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UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI  
STUDI DI SALERNO



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# 3rd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ILIS

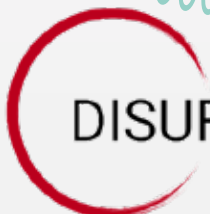
## Research Methods in the Digital Society: Areas and Practices

24-25  
November 2021

Abstract Book



edit by Giuseppe Masullo  
SCIENTIFIC COORDINATOR OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL LAB FOR  
INNOVATIVE SOCIAL RESEARCH (ILIS)



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Abstracts  
Third International Conference  
Research Methods in the Digital Society:  
Areas and Practices  
24 - 25 November 2021,  
University of Salerno

Edit by Giuseppe Masullo



First published in Salerno, Italy by the International Lab  
for Innovative Social Research.

ISBN: 979 -12- 200- 9929-5  
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**Preface****Research Methods in the Digital Society: areas and practices**

of Giuseppe Masullo

Aristotle stated that “all human actions have one or more of these seven causes: chance, nature, compulsion, habit, reason, passion and desire”. I firmly believe that the decision to start the ILIS international network encompassed all of them. It was particularly our common “passion” for social research and the “desire” to contribute to the scientific debate in this field that pushed me, Felice Addeo, and Angela Delli Paoli in 2018 to gather around a table and beckon those colleagues and scientific partners (both national and international) with whom to engage in a permanent dialogue on the topic of innovation in social research.

We were young researchers with different background stories and areas of expertise, but we shared the same vocation and the feeling that the Italian academic scene lacked sufficient space in which to carry on a fruitful discussion on the state of sociological research, its methods, its ongoing innovations, of which we heard via the national and international debate. Our aim, therefore, was to bridge these different realities, in the full awareness that scientific work can only flourish through constant comparison, connecting tradition with innovation - particularly the innovation introduced by the new generation of researchers.

The International Centre for Innovative Social Research (ILIS) was established in this way, within the Department of Humanities, Philosophy and Education of the University of Salerno, as an interdisciplinary centre for social research.

The centre aims to stimulate theoretical and methodological discussions, as well as empirical studies, on emerging trends in social research: from theoretical challenges faced by new social issues to innovative methodological approaches to understand them. The centre’s mission is to promote theoretical, epistemological and methodological advances in the social sciences through continuous exchanges with national and international scholars.

The research interests focus on social processes ranging from educational, migratory, identity and cultural processes, to gender, generational and health issues drawing special attention to the social research methods.

The main goal is to offer an integrated research system to direct scientific actions towards an innovative theoretical and empirical knowledge of the processes transforming our societies.

From the scientific point of view, the centre aims to combine the understanding of contemporary social processes with emerging trends in social research methods which have innovated traditional approaches and have introduced alternative data collection and analysis methods together with new methods for representing information (such as in the case of e-methods and big data analysis).

The centre offers also methodological services for the scientific community of the University of Salerno supporting in the research design, data collection, generation and storage, pre-testing, questionnaire building, sampling, dataset creation and data analysis. We first addressed the issue of interdisciplinarity, aware that research approaches and tools (e.g., participant observation) are not the exclusive property of the disciplines in which they originated and that it was, therefore, essential to broaden how they are employed by neighbouring disciplines, such as cultural anthropology and

social psychology, that greatly contributed to defining the theoretical framework of sociology and its ways of doing research.

The earliest opportunity to test the network and the soundness of our approach came with the first international conference of the network held in Salerno in 2019 on 27 and 28 November, centred on ethnographic research, both classically understood and applied to the digital environment, which today takes on various names, including that of “netnography”.

The first conference brought together many researchers on emerging issues in ethnographic and netnographic research: from the theoretical and epistemological approaches to the methodological and technical aspects, from the various techniques to be used to the ethical dilemmas and their applications in the field of sociology and anthropology<sup>1</sup>.

The results of this conference – and the other occasions for dialogue and cooperation promoted by ILIS throughout 2019 – have been collated in the volume. *Etnografia e Netnografia. Riflessioni teoriche, sfide metodologiche ed esperienze di ricerca* [Ethnography and Netnography: theoretical reflections, methodological challenges and research experiences], edited by Giuseppe Masullo, Felice Addeo, and Angela Delli Paoli, Loffredo editore, Nuova serie<sup>2</sup>.

This initial opportunity for dialogue led us to focus our attention increasingly on the theme of digital research, firmly convinced, as we are, of the profound impact that the increasing presence of the tools and platforms of the web society had on our traditional ways of theoretically and methodologically framing sociological phenomena. This awareness led us to plan a second initiative on the subject: *Research Methods in the Digital Society: challenges and opportunities* (curated by Felice Addeo, Angela Delli Paoli, Gabriella Punziano and myself), which took place in streaming amidst the pandemic in Salerno on 25 and 26 November 2020.

This conference, well attended by colleagues, reinforced our conviction that digital research is now one of the most promising and innovative areas on which to focus our attention.

Internet and computer mediated communication (CMC) are being incorporated into every aspect of daily life and social life has been deeply penetrated by the Internet. This is due to recent technological developments which increase the scope and range of online social spaces and the forms and time of participation such as the web 2.0 which widened the opportunities for user-generated content, the emergence of an “internet of things” and of ubiquitous mobile devices which make it possible to be always connected.

We can say that digital technologies are becoming central in understanding culture and society, human experience and social world since computer software and hardware actively constitute selfhood, embodiment, social life, social relations, social institutions, in a word us as humans (Lupton 2015). Thus, digital technologies are entangled in the structures of society in many different, complex, and even contradictory ways and are deeply changing the practices, symbols, and shared meanings of our societies. The distinction between real and virtual, material and immaterial, bounded and unbounded spaces, in group, outgroup become confused and overlapping (Veltri, 2021; Rabelo, Bhide and Gutierrez, 2019) with frequent incursions of virtual reality into real life, social relations developed in physically unspecified places, online interactions losing their space-time anchorage and strength of linkages and incorporation of technology into our daily materiality.

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<sup>1</sup> For more details, see <http://www.labh.it/ilis/conferenze-internazionali/1st-international-conference-ilis/>

<sup>2</sup> For more details, see <https://www.labilis.org/dubblicazioni/>





The “digital turn” (Caliandro, Gandini, 2019) provides both new objects of study (natively digital data objects, born in the web), digitalized and digital data and innovative source of methods, that is a natively digital methodological array (Rogers 2013; Caliandro 2018).

Digitalized and digital data, also called big data, are related to our digital traces and our routine interactions (e.g., search engine queries, phone calls, shopping, banking interactions, social media posts, narratives and storytelling, etc.) (Kumar, Morstatter e Liu, 2013; Zafarani, Abbasi e Liu, 2014; Amaturò, Aragona, 2019b). The impact of such turn on the epistemological and methodological asset of social research is undeniable due to the specificity of such digital data (Agodi 2010) and the opportunities of creative and innovative research practices (Giuffrida, Rinaldi, Zarba, 2016). Thus, some hypothesize a shift toward a fourth paradigm in social sciences based on the power of algorithms and computers (Stefanizzi, 2016; 2021). We can accept or not the notion of paradigm for such developments but what is undeniable is that the pervasive digitalization calls for interpretative schemes and methodological options more suitable for grasping the current complexity.

This calls for a tuning of the epistemological and methodological stances of social research from a twofold perspective: first by adapting the established social research methods to the practices and the interactions made by people when acting online (digitalized methods), then by creating new methods and techniques in order to analyze those online experiences that could not be framed using the tools of the traditional social research methodology (digital methods).

With reference to the specificity, a crucial epistemological and ethical issue refers to the nature of data collected online which are drastically different from those collected through questionnaires, surveys or interviews: they are collected without the actor is aware of it (Corposanto, Valastro 2014). It is a new ontological object that is referred to in different ways (digital life, digital shadow, digital footprint, algorithmic identity) (Addeo, Masullo 2021). If on the one hand this confers to this information a naturalistic character, making them paradoxically closer to ethnographic materials than provoked data (such as answers to surveys and interviews) (Cardano, 2011), on the other hand, it raises important ethical issues. On the quantitative side, big data together with the development in computational science have allowed for the spread of innovative explanatory models and simulations (topic modelling, machine learning) although their feature of being “searched” and “found” online may drive social research toward a data-driven approach and a naïve new empirism (Kitchin 2014, Amaturò, Aragona 2019a). Digitalization gave also opportunity for rediscovering methods that had never been mainstream, such as network analysis and content analysis (Punziano, 2021). On the qualitative side, the spread of spaces of online narration and storytelling, have strengthen the possibility of digital ethnography and biographic research (Delli Paoli, D’Auria 2021; Delli Paoli, 2021; Masullo, Addeo, Delli Paoli 2020).

The richness of the contents of the essays we received and the feedback from the second conference led to the following publishing projects:

- A special issue in **Italian Sociological Review** (Class A journal -ANVUR rating) dedicated to the reconceptualization of social research in the digital era (eds. F.Addeo, G.Masullo)
- A **Handbook of Research on Advanced Research Methodologies for a Digital Society** (eds. G.Punziano, A.delli Paoli)
- A special issue in **Cultura e Studi del Sociale** (Scientific journal – ANVUR rating) dedicated to digital research during Covid-19 pandemic (eds. G.Maiello, G.Masullo)

Enriched by the two previous initiatives, we persevered in our in-depth study of the digital society, now aimed at highlighting how these tools, applied to the digital environment, have contributed to the growth of knowledge in various fields of sociological research.

This is the third edition of the conference, entitled *Research Methods in the Digital Society: areas and practices*, which symbolically closes the circle of our reflection on this topic.

Recalling the different areas of application of digital methods is fundamental for two reasons (identified through our conferences on the subject). First, as mentioned, the digital society changes our way of doing social research, imposing the need to consider the digital environment not only as a specific field of study of the sociology of communication but as a dimension constantly related to what happens in everyday life. It is, therefore, an aspect that we cannot help but confront as scholars of the relationship between the individual and society. We have explored this relationship by looking at various fields on which sociology has traditionally focused its attention, such as health, gender and sexuality, education, politics, territory and the environment, etc.

In addition, the allure of digital research tools (especially for young researchers, who are often also users of the same platforms they study) calls for reflection on the associated risks, such as a return to a positivist-style inductivism. It follows the need to construct theoretically grounded research questions and the importance of circularity between empirical detection and theoretical speculation. We felt it was our duty to link our reflections on these approaches to the specific theoretical background of each field of sociological knowledge in which they are applied.

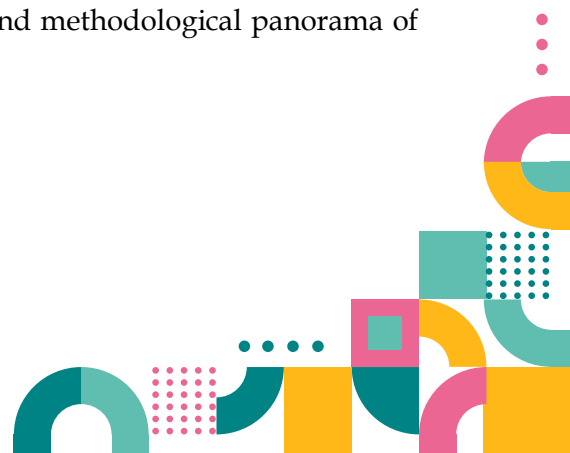
This year's conference will be more complex in its organization and will aim to make the most of the different partners in the ILIS international network. For this reason, it will be held in partnership with two prestigious foreign universities: the University of Lorraine – France (through our colleague Vulca Fidolini) and the University of Finance and Administration – Prague (through our colleague Bohuslava Senkřřová). We firmly believe in the importance of this exchange between the different academic realities of the ILIS network and, as is now our custom, we will try to produce scientific outputs that can cross the borders of our single universities and research laboratories.

I must thank some of those who contributed the most to the success of this third initiative. My heartfelt thanks to Gabriella Punziano of the University of Naples Federico II (member of the presidency of the scientific committee of the Conference), who is a vital reference point both in scientific and human terms for the small group of Salerno. The success of these initiatives in terms of participation is also due to her enthusiasm and scientific vitality.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Dr. Marianna Coppola, who again took on the role and responsibility of scientific secretary, coordinating all the organizational aspects of the initiative with efficiency and precision.

I would also like to thank all the colleagues who enthusiastically agreed to be part of the scientific committee, as well as those who agreed to coordinate and/or be discussants in the various panels proposed. My gratitude goes to them for being a constant presence in our scientific initiatives. They are reference figures in the Italian and international sociological and methodological panorama of which, as a network of scholars, the ILIS can no longer do without.

*Giuseppe Masullo*



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**Felice Addeo** – *University of Salerno (Italy)*;

**Angela Delli Paoli** – *University of Salerno (Italy)*;

**Gabriella Punziano** – *University of Naples, Federico II (Italy)*.

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Conference Schedule

24/11/2021

9:30 AM – 12:00 AM - Plenary session

**Institutional Greetings:**

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

**Vincenzo Loia**– Rector of *University of Salerno (Italy)*

**Maurizio Sibilio** – Pro-Rector of the *University of Salerno (Italy)*

**Paola Aiello** – Head of the Department of Humanities, Philosophy and Education (DISUFF) *University of Salerno (Italy)*

**Sonia Stefanizzi** – Coordinator of AIS Methodology - *University of Milan, Bicocca (Italy)*

**Fabio Corbisiero** – Coordinator of AIS Gender Study - *University of Naples Federico II (Italy)*

**Guido Giarelli** – Coordinator of AIS Medicine - *University Magna Grecia of Catanzaro (Italy)*

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**Hosting partners**

**Bohuslava Šenkýřová** - Rector of the *University of Finance and Administration in Prague*

**Vulca Fidolini** – Maître de conference - *Université de Lorraine (France)*

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**Massimo Ragnedda** – *Northumbria University of Newcastle (UK)*

**Costantino Cipolla** – *University of Bologna (Italy)*



Introduction to Guest Lecture **Angela Delli Paoli** - *University of Salerno*

**12:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

**Guest Lecture Richard Rogers**

*University of Amsterdam (Netherlands)*

*The Meme as Technical Object*

**Lectio Magistralis**

This contribution seeks to demonstrate how studying memes as collections of artefacts depends on the software that makes them. To do so, I compare how memes are conceived in the well-known meme repository, Know Your Meme, with those from meme generators and popular platforms (as TikTok and 4chan) that output and spread them, analytics-driven influence campaigners (as the Internet Research Agency) that deploy them, analytical and vision software (PicArrange and Google Vision) that detects them as well as a marketing and research data platform (CrowdTangle) where one may search for them. Building on insights from software studies, digital ethnography and content analysis, I demonstrate how each software environment groups and differentiates memes in a distinctive manner. The talk concludes with the implications for their conceptual and empirical study, depending on which technical collection-making technique the researcher employs.

