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The role of the influencer news-maker in the social platform era*

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

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Abstract

In the last 20 years, the Internet revolution has driven the traditional news-models featured by the journals' gatekeeping towards a brand-new disintermediated logic made by prosumers. This phenomenon has drastically reshaped the logics of the news dissemination, forcing a rethink of journalists' role. Through a research design based on a content analysis conducted on Facebook, the aim of this paper is to identify 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, and the respective publishers they work with. Analyzing about 20,000 social media posts, the main results from this study concern the emergence of two different profiles: the journalist who reinvents traditional news making practices by exploiting the logics of social media and the journalist who integrates the promotion practices of his own content in the gatekeeping process.

Keywords: Journalism studies; social media analysis; content analysis.

Introduction

The transition to the late modern society drives us to rethink the role of the digital scenario and its influence on every aspect of daily life. The digital issue has been addressed by many scholars (Fuchs, 2021; Lupton, 2015; Marres, 2017; Rheingold, 2000; Rogers, 2013, Salganik, 2020; Vittadini, 2018) as a making-value repertory made by practices, techniques and representation. Digital is no longer understood in this way as a simple set of tools but rather as whole environment, mainly expressed in the web/online logic where specific rules and logics of the social norms are imposed and by which relational and sense sharing processes are reshaped among users and groups (Arvidsoon & Delfanti, 2013). As underlined by Comunello (2013, p.144), internet studies drove towards a comprehension of digital scenario not anymore as a parallel world «far from the social life, but rather remarking continuation elements among online and offline experiences» and so overcoming the concept of cyberspace, where all the cultural online elements are stored (Woolgar, 1996, p.89). In light of this background the relations between journalism and digital scenario have become more complex for the actors at all levels - from the subjects of coverage to journalists, to those consuming news - engage within these spaces (Broersma, 2019).

The technology has facilitated new ways of interacting with content and with the public, and one of the most-used instruments to this end are social media (Mourao & Chen, 2020; Hedman, 2020)

Facebook, the most popular social network, has also attracted interest in academic research, both because it is used as a professional medium by journalists (Jordaan, 2013) and it also alters the way users consume news (Carlson, 2018). Despite the persistent concern over the impact the haste and the real time logic of social media platforms might have on the quality of journalistic coverage (Bruns & Nuernbergk, 2019) for journalists, the use of social media has been integrated into their professional practices (Beckers & Harder, 2016; Bossio, 2017).

Furthermore, the relationship between practices and technologies changes due to the progress of innovation, on one hand from the point of view of the technological repertoire and on the other hand for what concerns the needs of use and consumption of information. Considering these assumptions, the following contribution aims to understand the main current characteristic relationships between journalism and the digital scenario. Journalism changes in terms of social image and in terms of the identity of those who practice it (Bechelloni, 2008). Therefore, it will be useful to reflect on how journalists reinvent their work, as well as how information specialists are influenced by the current way. The new ways of renegotiation of normative boundaries in visual journalism to «to support both the informational and the emotional content» (Aitamurto, 2019, p.4) as well as by the current way to make headlines in the online environment and how their performance style is determined by their being in a sense an influencer.

1. The Evolution and the role of the public in the news creation process.

Web 2.0, with its time pressure, relational dynamics and its specific narrative grammars, has represented an explosive element for journalism. Today the news doesn't end with the latest TG news of the night or with the printing of newspapers in the printers; today it is possible to consume information anytime and anywhere. With the web, the practices settled in the work of journalists have been renegotiated by two factors: technological development and the breakthrough of the public in the process of creating the news. On one hand the new technologies in a "always on" logic (Boccia Artieri, 2012) cause a drastic reduction in the production times of news. This reduction affects the sources which suffer a greater level of flattening while the content undergoes an increasing level of homogenization and imitation between the different editorial offices. On the other hand, when the immobility of the medium has disappeared, the network offers newspapers the possibility of communicating with their readers in real time, while social networks amplify the spread of the message. The compound effect of these two factors has upset the communication paradigm of journalists and editorial groups and triggered unprecedented news production and consumption practices (Bruns, 2005) such as to redesign the entire information ecosystem, gatekeeping and journalist roles (Welbers & Opgenhaffen, 2018). The top-down model, which saw news acquisition moving from top to bottom, has given way to a horizontal model in which social actors are transformed into hybrid subjects; they stop being simply news consumers and become prosumers (Ritzer & Jurgerson, 2010), resulting in what Castells (2017) defines mass self-communication. While newspapers are losing their traditional

