza su internet" e fino a quando rimbalza va benissimo!

O quelli di "La Repubblica" non sono stati abbastanza bravi da recuperare la fonte... o hanno preferito non citarvi.

L'importante è che rimbalzi, la proprietà intellettuale non ci è mai interessata. E se siamo usciti dalla logica della persona che incarna il progetto abbiamo fatto un grande favore al progetto. Il bello della rete è proprio che spersonalizza. La mia figura senza una serie di persone indietro, avanti e a fianco non esisterebbe perché senza la persona che mi corregge i pezzi, la persona che mi trasforma i pdf in jpg, le cazzate più grandi, non esisteremmo, senza l'avvocato che ci ha sempre difeso per 10 anni da tutte le querele che sono arrivate, non esisteremmo. Non esisteremmo senza i finanziatori che ci lasciano i soldi perché il giornale è autofinanziato. Non esisteremmo senza la professoressa che ci da in mano un gruppo di ragazzi e un lavoro all'università. L'idea della rete che ci permette di stare assieme e ci permette di vivere assieme tutto quello che facciamo, anche la soddisfazione del lavoro svolto del vedere che il lavoro che fai è vissuto, se no lo fai solo per presentarlo, fai la bella serata ma sarà... e il bello di tutto quello che abbiamo fatto, del giornale, dei libri, della ricerca storica, dei dossier sulla mafia è un lavoro di gruppo e ci vado io o ci va qualsiasi ragazzo la serata ha sempre pari dignità e se riuscissimo a recuperare questa storia per cui un lavoro è fatto perché deve essere fatto e non perché deve darti una visibilità è ancora più bello. La rete penso che ci permetta

Le reti sociali e la gratuità dei mezzi

Circolazione libera dei materiali

Ruolo della rete sociale e del gruppo

Ruolo della rete sociale e del gruppo

questo, prendere il lavoro, buttarlo sopra quel maledetto mezzo essere irradiato e non sai di chi è, sai che è di un gruppo di persone. Dopo di che lo leggi e reputi se sia o meno credibile, in quella storia di 100 e passa pagine incroci tante di quelle storie che alla fine davvero è un racconto corale, ciò che ti permette di essere credibile è che è corale non perché il nome fa garanzia allo strumento. Il più grande problema di questo Paese è spesso che il nome di chi ha scritto da garanzia a uno prodotto che non è assolutamente di livello. Questa te la racconto perché è simpaticissima. Uno dei primi libri che ho letto era un libro di Torrealta, un giornalista de "Il Manifesto" su Ultimo⁹. Uscì 20 anni fa, fu uno scoop, vennero fuori film, dopo di che venne fuori la storia che quello che raccontava in quel libro non è che fosse veramente la verità, la mancata perquisizione del covo di Riina¹⁰, i processi a Mori¹¹ e a Ultimo. Quest'estate eravamo con Torrealta a Ravenna, tutti e due nella giuria del Premio dello Zuccherificio dedicato a Roberto Morrione¹² e gli posi questa domanda, gli dico: "Marcello, come ci si sente a dovere la propria visibilità, la propria ricchezza a una storia che poi si è rivelata non così come l'hai raccontata?"¹³ e lui rispose: "di merda". La sincerità di quella risposta è la cosa più bella che ci può essere in un giornalista perché tu una storia la puoi avere, ti dà credibilità quella storia ma non può essere mai la storia giusta. Deve essere una storia che viene letta perché è tua ma magari se tu sbagli, sbagli anche la storia e infici quella che è la libera informazione. Quando una storia, invece, diventa di tante persone e ognuno ci mette il suo difficilmente può essere una storia inficiata per questo la rete lo strumento dei medi ai giornalismo di base che poi quello è, il giornalismo di base come lo vedeva Sciascia che era un grande amatore dei giornali locali, diceva che la stampa locale è la vera opposizione. In mancanza della politica, c'è il giornale locale, la stampa di base. E la stampa di base è bella perché è collettiva, quindi ti dà credibilità un gruppo di persone che crede in qualcosa e poi la struttura. Secondo me quello dovremmo recuperare l'idea della collettività e non della singola persona che garantisce per tutto, Saviano per quanto possa essere una

Ruolo della rete nella diffusione libera del materiale prodotto

Stampa locale come vera opposizione

bravissima persona basta che dice una cavolata che inficia il lavoro di tante persone in giro per il mondo.