*Richard Rogers is Professor of New Media & Digital Culture, Media Studies, University of Amsterdam. He is director of the Digital Methods Initiative, known for the development of software tools for the study of online data. His most recent books are Doing Digital Methods (Sage, 2019) and the edited volume (with Sabine Niederer), The Politics of Social Media Manipulation (Amsterdam University Press, 2020). He is currently working on Mainstreaming the Fringe: How Misinformation Propagates on Social Media (Amsterdam University Press, 2022) as well as projects on visual media studies, a technical definition of memes, the art of critical analytics and issue influencers.*

**1:30 PM - 3:00 PM Lunch Break**



## CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

3rd International Conference ILIS | 24 -25 november 2021 - University of Salerno

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM [Room 1](#)

### Methodological Challenges in a Multi-Changing Society

**Coordinator:** Giuseppe Maiello, *University of Finance and Administration (Prague)*

**Keynote Speaker:** Roberto Cipriani, *University of Rome 3 (Italy)*

<b>Blurring boundaries: negotiating researchers' positionality and identities in digital qualitative research</b>	<b>Anita Lavorgna</b> University of Southampton <b>Lisa Sugiura</b> <i>University of Portsmouth</i>
<b>Robots in Social Research. Can Robots conduct an Interview?</b>	<b>Eleonora Sparano</b> <i>University of Rome Niccolò Cusano</i>
<b>Do Italians communicate it better? An explorative skill mapping of Public Organizations professionals' skills</b>	<b>Nicola Capolupo</b> <i>University of Salerno</i>
<b>Gender differences in Computer and Information Literacy and ICT use at eight grade</b>	<b>Francesco Annunziata</b> <b>Laura Palmerio</b> <b>Elisa Caponera</b> <i>INVALSI</i>
<b>How does the error from sampling to big data change?</b>	<b>Cleto Corposanto</b> <b>Beba Molinari</b> <i>Magna Græcia University of Catanzaro</i>



**CONFERENCE SCHEDULE**

3rd International Conference ILIS | 24 -25 november 2021 - University of Salerno

**3:00 PM – 5:00 PM [Room 2](#)**

**Science, technology, communication, and health**

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

**Keynote Speaker: Biagio Aragona, *University of Naples Federico II (Italy)***

<b>Digital Technography: A Methodological Framework for Interrogating Emerging Technologies</b>	<b>Martin Berg</b> <i>Malmö University</i>
<b>Reconsidering focus group as a methodological tool in controversial science-related issues</b>	<b>Ilenia Picardi Marco Serino Maria Carmela Agodi</b> <i>University of Naples Federico II</i>
<b>Alice through the methodological looking glass: a web-ethnography of refused knowledge communities during the Covid-19 pandemic</b>	<b>Ilenia Picardi Marco Serino Maria Carmela Agodi</b> <i>University of Naples Federico II</i>
<b>Public communication of Italian scientific experts in the Anti-Covid 19 vaccination campaign</b>	<b>Rosanna Cataldo Gabriella Punziano Ferdinando Iazzetta Gabriele Luciano Carmine Borriello</b> <i>University of Naples Federico II</i>  <b>Barbara Saracino</b> <i>University of Bologna</i>
<b>Exploring New Digital Addiction: Developing a WhatsApp Addiction Scale</b>	<b>Valentina D’Auria Vincenzo Esposito Rocco Perrone</b> <i>University of Salerno</i>



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

3rd International Conference ILIS | 24 -25 november 2021 - University of Salerno

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM [Room 1](#)

Politics, policy, movements and Big Data

Coordinator: **Giammaria Bottoni**, *University of Pavia (Italy)*

Keynote Speaker: **Davide Beraldo**, *University of Amsterdam (The Netherland)*

<p><b>The digital role in building public profiles of political actors</b></p>	<p><b>Gabriella Punziano</b>  <b>Federico Esposito</b>  <b>Giuseppe Michele Padricelli</b>  <i>University of Naples Federico II</i></p>
<p><b>Digital State and Defence Sector in Italy: the National Cybersecurity Agency</b></p>	<p><b>Giuseppe Borriello</b>  <i>University of Naples Federico II</i></p>
<p><b>A network analysis approach to map trending topics in information propagation on social media</b></p>	<p><b>Ilaria Primerano</b>  <b>Giuseppe Giordano</b>  <b>Maria Prosperina Vitale</b>  <i>University of Salerno</i></p>
<p><b>Rethinking the resource mobilization theory in social movements digital expressions: the role of celebrities for the “Dana libera tutti” initiative</b></p>	<p><b>Giuseppe Michele Padricelli</b>  <i>University of Naples Federico II</i></p>
<p><b>The Facebook communication of the Mayor’ candidate at the 2021 administrative elections of the Municipality of Naples</b></p>	<p><b>Mariateresa Principe</b>  <b>Irene Rossi</b>  <b>Giuseppe Rizza</b>  <i>University of Naples Federico II</i>  Coordinator – <b>Gabriella Punziano</b></p>



5:00 PM – 7:00 PM [Room 2](#)

**Gender and the digital**

**Coordinator:** **Giuseppe Masullo**, *Head of the International Lab for Innovative Social Research (ILIS), University of Salerno (Italy)*

**Keynote Speaker:** **Cirus Rinaldi**, *University of Palermo (Italy)*

<b>Researching LGBT parenting: tips and traps from an Italian perspective</b>	<b>Salvatore Monaco</b> <i>Free University of Bozen</i>
<b>Bodiless Sexuality and Relationality. Asexuality and Aromanticity as new forms of relationships in the web society: a netnographic study</b>	<b>Giuseppe Masullo</b> <b>Marianna Coppola</b> <b>Angela Delli Paoli</b> <b>Miriam Matteo</b> <i>University of Salerno</i>
<b>The evolution of the male sexworking towards new digital scenarios</b>	<b>Cirus Rinaldi</b> <i>University of Palermo</i>  <b>Marco Scarcelli</b> <i>University of Padova</i>  <b>Mirco Costacurta</b> <i>University of Padova</i>
<b>Gender Study in the Digital Age and Pandemic Era: sensitive Theme with and without face-to-face interaction</b>	<b>Tatiana Smirnova</b> <i>Russian State University for the Humanities</i>  <b>Roman Smirnov</b> <i>Research Centre NAFI</i>
<b>The online experience of gender and sexual minorities. An exploratory study on intersectionality and digitization</b>	<b>Carmela Ferrara</b> <i>University of Naples Federico II</i>





CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

3rd International Conference ILIS | 24 -25 november 2021 - University of Salerno

25/11/2021

9:30 AM – 12:30 AM [Room 1](#)

Communication, social media and digital society

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

Keynote Speaker: **Davide Bennato**, *University of Catania (Italy)*

<p><b>Is it still disintermediated? The role of influencer news-maker in the social platform era</b></p>	<p><b>Suania Acampa</b> <b>Noemi Crescentini</b> <b>Giuseppe Michele Padricelli</b> <i>University of Naples Federico II</i></p>
<p><b>The “Astrazeneca affair”: a litmus test of public arena formation in a hybrid media ecosystem setting?</b></p>	<p><b>Federico Pilati</b> <i>IULM University of Milan</i></p> <p><b>Guido Anselmi</b> <i>University of Milan</i></p>
<p><b>The vaccine is now here. The State-Region governance between converging plans and diverging digital communication.</b></p>	<p><b>Ciro Clemente De Falco</b> <b>Gabriella Punziano</b> <b>Domenico Trezza</b> <i>University of Naples Federico II</i></p>
<p><b>Hating online in times of emergency. Profiles and patterns of verbal violence on social media.</b></p>	<p><b>Miriam Di Lisio</b> <b>Rosa Sorrentino</b> <b>Domenico Trezza</b> <i>University of Naples Federico II</i></p>
<p><b>Analysis of Amazon reviews to promote sustainable consumption</b></p>	<p><b>Viviana Capozza</b> <i>Sapienza University of Rome</i></p>
<p><b>The First year of Clubhouse in Italy</b></p>	<p><b>Giuseppe Maiello</b> <i>University of Finance and Administration, Prague</i></p> <p><b>Laura Caroleo</b> <i>Magna Graecia University of Catanzaro (Italy)</i></p>
<p><b>Intangible Heritage or Aesthetic Performance with a Flavor of Mystery?</b></p>	<p><b>Jitka Cirklová</b> <i>University of Finance and Administration, Prague</i></p>



## CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

3rd International Conference ILIS | 24 -25 november 2021 - University of Salerno

**9:30 AM – 12:30 AM [Room 2](#)**

**Stream: Digital Research in Education**

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

**Keynote Speaker: Fiorenzo Parziale, Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)**

<p><b>Digital Methods and Evaluation of school SWA/PTSO projects: interlinked actors, points of view and observation contexts</b></p>	<p><b>Antonio Fasanella</b>  <b>Maria Paola Faggiano</b>  <b>Veronica Lo Presti</b>  <b>Fiorenzo Parziale</b>  <b>Maria Dentale</b>  <i>Sapienza University of Rome</i></p>
<p><b>Italian University Students facing Distance Learning: the results of a panel web survey</b></p>	<p><b>Maria Paola Faggiano</b>  <b>Sergio Mauceri</b>  <i>Sapienza University of Rome</i></p>
<p><b>Exploring digital platforms for mentoring research and practice</b></p>	<p><b>Lee Kwan Meng</b>  <i>University Putra Malaysia</i></p>
<p><b>Virtual Reality and Interpreter Training: Reflections on a cultural mediation course for refugee trainees in Agrigento (Sicily)</b></p>	<p><b>Mette Rudvin</b>  <b>Roberta Di Rosa</b>  <i>University of Palermo</i></p> <p><b>Edoardo Di Gennaro</b>  <i>Swans-Tech s.r.l, Bologna</i></p>
<p><b>Methods and behaviours for successful digital social research with subjects with specific learning disorders (SLD)</b></p>	<p><b>Jessica Camargo Molano</b>  <i>University of Rome Nettuno</i></p> <p><b>Michelle Grillo</b>  <i>University of Salerno</i></p>
<p><b>School Work Alternance: towards a longitudinal study</b></p>	<p><b>Ughetta Favazzi</b>  <b>Grazia Graziosi</b>  <b>Enrico Nerli Ballati</b>  <b>Donatella Poliandri</b>  <i>INVALSI</i></p> <p><b>Beba Molinari</b>  <i>Magna Græcia University of Catanzaro</i></p>

## CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

3rd International Conference ILIS | 24 -25 november 2021 - University of Salerno

12:30 AM - 1:30 PM

### Round Table

#### Discussants

**Alfonso Amendola**, *University of Salerno*

**Amalia Caputo**, *University of Naples Federico II*

**Micol Pizzolati**, *University of Bergamo*

**Lello Savonardo**, *University of Naples Federico II*

	<b>Presentation of the volumes:</b>	
	<u><a href="#">Etnografia e netnografia. Riflessioni teoriche, sfide metodologiche ed esperienze di ricerca</a></u> Giuseppe Masullo, Felice Addeo, Angela Delli Paoli. © 2020 Loffredo	
	<u><a href="#">Research Methods in the Digital Society</a></u> Felice Addeo, Giuseppe Masullo. © 2021 Special Issue on Italian Sociological Review	
	<u><a href="#">Handbook of Research on Advanced Research Methodologies for a Digital Society (2 Volumes)</a></u> Gabriella Punziano, Angela Delli Paoli. © 2022 IGI Global	
	<u><a href="#">Between Infodemic and Pandemic: On-line Researches in the Time of COVID-19</a></u> Giuseppe Maiello, Giuseppe Masullo. © 2021 Special Issue on CuSSoc	

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM Lunch Break



## CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

3rd International Conference ILIS | 24 -25 november 2021 - University of Salerno

3:00 AM - 5:00 PM [Room 1](#)

Stream: Digital Research Innovation

Coordinator: **Gabriella Punziano**, *University of Naples Federico II (Italy)*

Keynote Speaker: **Sonia Stefanizzi**, *Bicocca University of Milan (Italy)*

<b>"When they work, I really like smart devices": an explorative qualitative experiment with smart toothbrushes</b>	<b>Marije Miedema</b> <i>Rijksuniversiteit Groningen</i>
<b>Defining an integrated and computed methodology approach for sentiment and psychographic analysis in tourism research</b>	<b>Federica Izzo</b> <b>Quirino Picone</b> <i>University of Naples Suor Orsola Benincasa</i>
<b>Changing the language also changes the sentiment algorithm? Exploring the communication on Green Pass</b>	<b>Domenico Trezza</b> <b>Ciro Clemente De Falco</b> <b>Suania Acampa</b> <i>University of Naples Federico II</i>
<b>The virality of the virus. Quali-quantitative analysis of memes shared during the covid19 pandemic.</b>	<b>Elisabetta Risi</b> <b>Riccardo Pronzato</b> <b>Guido Di Fraia</b> <i>IULM University of Milan</i>
<b>Geo-social media and socio-territorial stratification: a study on the Italian case</b>	<b>Antonio De Falco</b> <b>Ciro Clemente De Falco</b> <b>Marco Ferraci</b> <i>University of Naples Federico II</i>

## CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

3rd International Conference ILIS | 24 -25 november 2021 - University of Salerno

**3:00 PM - 5:00 PM [Room 2](#)**

**Stream: Capital, inequalities and the digital**

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

**Keynote Speaker: Massimo Ragnedda, *Northumbria University of Newcastle (UK)***

<p><b>De-sanitizing the ‘New Normal’: Digital Research and the Challenges of Digital Divide in India</b></p>	<p><b>Ahana Choudhury</b> <i>Tezpur University</i></p>
<p><b>The Language Test: Digital Surveillance, Linguistic Exposés, and the Public Debunking of Beggars</b></p>	<p><b>Jonah Steinberg</b> <b>Emily Manetta</b> <i>University of Vermont</i></p>
<p><b>Developing a hybrid ethnographic approach for digital, physical and digital-physical spaces. Notes from an exploratory study on urban everyday experiences of platforms in China</b></p>	<p><b>Johan Vaide</b> <i>Linnaeus University</i></p>
<p><b>DigiCapItaly: an operationalisation proposal for the measurement of digital capital in Italy</b></p>	<p><b>Felice Addeo</b> <b>Angela Delli Paoli</b> <b>Valentina D’Auria</b> <i>University of Salerno</i></p> <p><b>Massimo Ragnedda</b> <b>Laura Ruiu</b> <i>Northumbria University of Newcastle</i></p> <p><b>Gabriella Punziano</b> <i>University of Naples Federico II</i></p>
<p><b>Combining qualitative methods. Studying food practices within migration through interviews, photovoice and digital ethnography</b></p>	<p><b>Alice Scavarda</b> <b>Raffaella Ferrero Camoletto</b> <i>University of Turin</i></p> <p><b>Vulca Fidolini</b> <i>Université de Lorraine</i></p>



## CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

3rd International Conference ILIS | 24 -25 november 2021 - University of Salerno

**4:00 PM - 5:00 PM Private room**

### **Round Table**

**NORISC-19** University Research Funding Project

Speakers: Gabriella Punziano - Mariavittoria Cicellin - Eugenio Zito - Rosa Sorrentino - Chiara Balestrino - Carmela Miraglia

Exponents of the Third Sector in Campania will be invited

**5:30 PM**

**Closing remarks and greetings from the committee**

**The final greetings | 6.00 PM**



Suania Acampa, Noemi Crescentini, Giuseppe Michele Padricelli – University of Naples Federico II (Italy)

### **Is it still disintermediated? The role of influencer news-maker in the social platform era**

Internet has developed drastically in last 20 years so much, influencing our daily routines, kind to express ourselves, our culture and our sharing of beliefs, knowledge, and notions. The Internet revolution has had a profound impact on social practices, as well for what concerns the news-making and news-consumption assumptions. The web environment has in fact driven the traditional news-models featured by the journals gatekeeping, towards a brand new disintermediated logic made by hybrid subjects better known as prosumers addicted to the mass self-communication (for example bloggers or city journalists) in many frames as politics, chronicle, economics etc. This phenomenon has drastically reshaped the elementary logics of the news dissemination forcing a rethink of journalists' role. How they reinvent their work? Due to the web architecture currently featured mainly by social platforms and the algorithms that led towards innovative news-personalization logics, the aim of this paper is to identify, through a proper research design based on a content analysis conducted on Facebook and oriented to compare journal and writer's communication styles, the features of the journalists' reinvention today we can define as *influencer news-makers*.

To achieve our research goal, we identified five of the most influential Italian journalists on social media, characterized by over a million interactions and the respective publications they work with. The posts published on their Facebook pages were collected from February 2020- the month of the beginning of the pandemic period, during which Users sought information to keep up to date on the pandemic situation to the pandemic - until June 2021, with a total of 20,000 cases. Analyzing and comparing the type of communication and information conveyed by journalists and newspapers as well as the different degree of involvement produced by users, the main results expected from this study concern the emergence - in the disintermediated information environment of social media - of a new figure intermediary between facts and users, who is no longer the newspaper medium but who is completely identified with a new figure of *influencer news-makers*.



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

### **Changing the language also changes the sentiment algorithm? Exploring the communication on Green Pass**

The development of techniques and tools for automated sentiment analysis of digital content is an area that is receiving more and more attention from the scientific community (Punziano, 2021). For example, many researchers, especially scholars of web communication, have to deal with the experimentation of innovative methods that combine the need to operate on new data with reliable procedures that do not lose sight of the meaning (and sentiment) of the content. We know that the uncritical application of automatic analysis techniques can be insidious (Amaturo and Aragona, 2016; Kitchin 2014) for this reason the scientific community is very interested in the supervised approach: it is based on the probability that a content in a defined context expresses a specific feeling. These algorithms learn from the researcher's knowledge background and is a significant step to limit the risks of a data-driven approach with big data (Aragona, 2017; Kitchin, 2014). In a previous work (Acampa, De Falco, Trezza, 2020) we compared the three machine learning approaches to measure feelings in a corpus of tweets in Italian, the results obtained prompted us to test the approaches also on other languages (English, French, Spanish) with a view to comparison of results. The case study is the analysis of the sentiment expressed by Italians on Twitter regarding the adoption of the vaccination green pass. Considering the conflicting reactions of European citizens regarding this measure, we have assumed that the treatment of the issue is characterized by antithetical perceptions and feelings useful for constructing an optimal test of the models. To start the supervised model, you will need to build a layered sample of tweets and manually classify them. Finally, an index will be built on the tweets processed with the aim of detecting the goodness of the results produced and comparing them with all the languages tested. The comparison of the three algorithms helps us to understand not only what is the strategy to verify the quality of the data obtained.



Felice Addeo, Angela Delli Paoli, Valentina D'Auria – University of Salerno (Italy)  
Massimo Ragnedda, Laura Ruii – Northumbria University of Newcastle (United Kingdom)  
Gabriella Punziano – University of Naples “Federico II” (Italy)

### **DigiCapItaly: an operationalization proposal for the measurement of digital capital in Italy**

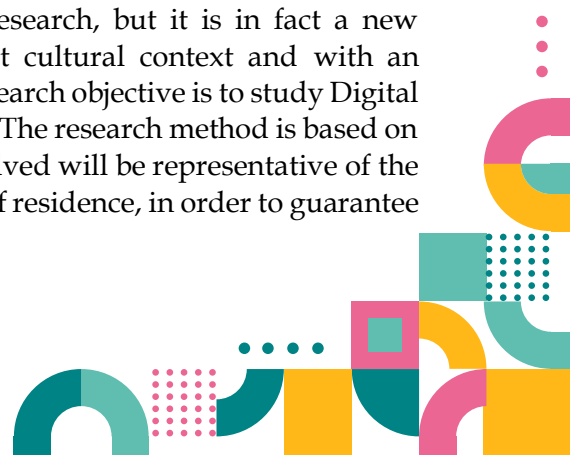
The use of technology is nowadays increasingly widespread mainly because of the need to process, store and transmit large amounts of data. In fact, ICT, i.e. the set of modern information and communication technologies, constitutes a fundamental resource not only for the survival and improvement of superior organisms (companies, institutions), but also for the life of individuals. For the latter, this has given rise to a strong association between the possibility of making use of technology and the chance to be informed. In fact, users can gain infinite advantages or disadvantages, more or less material or immaterial, from the reality offered online thanks to the continuous exchange, accumulation and transfer of information, knowledge and news of various kinds. This accumulation of resources is not the same for everyone but occurs differently according to a number of pre-conditions that affect both the individual and the general context of which he or she is a part. The gap between those who are part of the digital society with its advantages and those who are partially or totally excluded from it (either by personal choice or because they are forced to do so) is known today as the Digital Divide (Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2013; Van Dijk, 2006).

Given the importance of technological resources (such as devices with access to the Internet), of the associated the possibility of assimilating, sharing and disseminating information, it can be said that the online reality has given rise to a new form of capital, Digital Capital, considered as the set of resources (tangible and intangible) born from the individual experience with technological devices. Although Digital Capital has modern and digital roots, it is still related to the different types of capital (social, economic, cultural, political, personal, symbolic) theorized during the 20th century (Hanifan, 1916; Bourdieu, 1988; Coleman, 1988; Becker, 1996; Putnam, 2004). Indeed, the full development of Digital Capital can create potential opportunities relevant to all other types of capital but not only, according to the theses of authors such as Van Dijk (2005, 2006), Park (2017), Ragnedda (2018, 2019), the interaction between these capitals and Digital Capital generates inequalities in both online and offline experience.

Our contribution will introduce a project named DigiCapItaly, born from a partnership among the Federico II° Univerisy of Naples, the Northumbria University in Newcastle and the University of Salerno. This project is motivated by the epistemological need to create analytical and methodological tools to help understand the Digital Society, with a focus on the Italian case. In fact, according to the latest report drawn up by the European Commission regarding the DESI (2021), as well as the "Digital Economy and Society Index", Italy ranks 20th out of 27 EU Member States, with a score of 45.5 against the European average of 50.7 (on a range from 0 to 100). From this emerges the need to investigate the phenomenon of digital capital in the Italian context in order to improve awareness of this reality and to identify the contexts most at risk of digital divide.

DigiCapItaly is part of a broader vein of research started by Ragnedda et al. (2019) focusing on the study of Digital Capital from a strongly empirically grounded perspective. It is the first, and so far only, attempt to give empirical consistency to the concept of Digital Capital in the social sciences. The authors also validated the operational definition with research based on a survey of a representative sample of UK inhabitants.

DigiCapItaly is not only a natural progression of the original research, but it is in fact a new articulation of the empirical framework, extended to a different cultural context and with an updated operational proposal compared to the original one. The research objective is to study Digital Capital in the Italian context, further validating the original model. The research method is based on an online survey with a structured questionnaire. The sample involved will be representative of the Italian population for the variables of gender, age and macro-area of residence, in order to guarantee the generalization of the results.



Maria Carmela Agodi, Ilaria Picardi, Marco Serino – University of Naples “Federico II” (Italy)

**Alice through the methodological looking glass: a web-ethnography of refused knowledge communities during the Covid-19 pandemic**

The COVID-19 health crisis has profoundly modified ethnographic research. The physical distancing prevented the exploration of physical places and, at the same time, made extremely relevant the online spaces in which the majority of public activity has spilled over. As a consequence of the resulting transformation of the public space, the web-ethnographic observation (Hine 2015; Markham, 2016) and the analysis of the virtual ethnographic field have allowed sociological research to go deeply into social places that have assumed crucial relevance in the pandemic crisis (Hine, 2020; Lupton, 2020). Based on a web-ethnographic observation of online spaces in the months of January 2020 – August 2021, this paper analyzes discourses about the pandemic and measures introduced to contain SARS-CoV-2 infection on web communities supporting and promoting healthy practices refused by institutional science. The research is inscribed in the theoretical frame proposed by the Science and Technology Studies. It analyzes discourses of web communities sustaining refused knowledge, defined as knowledge claims not accepted by orthodox scientific experts as belonging to science, although they may have supporters who consider them sound science (Wynne, 1976; Wallis, 1979; Dolby 1979). The presentation highlights specific methodological challenges, while substantive findings reveal the ambivalence in the discourses circulating within these communities, on the one hand, and in their relationship with orthodox scientific discourse, on the other. The major challenge is producing sound results in a dialogic and open-minded methodological style while maintaining a socially accountable and responsible positioning.

Maria Carmela Agodi, Ilaria Picardi, Marco Serino – University of Naples “Federico II” (Italy)

### **Reconsidering focus group as a methodological tool in controversial science-related issues**

A well-known advantage and a key feature of focus groups consists in the observation of group interaction (Morgan 1988; Kitzinger, 1994). In fact, focus groups are proved useful for discussing controversial issues dialogically, for the collective construction of meaning and also for enhancing deliberative capacities and processes (Freeman, 2006; 2013). Therefore, focus groups provide the researcher with the opportunity to let opinion being raised and discussed by participants (Kitzinger, 1994), letting them able to rise questions in deliberative discussions (Rothwell et al., 2016). This may be particularly important when dealing with sensitive topics (Kitzinger and Farquhar, 1999), or with regard to the domain of Science and Technology Studies (STS), the public engagement with science (Macnaghten, 2017; 2021), and the public confidence in science (Brounéus et al., 2019).

Recently, focus groups went more and more often online (Gaiser, 2008; Abrams and Gaiser, 2017) and end up being a tool that helps scholars overcome the limitations of doing qualitative social research during a time of spatial distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Lupton, 2020). Some advantages of this technique are the feeling of anonymity that it may guarantee to participants, which may help them express opinions with more ease (Abrams and Gaiser, 2017), the social-spatial diversity due to the possibility of reaching participants from different geographical areas – i.e., hard-to-reach participants (Lijadi et al. 2015; Gaiser, 2008) – and the availability of choosing between an asynchronous or a synchronous focus group (Fox et al., 2007; Williams et al., 2012).

In an online environment, addressing important or particularly sensitive issues may likely be pursued with the benefit of giving participants different opportunities to express their beliefs with more ease, by also relying upon strategies of conducting and moderating focus groups that take into account different patterns of interactions among participants than those occurring in offline focus groups.

In this proposal, we aim at defining a methodological and theoretically well-informed approach for conducting online focus groups in order to deal with group polarization – which often occurs in like-minded groups (Strandberg et al., 2019) - and, in particular, the political polarization over science (Rekker, 2021).

We aim to define stimuli apt to elicit motivational, cognitive, experiential cues and to delineate correlate dimensions to polarization, to be explored empirically. For instance, on the basis of the dialogical context of focus groups, we consider how important are relations and mediations among people talking about science-related issues. In doing so, we discuss the possibility of exploring controversial issues and the processes of stabilization of knowledge, also on the background of polarization of opinions on social media (Bessi et al., 2016).



Francesco Annunziata, Laura Palermo, Elisa Caponera – INVALSI (Italy)

### **Gender differences in Computer and Information Literacy and ICT use at eight grade**

In recent decades, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has radically transformed our daily lives, work, and social relationships. Trying to understand how today's young people are prepared for this new challenge is crucial. The IEA's (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement) ICILS (International Computer and Information Literacy Study) survey aims to collect data to provide the education systems with a better understanding of the phenomenon and thus develop programs in line with the changes taking place. The survey focuses on how students develop digital and information skills, i.e. the ability to collect, manage, evaluate and share digital information, as well as their understanding of issues related to the safe and responsible use of electronic information across different countries. These skills combine computer literacy, critical thinking, technical skills, and communication skills applied to a range of contexts and purposes. The first cycle of the study was in 2013; in the second edition of the study (2018), Italy participated for the first time.

The present study investigated the gender differences in ICILS 2018 results. Italian students participating in ICILS 2018 (N = 2810; mean age: 13,3) were considered. The sample was representative of Italian students at the beginning of eighth grade. Students answered the CIL (Computer and Information Literacy) test and the international questionnaire that included questions regarding students' socio-economic and cultural background, future expectations regarding their educational career, expectations for the use of ICT for work and study, their experience and use of computers and ICT to complete a range of different tasks in school and out of school, their attitudes towards using computers and ICT, such as self-efficacy in basic and advanced ICT skills, use of different applications in class, use of ICT for different purposes.

The descriptive statistics results showed that girls outperformed boys in CIL, although boys perceived themselves as more confident than girls in using ICT for specialist application and reported a higher level of *expectations of future ICT use for work and study* and frequency of use of general application for activities.

A structural equation model (SEM) was applied to perform a path analysis to test a relationship between student characteristics, SES (socio-economic index), and CIL performance.

The results evidenced that the relationships between the CIL test, on one hand, and self-confidence and *expectations for the use of ICT for work and study*, on the other hand, differ between boys and girls. Moreover, the relationship between self-efficacy and *expectations of future ICT use for work and study* is stronger for boys than for girls, while the relationship between *learning about CIL at school* and self-efficacy is stronger for girls than boys. Self-efficacy mediates the effect of the four variables considered for the girls. In particular, a higher level of self-efficacy reinforces the relationship between *learning about CIL at school* and CIL.

Based on the analyses performed, some possible implications for the Italian school system are discussed.

Martin Berg – Malmö University (Sweden)

### **Digital Technography: A Methodological Framework for Interrogating Emerging Technologies**

Emerging digital technologies, such as 'intelligent' automation, 'smart' personal and domestic technologies and data-driven platforms, are becoming increasingly prevalent in contemporary society. As future-oriented, promissory, and sometimes yet to exist, such technologies pose particular methodological challenges for digital social research since they partake in creating the future they aim at transforming. This paper proposes a methodological framework to study the construction of emerging digital technologies as meaningful phenomena. Corporate actors within this growing field adopt similar marketing strategies that involve sharing multimodal promotional materials on digital platforms where technical specifications blend with evocative stories (Miller, 2007; Goode, 2018). These stories employ a future-oriented vocabulary in which words such as change, re-imagination, reinvention, and transformation play an essential role. Building on recent ethnographic research, this paper demonstrates how emerging digital technologies are promoted by creating a symbolic and imaginary context in which such technologies make perfect sense. These studies focus on wearable self-tracking devices (Fors et al., 2020), digital food technologies (Boztepe and Berg, 2020), and systems for work automation (Berg, forthcoming). The empirical examples demonstrate how the promotional materials involve discursive practices that produce a particular kind of situated and transformative knowledge that allows emerging digital technologies to appear meaningful. These empirical examples serve as a basis for the formulation of 'digital technography' (not to be confused with Kien, 2008) as a methodological framework that allows for an interrogation of how emerging digital technologies are imagined across different platforms and sites of knowledge production. The methodological framework involves the identification of how an imaginary and symbolic context is rhetorically and technologically created. It then explores contradictions and tensions between actors, devices and contexts that allow for further theoretical exploration by engaging with what is here referred to as rhetorical 'glitches'. The methodological framework outlined here engages with a particular form of discourse production that is afforded by digital platforms. As such, it is an essential addition to the broader field of digital ethnography and more design-oriented approaches such as 'thing ethnography' (Giaccardi et al., 2016).