Quanti ragazzi eravate quando avete iniziato con il giornale?

Quattro

E ora?

Chi li conta più, le persone che hanno scritto sul giornale sono un centinaio. I redattori fissi una quarantina. Quello che ci ha aiutati è stata proprio quella campagna che ci dicevano di non fare in seguito alla nostra sconfitta più clamorosa. L'elezione di Cuffaro. Ora il Sindaco del mio paese è il nipote di Vittoria Giunti, i dirigenti sono tutti "figli nostri", tutta gente che aveva scritto sul giornale. E' una questione puramente generazionale, i vecchi muoiono i giovani crescono.

Cuffaro potrà avere ancora terreno fertile quando sarà rilasciato?

Lui no. E' condannato per mafia quindi è interdetto dai pubblici uffici. La famiglia si è ritirata, ed è un bene soprattutto per loro.

Crescita del gruppo di lavoro

Dall'azione di opposizione al ruolo politico attivo

¹ Vittoria Giunti (Firenze, 14 dicembre 1917 – Raffadali, 2 giugno 2006) è stata una partigiana italiana, dirigente del Partito Comunista Italiano e primo sindaco donna della Sicilia.

² Salvatore Cuffaro è stato presidente della Regione Siciliana dal 2001 al 2008. È stato condannato definitivamente a sette anni di reclusione per favoreggiamento aggravato a Cosa nostra e rivelazione di segreto istruttorio. Sconta la pena nel carcere romano di Rebibbia.

³ Giovanni Salvatore Augusto Falcone (Palermo, 18 maggio 1939 – Palermo, 23 maggio 1992), Magistrato. Fu assassinato con la moglie e alcuni uomini della scorta nella strage mafiosa di Capaci. Assieme al collega Paolo Borsellino è considerato uno degli eroi simbolo della lotta alla mafia.

⁴ Paolo Emanuele Borsellino (Palermo, 19 gennaio 1940 – Palermo, 19 luglio 1992) è Magistrato. Assieme al Magistrato Giovanni Falcone è considerato uno degli eroi simbolo della lotta alla mafia. Fu assassinato con alcuni uomini della scorta nella strage di mafia di via d'Amelio.

⁵ Lucarelli C., (2000), *Un giorno dopo l'altro*, Torino, Einaudi

⁶ Dossier Mafie in Emilia Romagna, <http://gruppodellozuccherificio.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/dossier-2012-le-mafie-in-er.pdf> ultimo accesso 08.03.13

⁷ *Scarface*, film del 1983 scritto da Oliver Stone e diretto da Brian De Palma.

⁸ Pagina Facebook "Amici di AdEst".

⁹ Ultimo è il nome in codice del capitano dei carabinieri Sergio De Caprio che arrestò Totò Riina.

¹⁰ Salvatore Riina, meglio conosciuto come Totò Riina è un criminale, legato a Cosa Nostra e considerato il capo dell'organizzazione mafiosa dal 1982 fino al suo arresto, avvenuto nel gennaio 1993. E' indicato anche con i soprannomi *U curtu*, per via della sua altezza e *La Bestia*, per la sua ferocia.

¹¹ Mario Mori, Generale e Prefetto. È stato comandante del ROS e direttore del SISDE.

¹² <http://www.premiorbertomorrione.it/>

¹³ Il riferimento è alla mancata perquisizione dell'abitazione di Salvatore Riina a seguito dell'arresto. Il Capitano De Caprio fu accusato di favoreggiamento il quale dichiarò che non ritenne utile la perquisizione dato che il luogo dell'arresto era la residenza stessa di Riina dove questi viveva con la famiglia. L'accusa mossa al Capitano fu di aver permesso la distruzione di eventuali prove da parte del clan (fu svuotata una cassaforte e ridipinte le pareti in modo da cancellare tutte le impronte). Il processo si concluse con l'assoluzione di De Caprio "perché il fatto non costituisce reato".