Giuseppe Borriello – University of Naples “Federico II” (Italy)

### **Digital State and Defence Sector in Italy: the National Cybersecurity Agency**

The paper is part of the strand of studies that analyzes the birth and evolution of the State and its appendages, defining the changes introduced by the rise of the platform society and the massive use of algorithms, AI and big data in the public sector. Within this research area, it will be explored the process of modern State-building, which began in the 15th century, and it was characterised by the establishment of sovereignty in three crucial areas: defence and security, administration of justice and taxation. These areas have historically been a battleground between the central power of the State and the local authorities and independent intermediary bodies that over time, by custom or by force, have gained the right to impose themselves in these areas. In spite of the long and not always linear path, the State has managed, until recently, to assert its sovereignty in most cases. However, with the digital revolution, the balances painstakingly achieved in the past have been redimensioned, causing the emergence of new players (especially the large high-tech companies) and new social, economic and political scenarios that have opened up a multitude of possible evolutions. In particular, following the methodology of the case study, the focus will be on the analysis of the policy strategy pursued by Italy in the field of cybersecurity, considered both as the defence of the country's strategic IT assets from the attack of foreign powers (what has been defined in literature as cyberwar) and as the protection of data and privacy of citizens; In this sense, the weight that new technologies are playing in this sector will be highlighted, taking into account the role played by private corporations and public administration apparatuses in a context such as the Italian one, characterised by a chronic delay in the digitalization of citizens, businesses and public sector. It was only with Decree Law No. 82/2021, in fact, that awareness was raised of the need to have a National Cybersecurity Agency, which is intended to be a further and concrete step aimed at making effective and strengthening the cybersecurity perimeter identified and then expanded starting with Law 133/2019. In this sense, it is proposed to analyse the regulatory evolution, the economic and legislative approach of the political strategy pursued by the Italian State in the field of digital security, focusing on the change of pace recorded with the latest legislative measures which propose to commit for the first time an unprecedented amount of resources, strong availability and priorities indicated in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) and the commitments made at EU level.

In conclusion the objective of the study will be to analyse a sector such as defence and security (in its digital variant) in the Italian case, which, as in the past, represents a fundamental terrain where the new game for sovereignty and the chances of renewal in the digital sense of the State is being played.



Jessica Camargo Molano – International Telematic University “UniNettuno”, Rome (Italy)  
Michele Grillo – University of Salerno (Italy)

### **Methods and behaviours for successful digital social research with subjects with specific learning disorders (SLD)**

The Covid 19 pandemic brought about a change in the way social research is carried out. In order to comply with public health protection regulations, since March 2019 researchers have had to resort to the almost exclusive use of online tools, as it is impossible to carry out any research face-to-face research.

All typical social research tools, from surveys to focus groups and interviews, are adapted to the online mode, confronting researchers with a new and unforeseen situation.

Starting from this context, the present research aims to investigate the disadvantages and advantages of using online tools to analyze individuals with specific learning disorders. Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) can be defined as difficulties in the acquisition of some particular skills or abilities that do not allow a complete self-sufficiency in learning. Such difficulties can arise in reading, writing and calculation, and are known as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysorthographia and dyscalculia. (Molisso and Bonfiglio, 2018: 42).

In face-to-face social research with individuals with specific learning disorders, researchers are called upon to set up various types of compensatory measures that depend on the disorder that the different subjects investigated present. But what behaviours and tools should researchers adopt when the research is carried out exclusively online?

By analysing different cases of specific learning disorders, this investigation aims to identify what tools and behaviours can be adopted in order to carry out research through digital platforms with subjects with SLD.



Nicola Capolupo – University of Salerno (Italy)

**Do Italians communicate it better?  
An explorative skill mapping of Public Organizations professionals' skills**

The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically altered the way in which organizations work, as well as technologies, skills and knowledge required to adopt these new disruptive methodologies. While business have found themselves prepared to cope with this need as "*digital natives*", or at least more sensitive to the continuous improvement their employee's digital know-how, this considerably differs for public bodies, where turnover and professional trainings are often delayed or non-existent. This is particularly true in communication sector, where professionals must keep up with Social Media algorithm updates, graphic software's, their institution needs, and the lack of budget available in a viable and unstable scenario. The role played by digital techniques in this critical period has brought new forms of knowledge exchange among both professionals and scholars, spurring new mixed methods of inquiry in qualitative and exploratory research. This approach allows to investigate without constraint phenomena and causes that, especially when applied to organizational contexts, would have been difficult to reach.

Therefore, the aim of this article is to investigate which are the new digital communication skills required to professionals in public organizations, and what issues arise in acquiring or applying them during the working daily life. To meet this goal, a public digital focus group on *Microsoft Teams* among professional communicators from various public organization was arranged, and its findings have been discussed to address a twofold need:

- (1) mapping hard and soft skills of digital communicators in the current Public Administration;
- (2) evaluate the relevance of virtual focus groups conducted on *Microsoft Teams* in organizational studies within the pandemic scenario.



Viviana Capozza – Sapienza University of Rome (Italy)

### **Analysis of Amazon reviews to promote sustainable consumption**

Thanks to their large amount, online customer reviews are being used in more and more studies about product innovation and design (Zhang et al., 2021; Anh, Yukari Nagai & Nguyen, 2019), especially to detect changes in user's experiences (Liang, Liu & Loh, 2013) and to plan improvement strategies (Hou et al., 2019) to better satisfy current and potential customers (Liu et al., 2012). On the contrary, there are no lots of studies about how relevant reviews can be to understand users' sustainable consumption practices and that's why this study aims to identify the role that Amazon reviews can have in this topic. Sustainability issues indeed are gaining more and more attention in social and scientific debate and since consumer behaviour has direct impacts on personal and collective well-being, sustainable consumption has become a central topic when talking about environment (Jackson, 2005). For example, in Europe the 95% of dishwashers' environmental impacts it's due to the way consumers use them (Peattie & Belz, 2010): a wrong usage can increase energy consumption by 50% (Brunzell & Renström, 2020). Moreover, users and technologies, together with producers, co-product sustainable effects (Ozaki, Shaw & Dodgson, 2013) because they co-construct each other: users are active while they incorporate technologies in everyday practices, using devices or software ignoring some functions or co-inventing new functionalities. At the same time, technologies can have effects on people's behaviour, skills and preferences (De Jong, 2014). The main problem then is how technologies can encourage more sustainable behaviours. For these reasons it's important to understand which are the factors that influence individual behaviour and to find ways for "unfreezing" existing behaviours (Jackson, 2005) and forming a new habit (Andersen, 1982). This is possible if the cognitive script for the habit is easy to follow (Tang & Bhamra, 2008). It is therefore essential to understand how to make it clear and easy for users to pay greater attention to energy consumption. That is where reviews come into play. Although deeper analysis are needed to examine some specific aspects of consumption practices, scraping Amazon reviews about the best seller dishwashers in Italy and then conducting a content analysis on these comments it was possible to detect some good and bad consumption practices and to understand the most significant and frequent ones. One of the most evident results of this study are the opinions about the drying function: unnecessary for some consumers and indispensable for others. This, for example, can suggest to maintain the drying function optional and separated from all the other programmes' functions; in this way consumers can better understand how much energy they can save without using this function and decide when to use it or not.



Rosanna Cataldo, Gabriella Punziano, Ferdinando Iazzetta – University of Naples “Federico II” (Italy)  
Barbara Sarracino – University of Bologna (Italy)

### Public communication of Italian scientific experts in the Anti-Covid 19 vaccination campaign

The Covid-19 pandemic was characterized by an unprecedented level of involvement of scientific experts in media coverage and public exposure to expert advice. Since Rae Goodell's seminal work on visible scientists (1977), the role of scientific experts in public communication has become increasingly central due to changes in the media landscape as well as in the dynamics between science and society (Maasen and Weingart, 2005; Cheng et al., 2008; Bucchi and Trench, 2014). In recent decades, social media has provided a means for experts to engage in public debate more actively and directly (Peters, 2014; Schiele et al., 2012). Discussions and controversies among scientists previously confined to specialized communication contexts have become, at least potentially, accessible to the general public (Gregory and Miller, 1998; Horst, 2013; Bauer et al., 2019). Since the beginning of the pandemic emergency, communication has played a key role in providing citizens with information and instructions on how to minimize the risk of infection. Information has been available through a variety of sources and media and, unlike in other countries (Metcalf et al., 2020), in Italy a plurality of experts with different perspectives and expertise have emerged so much to open and shape a new crisis within the emergency on the public and institutional communication front<sup>3</sup>.

Since the symbolic launch of Vaccine Day<sup>4</sup>, the role of scientific communication experts has become increasingly central in the agenda setting to effectively promote through the mass media interventions both in support of vaccination decisions (Casiday R., 2007) and in response to cases of misinformation ready to cause social alarm (Diekema S.D., 2012). Therefore, the project intends to analyze the peculiarities of the Italian case in terms of presence and ways of communicating experts during the first six months of the anti-Covid vaccination campaign, setting as a macro hypothesis at the basis of the work the existence of discordant communication strategies. The research questions from which the project moves are:

-Which scientific experts became visible? How much and how did these experts communicate and what kind of strategy did they employ? How has health literacy been conveyed to citizens?

To answer these questions, we intend to study the TV and print media representation of experts and self-presentation on the web. Specifically, we intend to analyze the content produced from 1/01/2021 to 30/06/2021 by monitoring with topics of interest and keywords related to "expert" and "vaccines" from:

-TG and in-depth broadcasts of the main Italian generalist networks (Rai1, Rai2, Rai3, Rete4, Canale5, Italia1 and La7);

-articles from the most popular daily newspapers (Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica, Il Sole24ore, La Stampa);

-contents of the web and social pages of those who will emerge as the most visible expert.

The data automatically extracted and collected in natively digital matrices (Rogers 2013; Caliandro 2018) thanks to the Volocom service<sup>5</sup> will undergo text data mining operations with automatic text analysis and content analysis (Losito 2002; Bolasco 2014; Tipaldo 2014).

Based on empirical evidence it will be possible to return results and interpretations useful to define the depth of expert communication and, to frame and overcome the problems that public communication has been facing.

<sup>3</sup> Concern about misinformation linked to a deadly virus was expressed in the words of WHO Director Tedros Adhanom with "We're not just fighting an epidemic; we're fighting an infodemic".

<sup>4</sup> Symbolically held on December 27, 2020 in Italy and Europe.

<sup>5</sup> Platform of innovative tools that allows, thanks to the continuous acquisition of the flow of information, to monitor and select news from different channels.

Ahana Choudhury – Tezpur University, Assam (India)

### **De-sanitizing the ‘New Normal’: Digital Research and the Challenges of Digital Divide in India**

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged as the deadliest crisis that stretched infrastructure supporting humane living and sustainability. While developmental practitioners vouched for several reforms and skill-sets appropriating the ‘new normal’, challenges have loomed large within the horizons of the Indian academia. It has been evident that digital researches resulted in opposing implications for Indian academia, even if it worked for some developed economies. The pandemic dented opportunities for the research scholars hailing from the marginalized sections of the Indian society. Lack of accessible digital resources generated academic and digital inequities, further stalling their research prospects.

Undoubtedly, digitalized classrooms have generated potent versions of continuing knowledge-network dissemination during the pandemic. But, conducting systematic social research across digitalized platforms have its own issues in a developing country like India. The rationale of choosing research topics has turned extremely limiting with the inaccessibility of certain target populations over digital platforms. In addition, with the onset of pandemic lockdown in India, several scholars have re-migrated back from their places of work to home, which threatened their prospects of accessing viable digital infrastructures for the continuation of ‘digital field’ work. So, the present study examined the impact of pandemic lockdown towards digital research in Indian academia, intersecting across several domains of socio-economic and political crisis. The paper also explored the impact of digital divide or inequity and the challenging conditions of conducting digital research for the scholars belonging to the marginalized sections of the Indian society, having irregular access to electricity and broadband facilities.

A qualitative approach has been used with purposive sampling technique to gather responses and accounts of experiences from the research scholars belonging to lower socio-economic groups. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with an interview schedule. Thematic analysis using ‘Braun and Clarke’ method enabled the exploration of complex nuances in relation to digital research. The study context has been set to Guwahati (Dispur), the capital city of the North-Eastern state of India, Assam. The North-Eastern states are populated with marginalized ethnic groups, besides being referred to as an under-developed region. So, it has been analyzed that conducting digital research has been challenging for research scholars who hail from disadvantaged backgrounds. Digital divide has been a pertinent intervention within academia, molding social identity, status and role-performances. Democratic principles and inclusiveness of educational institutions have been disfigured with an essence of digital inequities. So, ‘academic ambivalence’ can be conceptualized to refer to a set of conflictive socio-technological lags erupting in one’s academic and social personality, at the backdrop of an uncertain and ambivalent social reality. While digital mechanisms made continuity of curriculum smoother to a certain extent through government-sponsored centers in remote villages, it ruptured possibilities of intensive and inter-personal research in terms of recruiting participants, losing track of research processes and academic losses. Therefore, the unidirectional relationship between digitalized research and new normal needs to be deconstructed along with multi-dimensional and interactive contexts of technological operations.



Jitka Cirklová – University of Finance and Administration, Prague (Czech Republic)

### **Intangible Heritage or Aesthetic Performance with a Flavor of Mystery?**

The focus of this paper is on the digitalized and commodified elements of a ritual, an aesthetic and social performance acknowledged by UNESCO as an intangible heritage festival known as the Ride of the Kings. The main goal of the text is to add to the understanding of the complexity of the sociocultural changes of local events that are triggered by the modes of digitalization and commodification of local culture, traditions, rituals, arts, and crafts, all found in the heritage festival. The aim is to contribute to the knowledge of the dynamic diversifying forces and stabilizing factors due to which rituals as festivals survived until today when became attractions of cultural tourism and a target of gamification.

This text uncovers the processes by which local traditional festivities become part of market mechanisms in the conditions of a market economy. The added value of attractive events is established throughout the processes of commodification identified by the text. In the course of commodification, a cultural element acquires economic value and is offered for consumption as a product or service.

This study uses ethnographic research and content analysis of available on-line material, such as village chronicles accessible via the Internet or contemporary local newsletters and other materials published about the event. The data for this research were obtained from a variety of sources and a combination of qualitative research to gain a holistic picture of the festival and the community. Narrative analysis was used to uncover the patterns with which the festival is presented in marketing campaigns and in the process of branding the Ride of the Kings outside of the rural community. Previously, the village event was researched at the level of its meaning for participants on an individual subjective level, in order to see what relationships exist between the ancient fertility ritual, folkloristic play, the form of political revolt against communism and the new social and cultural dimension of the local event emerged with the advent of digital technologies.

Digitalization contributed highly to the process of the transformation of a social event into a brand of high market value. The Moravian folk festival Jízda Králů, in English "The Ride of the Kings" is a ceremonial procession of village males with a king on a horseback. During the ritual, a twelve-year-old boy is elected as "The King" of the young men of the village who have just reached the age required for the army draft, marriage, or have in the broader sense entered adulthood. The King is dressed in a folk bridal dress, holding a white rose between his teeth, and is forbidden to utter a sound all day long. He is seated on a decorated white horse and accompanied by young men in traditional costumes. This aesthetic performance with a flavor of mystery helps to market the event commercially, to transform the ritual into a commercial festival with the seal of authenticity.

Cleto Corposanto, Beba Molinari – Magna Graecia University of Catanzaro (Italy)

### **How does the error from sampling to big data change?**

In this abstract proposal the authors aim to present a series of researches carried out in the last 8 years, which starting from Big Data have posed different methodological problems related, on the one hand to sampling and on the other to the conception of error. in the scientific field (Corposanto - Molinari, 2019, 2018a, 2018b, 2016, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). We are used to considering the so-called *hard sciences* as incontrovertible, but this is not the case. More precisely, the contribution will be divided into two macro areas of discussion.

In the first part we will discuss sampling and in particular at break-offs and drop-outs and the relative response and cooperation rates in order to understand how much these rates can still be valid in web 2.0 contexts.

When discussing sampling it is necessary to investigate what are the strengths and weaknesses of online platforms and how versatile these platforms are in their use. It is the versatility of these platforms that allows us to carry out and / or distinguish between a probabilistic sampling from a non-probabilistic one.

But at the same time we should ask whether it still makes sense to speak of probability sampling when in the hard sciences are used in experiments a few cases, often below the hundred.

Further reflections concern the determination of a statistical representativeness which, especially online, can sometimes be overcome by an effective sociological representativeness.

The second part of the contribution will be dedicated to the limits with which the authors have had to confront and to what were the different types of responses put in place to overcome these criticalities, in the perspective that the classic detection tools present bias, so such as web surveys.

In this regard, the authors are convinced that an interpretative change must be made in the discussion that takes place around the bias, to which a predominantly negative connotation is attributed to it. In our opinion, this consideration is not always true, in fact unexpected influences must not always be perceived as "mistakes", "errors" that contaminate the quality of the information detected and should therefore be considered as unusable.

The authors believe that it is necessary to adopt another point of view, that of the researcher who intends to study his own theory aware of being in the field of discovery, with respect to which the researcher could ask himself a substantial question, that is, if the survey instrument that it intends to use, already supplied in the scientific field, can really measure its object of study, or if it does not measure the object of study together with some other variable or if it does not measure something completely different and that nothing has anything to do with the research object.

We must therefore ask ourselves if the so-called disturbing elements and / or errors are really recognizable, but even more if the researchers are really ready to question the results that are in contrast with reference paradigms consolidated by solid schools of thought.

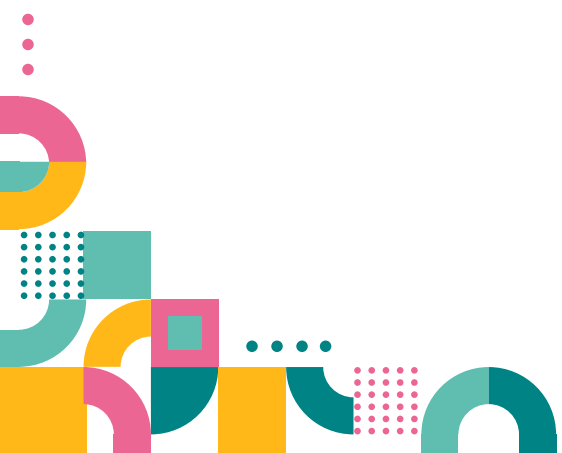


Valentina D'Auria, Vincenzo Esposito, Rocco Perrone – University of Salerno (Italy)

### **Exploring New Digital Addiction: Developing a WhatsApp Addiction Scale**

In recent decades, social network-mediated communication has become increasingly intense and frequent. In particular, WhatsApp can be considered our main channel of private conversations: we deepen relationships, flirt, make appointments, gossip. Originally created as a channel to replace the traditional paid SMS, it has now become, along with other social networks, an extension of our offline lives. However, many studies (Ko, et al., 2007; Brand et al., 2016; 2019) show that excessive use of social media can lead to pathological attitudes. In particular, problems arise when face-to-face communication is completely replaced by mediated communication, or when mediated communication gets in the way of other activities in our daily lives.

From a sociological perspective, our contribution provides the preliminary results of a study aimed at developing and subsequently validating a scale for the detection of WhatsApp addiction. The study is based on the implementation of an online survey using scales already validated in the literature: Internet Addiction Assessment (Young, 1998), Smartphone Addiction Scale (Yang, et al., 2013) and Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) Scale (Przybylski, 2013); and a part created ex novo. The exploratory phase administration involved a convenience sample (256 cases). Data analysis was carried out through bivariate (ANOVA, Correlation) and multivariate (Factorial analysis, Regression) analyses.





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### **Geo-social media and socio-spatial stratification: new methods for a conjoint analysis**

The role of space in sociological theory has never been preeminent or in any case well defined. Despite the works of authors such as Giddens (1979), Harvey (1978), Gieryn (2000) and Jacobs (1961) highlighted the centrality of the spatial dimension in the study of social phenomena, this relevance is not yet fully recognized except for the field of urban sociology, where the focus on the space and territorial dimensions are fundamental keys to understand and explore social inequalities (Tammaru et al., 2016; Vicari Haddock, 2013).

Recently, the interest in the spatial dimension seems to have found new life thanks to the great diffusion of big data in the social research. In the data revolution era (Kitchin, 2014) new data and new sources allow researchers to find new ways to study society and its dynamics. Among these types of data, geo-located data enable better ways of producing social knowledge (Halford, 2013). The availability of "voluntary" (Flanagin, Metzger, 2008) and "derived from social media" (Campagna et al., 2015) geographic information put the spatial dimension – initially ignored in social media analysis – at the center of the interest in digital and web studies.

In the last few years, a new approach which aim to analyze two worlds that were previously considered irreconcilable, the online and the offline world, has been developed. To date it is increasingly recognized that the virtual and material separation is entirely artificial, as pointed out in spatial media theory (Leszczynski, 2014).

In the growing body of research on geo-social media it is possible to distinguish at least five lines of research. In one of these we can find quantitative works which focus on explaining the variability of the phenomena investigated through the analysis of geo-social media, by using statistical models where socio-economic variables – gathered from ecological units – are treated as independent variables. This field of research investigates the different ways by which the spatial dimension is related to events of online world and in particular of social platforms.

Starting from this consideration, the work aims to illustrate the potential of some innovative methods for the analysis of georeferenced data to integrate the study of socio-spatial stratification with the social media analysis, through the adoption of a large geolocated twitter dataset collected from 2017 to 2020 and the use of spatial analysis techniques performed with R and Qgis software.



Ciro Clemente De Falco, Gabriella Punziano, Domenico Trezza - University of Naples "Federico II" (Italy)

**The vaccine is now here. The State-Region governance between converging plans and diverging digital communication**

The Covid-19 pandemic has revealed the intricate nature of multi-level governance systems. The frequent conflicts between State and Regions, which emerged in the normative contradictions within the emergency management, could be among the causes of the drivers of the dramatic outcomes of the pandemic (Istat, 2020; Censis, 2020). More frequently, this complexity has had a communicative expression, in the arena of social media, where the difference between personal, political and institutional communication is now highly fuzzy (Solito, 2018; Rega, 2018; Calise; 2011). Among the tension elements between State and Regions there is, in addition to the unclear attribution of responsibilities in the decision-making circuit of the emergency, also the supposed different allocation of resources. The contribution aims to present an analysis of State-Regional governance in relation to the vaccination campaign, with the objective of identifying possible elements of divergence and convergence on three dimensions. Of these three dimensions, the first refers to the regulatory dimension of the campaign, which ensures the management plans of the national campaign and individual regional plans. The second relates to the implementation area of the provisions concerning data on allocation and distribution of both vaccines and vaccinated people. The third instead concerns the institutional communication of vaccines on Facebook institutional profiles. It introduces an analysis of public communication on the anti-Covid 19 vaccine, from December 20, 2020 (a few days before the start of the campaign) to June 30, 2021. It examines the central level of communication, i.e., the communication campaign of government actors; and regional, i.e., the institutional communication of regional presidents through their respective social profiles. Facebook post were extracted via API programs and analyzed by content analysis according to text interrogation, known as Rositi's (1988) third type analysis. The results show an institutional scenario that goes in two directions. In opposition to a normative and implementation level that is more coherent and less divergent, there is an extremely fragmented communication context with elements of contradiction between State and Regions. The latter responds to different logics, such as political (in disagreement with the government coalition) or lobbying to claim priorities for action and - during the implementation phase - to change the local territorial allocation of vaccines. This is functional to the formulation of policy proposals and restructuring of the institutional communication agenda.



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**Hating online in times of emergency. Profiles and patterns of verbal violence on social media.**

Digital environments from web 2.0 forward have offered the chance for users to generate their own content and communicate also anonymously. This has implied the abundance of phrases, incitements, hate speech and sentiments especially towards public targets, or vulnerable groups (Ziccardi, 2016). Verbal violence on the web, which often flows into 'hate speech' meaning the repeated forms of insults to people or groups, is widespread on the Net and does not yet have a strict legal limitation because it clashes with another sensitive issue, that of freedom of expression. It is a very serious problem because it may affect the psychological vulnerability of the individual and also have social repercussions (Salzano and Perfetti, 2020). During the emergence of the pandemic of 2020 and 2021, this phenomenon has grown out of control. The lockdowns, the vaccination campaign implementation, and most recently, the launch of the green pass for only vaccinated, has inflamed the debate and in many cases exacerbated the violence of verbal conflict online (Uyeng and Carley 2021). The contribution presented is an analysis of the verbal violence of tweets (VVT) during these three crucial moments of the emergency ('contagion outbreak', 'vaccination phase', 'green pass introduction'). The research question aims to understand the phenomenon of verbal violence from two perspectives: first, from the perspective of the text: what are the most frequent topics behind the verbal violence? As hypothesized in many previous works, is the phenomenon related to the circulation of fake news or is there more to it? The second one follows the users' perspective: how do users profiling verbal violence emerge? The study of tweets is oriented towards mixed qualitative-quantitative forms of data organization and analysis, according to the following three steps: 1. Extraction of the base of VVT through supervised classification and qualitative and hermeneutic control of the dataset; 2. Quantitative content analysis through topic modeling, lexical correspondence analysis to detect latent structures underlying insulting expressions and construction of verbal 'violence' indices; 3. In-depth analysis of a sample of tweets through qualitative procedures to investigate tweets in their entirety and to identify their full meaning. A possible innovation brought by the results could allow to shed light on the most hate speech-oriented profiles and to understand possible gender issues in the use of verbal violence or associations with topics related to fake - news.



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### **Digital Methods and Evaluation of school SWA/PTSO projects: interlinked actors, points of view and observation contexts**

Analysis of data from institutional sources – available on specific platforms and websites - have contributed significant knowledge and useful suggestions for public policy makers (Agodi, 2010). Expressions such as “data deluge”, “data revolution” and “data intensive society” (Amaturo and Aragona, 2016) are increasingly used to define a social reality more and more characterized by a flow of data coming from the web (Amaturo and Aragona, 2016; 2019) and animated by a multitude of public and private actors. These referents, both for evaluation/self-evaluation purposes (e.g. reporting or learning) and for social engagement goals, represent an important object for sociological analysis. Regarding the perspective of *digital research* (Rogers, 2015), the focus is on the need to orient research practices towards a “ductile” and flexible use of *digital methods*, which can combine and connect the institutional purposes of collecting and sharing data on the web with complex research designs, according to a specific culture of research, “with-and-in” the digital world. This perspective reflects various prerogatives: appropriate formulation of research questions, selection of the most appropriate sources and data collection through *web-based* procedures (Caliandro and Gandini, 2019; Veltri, 2021); innovative application of data analysis techniques from different digital environments, including content analysis as a survey (Losito, 1996; Faggiano, 2016) and *social network analysis* (Newman, 2018; Borgatti et al. 2018). Starting from this assumption, this paper intends to highlight a section of research, carried out by the Coris Department of Sapienza University of Rome, which is part of the *Project of Relevant National Interest - PRNI - “Evaluating the School-Work Alternance: a longitudinal study in Italian upper secondary schools”*. In particular, this is the exploratory phase of the research, conducted on school SWA/PTSO projects (school years 2016/17; 2018/19), carried out by exploring the schools’ websites and the *Miur Platform of Alternance Stories*, which contains the most virtuous projects developed by the school networks (subsequently downloaded and analyzed). According to a *mixed methods approach*, the results of the content analysis as a survey (classifications referred to: thematic area, learning objectives, competences and didactic methodologies found in the projects) were usefully employed for the development of the data collection tools to be used extensively in the following research steps, such as: *i. online questionnaires* for teachers and students of the alternance, involved in the closed multi-wave web survey; *ii. online metadata format* for a first analysis of the SWA/PTSO projects (school years 2021/22), filled and uploaded by the sampled schools in the *web environment*, virtual place of connection among the different actors involved in our research. More specifically, the digital platform will perform the function of: repository or *crowd sourcing* (Rogers, 2015) of the answers to the questionnaires; interactive communication of the research outcomes to the communities of involved stakeholders (schools, hosting organizations, students and families). With reference to the contribution of digital methods for the development of complex research designs, we emphasize these aspects: immediacy of the space-time connection among different contexts of observation; efficacy of the storage/downloading procedures of extensive databases; inter-connectivity and comparability of the databases - also thanks to the linkage among different information units (e.g. between ASL/PCTO projects and student questionnaires) - useful for reconstructing the social impact of the adopted measures on educational careers and choice of studies at the end of high school.

Ughetta Favazzi, Grazia Graziosi, Enrico Nerli Ballati, Donatella Poliandri – INVALSI (Italy)  
Beba Molinari – Magna Graecia University of Catanzaro (Italy)

### **School-Work Alternance: towards a longitudinal study**

The abstract aims to discuss the activities carried out under the PRIN project entitled *Evaluating the School-Work Alternance: a longitudinal study in Italian upper secondary schools* involving Invalsi (Principal investigator), University La Sapienza, University of Milan Bicocca and University of Genoa.

The study designed and proposed to the Ministry in 2017 was aimed and prepared for traditional school contexts. With the advent of the Pandemic it was necessary to reformulate the timing of the project and take the necessary precautions regarding the research methodology.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the National Educational program, named “Pathways for Transversal Skills and Orientation”(PTSO) issued by the Ministry of Education with Decree 774/2019, as a part of the school curriculum for students from Grade 11 to Grade 13, with the purpose to depict the developmental trajectories about students’ occupational aspirations, career orientation, and occupational skills in their interplay with the PTSOs. To achieve this goal, we realize a two-year longitudinal study involving nearly 20,000 high school students enrolled at Grade 11 in 100 Italian high schools during 2021/2022 school year.

The first stage of the project is to recruit about 100 Italian high school selected through a quota sampling method by considering the geographical area (Northwest, Northeast, Centre, South, South and Islands) and the high school field of study (lyceums, technical and professional schools) as strata variables. The recruitment process started at the end of May and finished the first week of September and it was carried out in collaboration with regional school offices (USR), a strategy that encouraged schools’ participation. Currently we have 73 signed agreements and 32 schools that refuse to participate. Especially it is interesting to note that schools have welcomed the proposal to participate in the study despite the issues related to the pandemic. We observe the higher number of refusals among lyceums, especially from the northern Italy, and professional schools.

During the presentation, a space will be dedicated to the preparation of the second phase of the project that sees the students and, to varying degrees, the remaining stakeholders as protagonists, with all the problems related to the many rules dictated by the Coronavirus. The second stage of the project will begin at the end of September. Each student will fill out a standardized questionnaire that will be replicated in two subsequent waves, with the aim to detect demographic characteristics, family structures, social origins and educational pathways of students, as well as contextual factors (e.g., class-average, socio-economic status). Also, students’ individual characteristics –in terms of career orientation, occupational and academic self-efficacy beliefs and personality traits–will be examined. The survey will take in account student’s achievements, social-emotional competencies, quality of relationships with parents, teachers, peers and, at waves II and III, students’ perceptions of their PTSOs. In addition, a specific focus will be given to the quality of the relationships that students establish with school PTSOs tutors and hosting organization tutors. Finally, during the observed period, both PTSO s referent-teacher and hosting organizations will fill a survey involving questions on the PTSO projects and students involved with the aim of gathering information on their experience and features.

This two-year longitudinal study will allow to identify good practices and factors capable of promoting the growth of student awareness in their career choices and to offer useful information to schools, host organizations and policy makers to implement PTSOs more aimed at supporting the students in the school/work transition or in transition to the tertiary education sector.



Carmela Ferrara – University of Naples “Federico II” (Italy)

**The online experience of gender and sexual minorities. An exploratory study on intersectionality and digitization**

This article investigates the online experience of gender and sexual minorities with a migratory background, with reference to the intersectional theory (Crenshaw 2017). The research, given the lack of scientific knowledge on the subject, is configured as an exploratory study, therefore it adopts qualitative research techniques. The unit of analysis is selected through Facebook groups, Telegram channels and physical and virtual desks aimed at migrant LGBTIQ people. The study consists in two in-person and online focus groups and four in-depth interviews with privileged witnesses and they are analyzed by using a phenomenological approach (Muzzetto and Segre 2006). This research is part of the field of research on digitized methods. The main findings show that the target population does not feel safe on the web to express their sexual identity, they prefer to share non-explicit content (post photos with their partner, but being distant and pretending to be just friends) and to publish stories instead of posts, because they disappear after 24 hours.



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### **Defining an integrated and computed methodology approach for sentiment and psychographic analysis in tourism research**

Digital technologies offer new opportunities in the field of tourism research and marketing, but their potential is still unexplored due to the lack of well-documented and community-accepted practices. This scenario calls for a redefinition of research methods, technologies, and procedures, moving forward the traditional questionnaire survey approach. In this research work, we present the preliminary results about the definition of an integrated and computed methodology approach in tourism research and marketing. The proposed paradigm is supported by the extensive use of currently available high-performance computational resources and artificial intelligence-based tools (needed for data acquisition, preparation, processing, and interpretation). Leveraging data science techniques for big data automatic learning, the proposed approach consists of two separate phases: learning and predicting. In order to perform the learning phase, leveraging on a literature-supported method, first we associated the psychographic analysis based on the Big Five Factor (BFF) Model to a vector-represented sentence dataset; then we collected online User Generated Contents (UGC)s performing the same vectorialization done in the previous step; finally, we used Sentiment Analysis and Machine Learning techniques in order to train a predictive model able to characterize by BFF components a given text. In the predicting phase, a generic UGC is positioned in a 5-dimension space where each coordinate axis is one of the BFF. The main contribution of this research effort is twofold: the definition of a general-purpose BFF/Sentiment Analysis methodology and the practical application to the research context of the archeological tourism offer in the Campania region. From the practical implementation point of view, the research design is based on the application of open-source Python-based software for data collection, text analysis, and psychographic attribution. Data collection is carried out by web scraping UGCs (users' reviews and ratings) from the TripAdvisor pages of the Archaeological Park of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Paestum in order to build an original and domain-consistent dataset. Text analysis is operated with SEANCE - Sentiment Analysis and Cognition Engine, a Natural Language Processing tool. The reference measure for BFFs is adapted from a 300-item inventory based on the Costa and McCrae's NEO-PI-R Facets available in the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP). BFF assessment is managed through fuzzy sentiment analysis using convolutional neural networks. The final result is a structured dataset of processed data from UGCs labeled with sentiment and psychographic attribution. Future developments of this project involve the use of the acquired structured data for a prediction model on tourist segments and appreciation as part of a marketing strategy designed to increase the number of visits to a cultural site or to reallocate tourists from an overcrowded site.

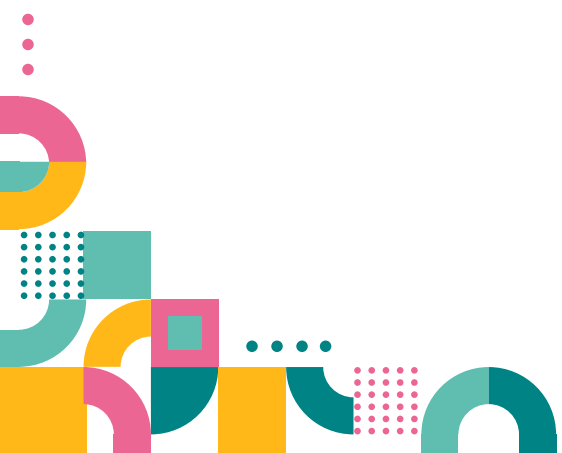


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Lisa Sugiura – University of Portsmouth (United Kingdom)

### **Blurring boundaries: negotiating researchers' positionality and identities in digital qualitative research**

Building on a previous research note (International Journal of Social Research Methodology 2020), this contribution discusses a series of methodological, ethical and ontological challenges encountered by the authors in the course of a series of recent socio-criminological studies based on digital ethnography and investigating sensitive and emotive issues. Particularly, we will discuss the practical difficulties encountered by the researchers in navigating a number of increasingly blurred boundaries, such as those among: (1) the researchers' private and public academic/personal selves online; (2) the shifting of the traditional power imbalances between the researcher and research participants; and (3) elements of ethnography and autoethnography becoming obfuscated. We also consider these dilemmas in the context of the pervasiveness of digital technologies within contemporary social life, such that we as researchers are always simultaneously on and offline, with our studies at risk of becoming all-consuming and encroaching on all areas of our lives. We will see how these blurred boundaries entail an inescapable continuous negotiation of researcher identity and positionality, and some of their practical consequences. We aim to encourage further discussion about these novel challenges faced whilst undertaking online research, and re-examination of the related ethical principles in regard to these contexts.





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Laura Caroleo – Magna Graecia University of Catanzaro (Italy)

### **The First year of Clubhouse in Italy**

The birth of modern societies has been strongly influenced by the development of digital media, through which it has facilitated not only the transmission of information and symbolic content, but also the creation of new forms of action, interactions and social relations. Relationships with others and with oneself have been modified to such an extent, by the exponential development of computer networks, which in addition to creating new forms and new channels of communication, are shaping the lives of individuals, structuring society around a bipolar opposition between the network and the self that often tends to blur if not to vanish.

The first communication tools that appeared on the Internet allowed users to write on predetermined interfaces, which led to a kind of literacy that simplified language and the sharing of interpersonal messages. From words written in journals on IRC, MySpace, Reddit, Facebook, Twitter, and others, we have moved on to image sharing. From images posted on Instagram, the move to video (Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat and others) has been almost entirely automatic: telling one's personal story or social and political engagement in 30-second pills that vanish within 24 hours or are shared permanently has become the norm.

The above figures not only show the pervasiveness of digitization, but seem to be increased between 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic that has led to the lockdown of the entire world population, shifting sociality predominantly online.

The use of online mediated media has thus characterized most of the encounters of daily life, from video calling business meetings, primary and secondary school classes to university classes, shopping, and grocery shopping, the race to digitization has never been faster.

The year 2020 also saw the birth of a new social media called Clubhouse, characterized by synchronicity and the use of voice alone as the sole means of interaction. Clubhouse has been much discussed and chatted about in the first months of 2021 for having aroused curiosity among a new band of early adopters, scholars, journalists and communication experts who have confronted each other experimenting its use and creating new online communities.

The purpose of our contribution is to follow the evolution of the Clubhouse social audio app, particularly in Italy. We will evaluate Clubhouse in the context of the other Social audio apps and we will ask ourselves whether these types of platforms are the practical (and commercial) expression of the return to Acoustic age formulated in the sixties by the Toronto School of communication theory.



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### **Commonalities and differences within the asexual community. A digital ethnographic study**

Recent years have witnessed a process of digitization of the processes of socialization and human interaction, creating new communicative spaces and new virtual contexts in which to trace friendships, relationships and potential affective and/or sexual partners.

These digitized contexts have represented an important factor of emancipation for subcultures and specific communities, which in offline communication struggled to determine, identify and consolidate their own spheres and their own processes of identity self-determination.

The LGBTQ community represents one of the main subcultures and communities that has benefited from the digitization of social contexts, identifying in this phenomenon the possibility of emancipation, aggregation and experimentation of their sexual identities (Bacio, Peruzzi, 2017; Masullo, Coppola, 2021).

However, even within the LGBTQ community there are instances and non-normative sexual identities that struggle to find communicative spaces and social contexts in which they can initiate processes of socialization and identity self-determination. An example of this phenomenon is represented by asexual and aromantic people.

Asexuality is defined as the sexual orientation that describes the condition in which the person presents an absence and/or a consistent reduction of sexual and erotic attraction towards another sex or gender, often associated (but not always) with the aromantic condition, which describes the condition of absence of affective and relational interest of a sentimental type towards other people (Valerio, Scandurra, Bocchicchio, 2017).

In line with the theory of sexual markets of Laumann and Gagnon, (2004), the present research work, which is part of a strand of research conducted by the authors on socialization to sexuality and the web society initiated in 2018, aims to analyze the use of virtual contexts as social and relational spaces, and the psychological, emotional and imaginary aspects of asexual and aromantic people who use apps for dating.

The research, conducted in mixed-methods mode, has analyzed the profiles of about 300 users registered to the fo dating app Cupid Asexual and then 40 asexual people aged between 18 and 35 years were interviewed, selected through a reasoned sampling through the main thematic groups on Facebook.

The results show that asexuality is not always related to aromanticity, a condition that is experienced only in a residual percentage and that would represent the most deeply rooted and closed form of socialization and sexuality.

The analysis of the data, moreover, showed that asexual people, unlike other non-normal sexual identities, are predisposed to show aspects of their bodies and their gender expressiveness, making explicit in a clear and consistent way their psychological and intellectual characteristics that would represent an erotic capital of reference to exhibit in the fo dating app. Gender expressivities, specifically, reflect the wide range of gender identities, from cisgender identities to binary and nonbinary transgender identities. However, the careful construction of sexual and erotic capital does not result in sexual and or sentimental seeking but in forms of socialization that are less intimate and involve low levels of emotional, psychological, and social involvement.



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### **Italian University Students facing Distance Learning: the results of a panel web survey**

Since the first national lockdown, Distance Learning (DL), as a response to the widespread health emergency, has represented an unexpected and radical transformation for all Italian students. Despite the massive investments in the direction of the digitalization of training processes (in part already underway before the pandemic) - with respect to which it would be worth identifying best practices to be inspired by - the world of schools has encountered considerable criticalities: an excessive increase in the study, a lower perceived effectiveness of training activities for learning purposes, the inadequacy of the innovative solutions implemented, the worsening of interactional dynamics. These negative effects have affected a large number of students, in particular those of upper secondary school (Fasanella et al., 2020).

The paper focuses on a section of data from extensive research on the social effects of the pandemic and regulatory restrictions on Italians' daily life and relationships (Mauceri and Lombardo, eds., 2020). The research, started in April 2020 by a group of scholars from the Department of Communication and Social Research (Sapienza University of Rome) and supported by important institutions such as the Department of Civil Protection and the Ministry of Health, provided for a wide sharing the link to the online questionnaire, reaching 13,473 cases in 4 weeks (of which 2,114 students in Distance Learning). This inquiry is configured as a panel web survey (Callegaro et al., 2014; Mauceri, Faggiano and Di Censi, 2020; Patrick and Couper, 2021), aimed at recording emerging phenomena in progress and at capturing, in a diachronic perspective, their evolution re-interviewing the same individuals (subjects available to be contacted again for research purposes provided their e-mail address during the first survey). One year later, the research team attempted to reconstruct the "balance" of the interviewees with respect to numerous areas, among which school stands out. The intent here is to present the emerging profiles of adaptation to Distance Learning, paying particular attention to the factors connected with worsening school performance, digital inequalities, cognitive-emotional distress, forms of marginalization-exclusion, but also trying to highlight the strengths and opportunities inherent in the process of social transformation.

In the case study presented, the aspects of the DL taken into consideration are: evaluation of experience and comparison with traditional teaching; preferences on the didactic and training level; expectations about the future of the school. The factors considered in order to assess the impact of new technologies on school education include classic socio-demographic variables, training path (high school or university), school address, technological equipment, quality of the internet connection, housing characteristics for the purpose of study, etc.

Beyond the substantive issues, on a methodological level it is possible to state that a survey conducted entirely online is a winning research technique in situations, such as that experienced globally, in which live interaction is impossible. The open web survey can also include long and complex questionnaires if it is able to activate participation and interest in the issues addressed; finally, it represents a profitable instrumentation when the goal is to study some phenomenologies in their temporal evolution.



Kwan Meng Lee – Universiti Putra Malaysia (Malaysia)

### **Exploring digital platforms for mentoring research and practice**

Mentoring for the youths have been about creating a caring relationship between the youth mentee with mentors who are more experienced nonparental adults where the goal is towards positive outcomes through quality relationships. It is a partnering relationship to support each other for development and growth through mutual learning of the mentee where the mentor, has to be more experienced than the other less experienced mentee. Research studies in mentoring helps to determine the contexts of how mentoring works, how they can work effectively, to whom are the compatible partners, and which specific youth it could work for. These studies seek to address the purposes of addressing the gap in existing mentoring practices, assessing the areas for further mentoring, how to improve the practice, determining the quality of the mentoring relationships, and establishing the shortcomings that need to be addressed. Many research designs have been employed for such mentoring practices and research on young people. However, from this literature review, there had hardly been any narrative on the research designs that employed digital tools and platforms which are important now in this digitalisation era. This review is therefore to explore the digital platforms and tools that could be employed in place of the traditional practices and research methodologies in youth mentoring research. It reviews the literature on youth mentoring research that were accessed from available literature from academic journals, and published chapters of studies reported in some mentoring books. Since a mentoring programme involves many contexts, different types of research designs and instrumentations are employed to achieve different mentoring objectives. In this digital age, many digital platforms and tools have been developed for constructive interactions, evaluations, research studies and surveys, both in quantitative and qualitative studies. Some digital platforms have already been developed for mentoring practices such as *my Compass*, *WeConnect* and *Mentor Together* which are actually digital apps. For research, there are digital interactive platforms such as Zoom, Hopin, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Learning Management System (LMS) for long distance learning or meetings. There are also digital educational sites that enables mentor to interact with mentee(s) for live questioning and instant responds, processing results featured in fun charts, word clouds, tables or in other creative visuals. They include online survey forms, as well as programs for qualitative analyzation of text, visual or auditory (including video) files, as well as for quantitative analyses; and also search engines, Big Data Analytics, and open networks. Some of these research programs additionally provide features for gathering content and quantitative data from the internet and various social media platforms and aim to making the use of mixed methods in research easier. Due to the variety of variables for mentoring research and practice in increasingly digitalized world, both quantitative and qualitative digital designs have to be employed based on the appropriate context. More digitalization of mentoring research still required further development to address access issues, safeguarding and ethical issues, new digital research technologies, and for mentoring practices in specific contexts.

Marije Miedema – Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (Netherlands)

**“When they work, I really like smart devices”: an explorative qualitative experiment with smart toothbrushes**

The term ‘smart’ is ubiquitous in our digital society. It is distinguished in various fields of research as well as the public debate and it pervades our everyday life as an adjective describing new technologies. Smart devices, such as the smart toothbrush discussed here, are often used in domestic settings and connected to The Internet of Things (IoT), recalling ideas of the ‘smart home’ (Darby, 2018), ‘smart technologies’ (Hildebrandt, 2020) and personal ‘e-health’ (Sardi et al., 2017). With a growing number of people using these technologies, more data is generated, accelerating the development of digital research methods. Yet, there is still a gap in knowledge about how the ‘smart’ is performed in the home. This move from big data to personal or ‘small data’ (Lupton, 2018) gives rise to two questions; what is considered ‘smart’ from a social science perspective, and what is an appropriate methodology to study this? Consequently, this makes the aim of this paper two-fold: to gain insight into the ways the ‘smart’ is performed in the everyday life of the user (i); to show the value of a qualitative experiment as a potential research method to thoroughly engage with small data (ii).

When qualitatively studying smart technologies in the home, the longitudinal character of ethnographic research practices can be a challenge. These devices develop and evolve incredibly fast, running the risk of obsolescence. Furthermore, researching intimate small data in the home for an extended period can be intrusive and thus ethically problematic. To overcome this problem, the Mixed Methods Experimental (or Intervention) design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018) is advanced into a *qualitative experiment*. Situated in the Netherlands, two participants, the Expert (a dentist) and the Novice, engaged with this project for one month, using their own toothbrush the first two weeks and the Oral-B iO9 smart toothbrush the last two weeks. During this time, the participants made video diaries brushing their teeth and reflecting on the experience. Semi-structured interviews were conducted before and after participation. The researcher subjected herself to the same conditions as the participants, kept a research diary and made video dairies with auto-ethnographic reflections. The audio-visual and textual material was coded in vivo and the digital and material qualities of the smart toothbrush and its infrastructure were thoroughly analyzed.

The performance of the ‘smart’ will be discussed in two complementary ways. Informed by the small data, the notion of ‘work’ shows us the ways that the technology (unconsciously) sets us to work, does the work for us, or, does not work. In addition, one aspect of the application is discussed as a ‘mouth map’. Displaying the real-time 3D tracking of the brushing experience, this interface is where the relations between the digital, the material and the body become evident. These observations will explicate how the ‘smart’ is experienced in an environment where the human and the digital are increasingly entangled and explore the limits and potential of a qualitative experiment.



Salvatore Monaco – Free University of Bozen / Bolzano (Italy)

### **Researching LGBT parenting: tips and traps from an Italian perspective**

Italian sociological studies that explore the perspective of parents when parenting occurs in challenging circumstances for material, cultural or relational issues are still few.

With the aim of giving voice and visibility to the construction of parenthood in uncertain circumstances, in 2019 the project of national interest COPING (Constructions of Parenting on Insecure Grounds) was launched. It is a qualitative study which, using the grounded theory approach, was aimed to give voice and visibility to the most vulnerable parents groups. In particular, among the categories on which the research project is focused there are also gay, lesbian, bisexual and trans parents.

This choice was necessary because being LGBT parents today in Italy still represents a great challenge. Thus, not only being gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans is not yet fully socially accepted, but in the collective imagination the typical Italian family consists of two heterosexual cisgender married partners with children. Consequently, the different forms through which LGBT parenting can take shape are not yet fully recognized, neither socially nor from a legal point of view. This closure occurs because LGBT parenting greatly diverges from the mainstream family model, questioning a supposed universal prototype. As amply demonstrated by anthropological, sociological, legal and psychosocial studies, the family cannot be considered a natural entity. Rather, it can be defined as an institution in constant evolution, in close relationship with the socio-cultural processes in which it is inserted, or as a socio-cultural and historically defined product, subjected to continuous processes of modification. However, this awareness is not yet fully rooted in Italy.

For this reason, in the context of social research, LGBT people in general and LGBT parents in particular fall into the so-called category of hidden populations. In fact, especially in not very inclusive territorial places (such as Italy) they often tend not to expose themselves and do not take part in social studies for fear of being marginalized or victims of discrimination.

However, the literature on the subject has highlighted some possible strategies for dealing with this type of difficulty and involving LGBT people in research concerning them.

The advent of COVID-19 has upset the initial research design of the COPING project, making even more difficult to recruit LGBT parents and carry out the scheduled interviews.

In this scenario, given the spread of digital technologies into most crannies of everyday life, the research group has identified some alternative solutions that have been adopted to continue the project anyway.

This paper examines the impact of digital on a research that was thought "offline", focusing in particular both on the possibilities offered by new communication channels to intercept vulnerable subjects such as LGBT parents and on strategies to be implemented to conduct anyway the foreseen by the project narrative interviews.

More specifically, the global aim of this work is to introduce a series of critical reflections on digital innovations in social research on LGBT parenting in Italy, presenting practical limits and possibilities for concrete research.

Giuseppe Michele Padricelli – University of Naples “Federico II” (Italy)

### **Rethinking the resource mobilization theory in social movements digital expression: the role of celebrities for the “Dana libera tutti” initiative**

The activity-base of social movements is not featured only by those actors directly involved on the physical fields of protest actions. Following McCharthy and Zald (1977), in fact, organizationally brokered or enabled connective networks are supported as well by several actors that sympathize with the movements’ causes, e.g. collective or individual actors as foundations, organizations and, also, celebrities who can provide important resources.

The following paper aims to open a reflection on celebrities’ endorsement role related to social movement causes: the purpose of this first exploration is to shed light on the more frequently actions’ schemes of the actual communication repertoire tied to the new *media sphere*, wondering about the celebrities’ resource mobilization power both financial and participative.

Following Bennet and Segerberg (2015) the actual communication repertoire is shaped by different action schemes and dynamics among which we found the digital direct actions as e.g. *cyberactivism*: a remote participation practice in digital media and untied from the fields of civic action (McCaughey, 2014; Fligstein and McAdam, 2011).

Ascertained this background the following paper deals with a recent crowdfunding campaign named “*Dana Libera tutti*” and promoted by *No-Tav*, the Italian network that from 2000’s fights against the construction of the high-speed railroad Torino-Lyon.

The initiative regards the status of *Dana Lauriola*, a 38 years old *No-Tav* activist recently arrested due to her activity in a 2012 riot. The purpose of the campaign aimed to raise 25k Euros to cover the legal and detention expenses. In few months various celebrities close to the *No-Tav* cause have declared their solidarity to Dana and to the activists who promoted the initiative. Among them, very awareness and symbolic actions have been made by *Zerocalcare*, an Italian graphic novelist for a long time supporting *No-Tav* cause: a direct contribution leveraged on his audience and based on a pervasive social media posting activity in order to communicate the coordinates of donation, and later making informative video messages about Dana status and drawing vignettes about her situation.

To better explore and frame the celebrities’ role in social movements, an integrated empirical phase is proposed. The first part aims to clarify expectations and push factors of *Zerocalcare* endorsement by a direct interrogation of the artist and of the crowdfunding promoters. Later a web investigation through the social-mediascape will be done in order to test the pull factors and the engagement raised in terms of participation.

From the attended results of this first exploration I expect its can lead not only to better understand the resource mobilization power related to the celebrities’ involvement, but as well to support further research deepening driven towards the comprehension of short or long last engagement and relations built due to *cyberactivism* actions.





Federico Pilati – IULM University (Italy)

Guido Anselmi – University of Milan (Italy)

### **The "Astrazeneca affair": a litmus test of public arena formation in a hybrid media ecosystem setting?**

One of the most significant aspects of the pandemic crisis is its manifold interaction with the current hybrid media ecosystem (Chadwick 2017). The so-called “infodemiology” (Eysenbach 2002) identifies social media as the main cause for concern in charting disinformation; while this perspective has produced a number of relevant contributions (Cinelli et al. 2020; Gallotti et al. 2020) it fails to acknowledge the complexities of information production, namely: the interaction between a given political context and pre-existing social media polarization (Anselmi et al 2020, Iannelli et al. 2020), the politicization of public debate (Boccia Artieri 2020) and the treatment and exposure of scientific information by generalist mass media (Saracino 2020).

In this sense, one of the most controversial topics related to information disorder phenomena concerns the role of traditional journalism (Wardle 2017). Their role in the media landscape has been increasingly discussed and explored from different points of view: as they are still the central institutions in agenda setting processes (Ceron 2016; Harder 2017). While we do know that legacy media can in fact be (un)intentional authors of disinformation content (Pilati 2021), this historical and inherent weakness in mass media activities seems to be exacerbated by the digital attention economy (Webster 2014) which may lead to visibility maximization strategies based around publishing sensationalistic or polarizing content (Tsfati 2020). Therefore, in the pandemic context, such a configuration of online flows accentuated the acceleration and turnover of ephemeral information bubbles that influence and saturate media discourses (Venturini et al. 2021).

Relying on the concept of public arena proposed by Hilgartner and Bosk (1988), in this paper we want to demonstrate how disruptive information bubbles comes to be at the intersection of social and legacy media. To do so, we will analyze more than 800000 tweets and 21000 news articles related to the adoption of Astrazeneca vaccine in Italy. Namely, we will adopt sentiment analysis to assess the emotional content of legacy media pieces for a period of 6 months (January 2021-July 2021) and, by using network and text analysis, we will show how the spread of sensationalistic legacy media content correlates with the polarization of Twitter discussion. The results of our research highlight how a direct implication of the hybrid media ecosystem actual configuration could be a resistance in the formation of a public debate capable of sustaining a prolonged and effective debate, particularly with respect to complex scientific issues such as those related to covid-19 vaccines.

Ilaria Primerano, Giuseppe Giordano, Maria Prosperina Vitale – University of Salerno (Italy)

### **A network analysis approach to map trending topics in information propagation on social media**

In the last decade, the study of information propagation as well as of fake news on social media has become an emerging research topic attracting the attention of researchers from different fields of study. Due to the free sharing of user-generated contents and the many-to-many real time communication, social media define the digital pace where information and disinformation can propagate quickly and easily. In fact, these platforms become, on the one hand, a useful channel for exchanging ideas and sharing private opinions by people, and, on the other hand, they are used and abused by spiteful users to facilitate the circulation of misleading information. Different approaches have been introduced to detect fake news emphasizing that the digital traces, left consciously or unconsciously by users on the web, together with the speed and variety of communication channels used play a key role in identifying these kind of information.

In the present study, we aim analyzing the phenomenon of fake news propagation on social media by considering a bibliometric approach. Starting from the keywords of papers dealing with fake news detection and propagation published on international journals, we highlight the main emerging topics and the leading edges on this field of analysis. The network data structure defined considering keywords' co-occurrence is analyzed by means of Social Network Analysis visualization tools and statistical measures, allowing to identify the recurring topics and the future lines of research on fake news detection domain.



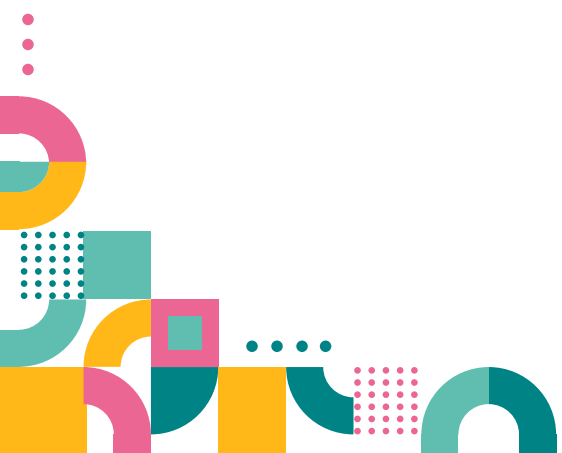
Gabriella Punziano, Federico Esposito, Giuseppe Michele Padricelli – University of Naples Federico II (Italy)

### **The digital role in building public profiles of political actors**

The current studies oriented on social and political science suggest approaching this field framing the features shaped on the digital characteristic related to pertinent practices of political actors as the electoral plans and on the online communication styles and strategies.

In the middle of the era featured by the permanent electoral campaign and by the personalization of politics held in the better-known platform society, our paper aims to shed light about the planning dynamics and practices held inside and outside the net by those political actors in charge for the local election arena. Which factors related to political networks push individual to run for a political charge? Which are the biographies, the cultural and the local relations with the territories they run for? Which are the differences between political competitors in terms of digital competences needed for campaign communication and promotion?

The research design focus on a specific case study shaped on the next election in Naples. By the study of political biographies of the candidates, a framework analysis held on press releases needed to understand the narration of the election and a content analysis conducted on their official online sources (social media and official websites) oriented to comprehend their interactional log, communication flows and relation processes with followers, the present study aims to return a clear model useful to understand the current digital customs adopted by political actors to draw and define their own public profiles.





Gabriella Punziano, Mariateresa Principe, Irene Rossi, Giuseppe Rizza - University of Naples "Federico II" (Italy)

### **The Facebook communication of the Mayor' candidates at the 2021 administrative elections of the Municipality of Naples**

There is a very ancient link between politics and communication, one so old that it does not take into account the evolution of social media communication technologies in the 20th century. Politics and its language have adapted to modern times, using digital communication and its channels. Nowadays, political communication is mainly based on the new resources made available by the Net, such as Social Media, which have become the main source of communication for many politicians, surpassing even the effectiveness of election rallies. Through social profiles, political figures are constantly looking after their image, trying to gain more and more credibility and to establish a direct dialogue with citizens. The cognitive objective of our research work is to circumscribe the digital self-narratives of the candidates for Mayor for the 2021 administration in Naples by working on the social narrative of each candidate (thus following their profiles and public pages on the main social networks) that is built in the flow of communication on the Net with the aim of understanding what style, communicative register, rhetoric, argumentative mode and social profile can have an impact on the election results achieved. To achieve our research objective, we analyzed the following candidates: Alessandra Clemente, Gaetano Manfredi, Catello Maresca, Antonio Bassolino who, according to the polls, are the most likely to receive an electoral quorum of over 10%. The extraction of the material under analysis was carried out by working with web scraping procedures, automated as well as manual. The posts published on their Facebook pages were collected from May 1, 2021 to October 12, 2021, a period including the preelection phase, the electoral campaign and the actual local elections. Through manual content analysis, in order to conduct a more accurate research, we constructed a netnographic type logbook, from the results of which a timeline was developed, constituting the mainly relevant topics, during the electoral phase. The survey work carried out so far has allowed us to offer a preliminary overview of the register, communication styles and themes dealt with on Facebook by each individual candidate for Mayor in the 2021 Naples local elections. The project is still in an experimental phase in order to try to conduct further investigations on the subject, delving into the communication dynamics on other social media, such as Twitter, in order to offer a broader and more complete contribution with respect to the object of study treated which, according to the literature on the subject, could have implications on the differences that can be traced between the social communication profiles of the candidates followed precisely because this platform is the one that is most used by politicians, at least more than Facebook. Another interesting implication on which future steps of analysis will focus is to take into consideration the iconographic material diffused on these platforms in which a large part of the communicative component is of a purely visual nature. These choices are due to the desire to investigate the differences between candidates, not only in terms of the platform used and dissemination of their messages, but above all in terms of the types of content disseminated. These hypotheses will open up future scenarios for the research presented here, which remains entirely in progress and exploratory in nature.



Cirus Rinaldi – University of Palermo (Italy)

Cosimo Marco Scarcelli, Mirco Costacurta – University of Padova (Italy)

### **The evolution of the male sexworking towards new digital scenarios**

Male sex work is a social world born from the intersection of two different identities: in fact in the history as homosexuals as prostitutes were considered deviant. Male sex workers are special social actors because - by force or by choice - they have to convert their physical, social and symbolic resources into economic ones. In this way sex working is a way to create new expressions of masculinity. Nowadays studies about prostitution are numerous and various, but the sociological state of art concerning men who sell themselves is not so much thorough in comparison to the women ones. This statement is valid also for digital sexworking, which is a proof of the cultural and social transformations of the capitalistic frame that surrounds male sex working in western societies. These important changings concern a lot of aspects such as laws, habits, moral values and through them sexworkers' clients have changed their interests, desires, fantasies, needs and kinks. Male sexworking has got a different history from the female prostitution, and also male sexual scripts are different from the female ones. On the other hand also the stigma and the labeling are different and for that reasons it's important to consider all the frames, the social representation and the processes of building of the identities to understand what sex work is today. For example, clients meet female prostitutes in different places from male escort and gradually all the physical sites disappeared, leaving mostly the mediatic one: from the porn movies to the erotic live-show on the web. Nowadays the digital erotic entertainment is set increasingly in the Onlyfans platform, an interactive space where creators and followers can communicate through amatorial pictures and videos breacking the boarder between private and public lives, building a new reality for adult. The aim of this contribution is to show some features of the male sex worker in the last century, since the pathologisation of the prostitution to the full digitalisation of the sexual explicit media. Today a lot of male sex workers have the chance to shake the stigma off and achieve a new respectable status in some subcultures.

Elisabetta Risi, Riccardo Pronzato, Guido Di Fraia – IULM University, Milan (Italy)

### **The virality of the virus. Quali-quantitative analysis of memes shared during the covid19 pandemic**

This paper discusses the results of an ongoing research aimed at analysing a large sample of memes, circulated from February 2020 to February 2021, concerning the Covid-19 emergency in Italy.

The term meme was originally coined as the cultural counterpart of “genes” by the evolutionary biologist Dawkins (1976) to indicate “the natural human spreading, replication, and modification of ideas and culture” (Chen, 2012, p. 7). On the Internet, memes are “digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance which” are “circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the Internet by many users” (Shifman, 2013, p. 14). Thus, they can be considered as visual artifacts (Rose, 2016) built and reconstructed by individuals, with the aim of being shared and going viral (Jenkins, 2018).

Memes are intertextual UGCs (Laineste, Voolaid, 2017; Wiggins, 2019), composed by both images and text and typically ironic. They are real-time reactions to mediatized events - remixing material from news media outlets with pop-cultural elements - which have evolved along with the accentuation of some topics on which public opinion has focused (also following the process of agenda melding, Shaw et al., 1999).

Recently, researchers have shown an increased interest in memes as they can shed light on how individuals construct specific narratives regarding certain themes by remixing different languages and registers. During the pandemic, the virality of memes was facilitated by the emergence of some dysphoric emotions connected to the covid-19 crisis. Given that the memetic phenomenon has crossed the media ecosystem, it can be an important research context to investigate in order to better understand the dynamics around public discourse and social response during the prolonged health crisis.

Our research goal was to analyse the main characters of the memes (principal objects and people) and the variations of humorous storytelling that emerged during different phases of the pandemic in the Italian socio-cultural context, such as the period before and after summer 2020. To do so, we gathered 1882 memes and conducted a content analysis (Punziano, 2021), by adapting established social research methods such as visual and discourse analysis. Data collection was not based on the automatic extraction of UGCs from the web, but on the gathering of memes through an open call for university students which uploaded several memes on a platform. Memes are unstructured data that challenge researchers as they are big data on an ontological level, but they can be examined as small data. After collection, we did not analyse data through automatic analysis tools, but we manually coded a subsample of memes in order to conduct both quantitative and in-depth analysis of the research material.

The data analysis is ongoing, but the first results confirm the presence of some viral narratives (Pedroni, 2020) incorporated and remixed through memes. Indeed, there are some main themes that have characterized the online narration about the pandemic crisis and that illuminate on the process of popularization of politics and on the complex interaction between traditional media, grassroots production, and digital platforms in the production of memetic contents.



Mette Rudvin, Roberta Di Rosa – University of Palermo (Italy)

Edoardo Di Gennaro – Swans-Tech s.r.l, Bologna (Italy)

### **Virtual Reality and Interpreter Training: Reflections on a cultural mediation course for refugee trainees in Agrigento (Sicily)**

The Covid-19 pandemic is changing many former paradigms of everyday life, and the use of online platforms are forcing us to rethink educational tools in the classroom. Virtual reality (VR) holds much potential as a pedagogical tool, especially – but not only – in a distance-learning context. This paper describes a pilot project at the University of Palermo (Agrigento branch) where VR is used as a didactic tool for a course in cultural mediation for refugees. As well as shedding light on how to better utilize new technologies in training from a practical-pedagogical point of view, the project aims to contribute to the research in this context. VR is particularly suited to the training of interpreters and language/cultural mediators (LMI) for numerous reasons, not least because the traditional training format is highly labour-intensive; VR tools can help contain financial and organizational costs. The COOPERA project is a perfect testing ground for using VR in LMI training. To the best of our knowledge, it has not yet been adopted in Italy in this specific context.

In collaboration with an IT company, we have developed a software platform that includes various scenarios that LMI trainees will likely face in their professional lives. The role plays are hosted on a digital platform with dedicated avatars that the trainees access using a visor. Not only will VR enable trainees/ers to work at a distance in a possible future Covid-situation, but there are a number of other intrinsic, didactic advantages. In this fully immersive experience where trainees virtually interact with each other as avatars, they will be able to realistically test out professional scenarios before experiencing them, thus fostering creativity, collaboration and commitment (Ciliberti 2019). The ‘learning by doing’ aspect, ‘situated learning’ (ibid), is crucial to the success of this methodology. From a psycholinguistic point of view, learning while accomplishing a task allows the student to acquire long-term linguistic competences (verbal/ non-verbal language, body gestures, pragmatics, fluency, lexicon) through ‘embodied cognition’. We acquire and retrieve meaning more easily by acting out a given action (mind-body interaction) (Barsalou 2009; 2016 and Tian et al. 2020), thus strengthening long-term learning.

The immersive multimodal experience tests terminology as well as supra-linguistic pragmatic communicative/interpersonal features and conversation coordination (turn-taking and interrupting; gaze and body language; active listening; voice projection). Importantly, it is also a perfect vehicle for testing high-stress affective features prior to a real-life situation, especially empathy-building in complex affect-based situations. Trainees will thus have been vicariously – but realistically – immersed in complex situations. This pre-emptive immersive experience will help trainees to become familiar with their own reactions to traumatic content and to their own levels of empathy (especially co-refugees and other migrants). Having reflected on their own empathic reactions together with their trainers and peers, they will be able to better avoid potential burn-out and also to pre-emptively practice decision-making (ethical dilemmas as well as communicative obstacles). This immersive strategy not only helps them to handle their emotions and stress, but is a valuable mnemonic tool, fostering long-term learning acquisition.

Alice Scavarda, Raffaella Ferrero Camoletto – University of Turin (Italy)

Vulca Fidolini – Université de Lorraine (France)

**Combining qualitative methods. Studying food practices within migration through interviews, photovoice and digital ethnography**

In this presentation we will discuss how food as a cultural object triggers a plural story-telling about its ways of being represented and embodied within migration processes. Because of its polysemic nature, we have approached food practices by using three different qualitative approaches: semi-structured interviews, photovoice, virtual ethnography. These different research techniques have been applied to three case studies on different migratory experiences: a group of migrants composed by young Moroccan men who arrived in Italy and France; a group of students made up of young workers (men and women) who arrived in Italy from different countries, individually or through family reunifications; a third group composed by young men and women from the Southern Italy and who have reached the North of the country to start or complete their university studies. The presentation will show how qualitative methods, particularly visual and digital ones, are effective in putting into light this creative process of identity development of migrant populations fostered by food practices and representations. Food practices in the migratory experience can be conceived as a space, both social and virtual, to renegotiate real and symbolic boundaries that can be constructed in a nostalgic way or reaffirmed as a distinctive and differentiating feature in migrant milieu. At the same time, food can operate as a field where different traditions meet and hybridize each other, revealing unusual sides of the migratory processes.



Tatiana Smirnova, Roman Smirnov – Russian State University for the Humanities (Russia)

### **Gender Study in the Digital Age and Pandemic Era: sensitive Theme with and without face-to-face interaction**

In spring 2020 began the COVID-19 changed our habitual way of life. These changes touched digital-technologies as well: they turned from a highly specialized sphere into one of the most important means of labor and “means of production”. In its turn sociology was affected as well: the pandemic formed some new theoretical as well as methodological challenges for social sciences, but at the same time showed new opportunities for the development of traditional research methods.

We faced the problem of limitations in the applicability of traditional methods while a qualitative gender-study devoted to the problems of institutional forms of care for the elderly (on the example of private board and care homes). This topic, being at the intersection of the sociology of gender and the sociology of care, is one of the most acute and sensitive topics. The empirical base should have been 64 in-depth unstructured interviews with women in Moscow and the Moscow region aged 40 to 65 years. Planned research date: December 2019-May 2020.

But the pandemic and anti-pandemic measures put us before a choice: to stop the study (because of the limitations of traditional interviews) or to adapt the qualitative research methodology to new conditions. So 25 interviews were traditional, and 39 were conducted using digital technologies (in-depth unstructured interviews in Skype or Zoom, when the informant was at home at a convenient time). At the same time, the methodological goal of the study was added to the sociological one: to analyze and compare the features, as well as the level of openness of informants during traditional and digital-interviews on a sensitive topic within the framework of gender research.

We came to the following conclusions:

- 1) A private board and care home is a “last choice” option for relatives of elderly people in need of constant care. It is applied when all adaptation possibilities have been used, and one or several main targets (health, home environment, caregiver's career) has suffered significant damage;
- 2) Barriers that prevent turning to this form of institutional care are social factors - social stereotypes and traditions of gender and intergenerational relations, normalization and the cult of self-sacrifice, fear of social stigma;
- 3) There are also feelings of guilt and betrayal that accompany relatives throughout the entire stay of an elderly person in a board and care home, as well as social disapproval of such practices;
- 4) Informants admit that the feelings are ambiguous and rather negative, and their feelings are irrational and their assessments are contradictory

Methodological conclusions were no less interesting:

- 1) in general, respondents were more frank during digital-interviews;
- 2) during digital-interviews, respondents were less likely to avoid the most acute and sensitive topics;
- 3) a digital-interview lasted 20% longer;
- 4) respondents noted that it was easier for them to speak out, because they were in a familiar environment at home.

We can conclude that although the wider dissemination of digital-methods was a necessary measure, it opened up new opportunities and prospects for gender studies on sensitive topics.



Eleonora Sparano – University Niccolò Cusano (Italy)

### **Robots in Social Research. Can Robots conduct an Interview?**

The presence of robots alongside humans is increasing every day and is becoming a focus of attention for social scientists. Studies on human-robot interaction show that an empathetic relationship is possible if there is a similarity with humans from the physical and behavioral point of view. Among the several kinds of robots there are social robots, created to help humans in different activities, from reception to care services for the elderly. On this basis, the aim of the article is to investigate from a methodological point of view if social robots can take a role in sociological surveys and if they can conduct qualitative interviews, where it is necessary to establish a good empathetic relationship. The pandemic crisis due to Covid-19 leads to new thinking about whether social robots can be used to replace humans. If it is already possible to imagine the use of robots in surveys, the reasoning regarding face-to-face interviews is different. Among the possible questions to be answered: what are the main types of robots; for what uses they were created; how they interact with humans and what are the effects of this interaction. To do this, a review of key achievements in the field of robotics education and treatment of autism spectrum disorders will be performed.



Jonah Steinberg, Emily Manetta – University of Vermont (USA)

### **The Language Test: Digital Surveillance, Linguistic Exposés, and the Public Debunking of Beggars**

Roma and other ‘liquid migrants’ (see Engbersen 2014) to western Europe engaging in economies of alms (Thomassen 2015, Ruggiu 2016) and other strategies of subsistence beyond wage labor sometimes appeal to highly local forms of habitus, self-presentation, and public language use. This is of particular note in already-marginal neighborhoods of Mediterranean cities with predominantly Muslim populations, where self-avowedly non-Muslim migrants/Roma from Danube and Balkan countries employ the wearing of hijabs, signs in Arabic, and Arabic phrases traditionally used by those seeking *zakat* (charity). This constellation of people, practice, and place has become more markedly visible, common, or pronounced in the years since the intensified arrival of refugees that was dubbed a “crisis,” beginning around 2015.

In this paper we explore community policing of this effort (van Baar et al 2019): it is not uncommon that a passerby will endeavor, often with intention and premeditation, to subject such alms-seekers to a “language test.” They may quiz the alms-seeker concerning Arabic phrases and Islamic practices, particularly where they are “suspected to be Rroms/Gitans/Tsiganes.” The present paper considers this practice in the context of digital capture: posts on social media depict efforts to expose or reveal such “false beggars”: the implication is that they are not truly needy, if they are dissimulating. The authors of such exposés seem to perceive themselves to be engaging in a kind of digital surveillance of murky moral implications and mandates, even within their own internal logic, but that unwittingly plays into and reinforces racialized, moralized stereotypes of Romani people as undeserving recipients of charity, and as fundamentally duplicitous.

We are concerned with both what happens within the semi-staged, filmed interaction – in particular the extent to which it leads to various imperatives to “prove who you are” and a range of strategic and positioned responses to that burden of scrutiny – and the online interactions that spin out of the dissemination of the digital form. In our presentation we explore just what it is that forms the object of surveillance here (both from the authorial perspective and ours, and following Foucault 1978), what the imagined effects or outcomes are, and who the audience is perceived to be -- through careful, granular exploration of the discourse elements of the posts, the interplay of one post to others, and the comments. We suggest the phenomenon we are calling “the language test” reveals critical and interesting elements of authenticity (Theodossopoulos 2013, Lacoste and Leimbgruber 2011), and of the contestation of authenticity. In this distinctive case, a framing as “authentically” Roma renders you “inauthentically” everything else, and disqualifies the subject for both pity and resources. The only successful digital form of “the language test” is one that results in this configuration. Authenticity itself becomes the crux of socio-semiotic contestation (as in Vološinov 1929 or Hebdige 1979) on a digital stage that is and is publicly seen as a space par excellence of likely inauthenticity.



Johan Vaide – Linnaeus University (Sweden)

**Developing a hybrid ethnographic approach for digital, physical and digital-physical spaces.  
Notes from an exploratory study on urban everyday experiences of platforms in China**

The use of diverse platforms has become integral to urban life (Barns, 2020) and is “a key way of experiencing, regulating, governing and measuring the Chinese city” (Caprotti and Liu, 2020:2). Taking the point of departure from an exploratory study on urban everyday experiences of the use of platforms in the high-tech city of Shenzhen (The People’s Republic of China) , this paper sketches on an ethnographic methodology for collecting and analyzing empirical material that span digital, physical and digital-physical spaces (Przybylski, 2021). Using and extending Przybylski’s hybrid ethnography approach (2021), I illustrate this method by showing how I worked with several users of the Chinese super-app WeChat and how their uses of this platform are implicated in urban space. While Przybylski (2021) outlines an approach that allows for a hybrid collection and analysis of empirical material combining traditional ethnography and digital ethnography, her approach does not equally handle digital, physical and digital-physical spaces. In this paper, I set out to illustrate how to study this hybrid space of platforms by focusing on the use of WeChat, how the use of WeChat relates to urban space through place-specific sharing and geotagging, the place-specific use of WeChat, and recommendations and offers in the WeChat app that enable certain visits to specific places in the city of Shenzhen. By this paper, I contribute to the emerging field of ethnographic methodologies that addresses the contemporary digital society, digital technologies, and platform urbanism.