function of filtering access to information in support of social media, journalists are no longer the only ones able to activate the news machine.

While the intent to inform, interpret, update has remained the same, the production of news and the relationship with readers has profoundly changed. Journalism remains alive as a symbolic elaboration of reality but changes the mechanism of this production (Pratellesi, 2013). The editorial offices are considered the first source of formation of images and icons on the main public events (Lippmann, 1942) and the priority of journalists was select the facts and deepen the news by with a high degree of autonomy from their audience. In this way, the journalists can best exercise their role as a filter of access to information for the simplification of the reality that surrounds us. These roles, however, seem to fail with the centered consideration of readers who find themselves using any tools and languages in their daily life that until recently were the exclusive competence of journalism.

The origin of the gradual imposition of the reader in journalistic work is to be found in the practices of *Citizen Journalism*. Although the discussion already began in 1937, when Walter Benjamin - observing the effects of the column "*letters to the editor*" of French and English newspapers - highlighted the gradual loss of the traditional distinction between author and reader and the transformation of the latter into a writer. The practice of *Citizen Journalism* refers to the information sharing activities of individual citizens and is the daughter of the network and technological progress that today allows everyone to have tools at hand to record and share information at low cost. Citizen input allowed a fluid and horizontal news creation process: blogs exploded quickly, and citizen journalists played the key role of witnesses in capturing and sharing tragic events such as natural disasters in real time (2004 tsunami in the south-East Asia) and terrorist attacks (the London bombings of 2005, the Boston bombing of 2013) before reporters could reach the places concerned, thus becoming key actors in the dissemination of contents.

The columns of which Benjamin spoke in 1937 represent today social media with their millions of users, where many of the traditional activities of *Citizen Journalism* have migrated.

From an editorial point of view, social media represents the possibility of reaching and retaining different groups of readers without large investment costs, but they inevitably force the editorial offices to new information practices that are consumed in a continuous monitoring of the consumer. The social analytics tools are used to monitor the traffic of the website or the social pages of newspapers and become the compass of the editorial offices to orient their business based on the behavior of the consumer-reader, what they read and what they don't, what generates satisfaction and what doesn't. As in any major transformation, also in this case, the criticism is divided between those who praise the potential for democratization of user involvement in the processes of creating and disseminating news, and those who question the quality of the information produced and the implications on the role of the professional journalist.

Exposure to the public and its various forms of feedback forces news producers to give more and more weight to what Hermida & Thurman (2008) define "*clash of cultures*", that is, that confrontation, clash, negotiation between those who cover a professional role in the production of information and who instead is the user, imposing significant transformations in the logic, in the practices and in the very concept of the news. A higher level of interaction with the consumer determines greater difficulty in ignoring the requests that come from him. The massive use in

editorial offices of audience monitoring tools has led, in recent years, to a fervent discussion on the so-called *Data Journalism* (Gray *et al.*, 2012; Anderson, 2012). The data that the website or the social profile of the newspaper generates are considered influential on the way of producing the news, on the determination of the daily agenda setting, on the persistence of a news in the foreground or on the suggestion of an in-depth analysis of some events. The public has therefore become an important influencer in the personalization of information content and in defining the media agenda.

Even though a traditional model of journalism still prevails in the historic Italian newsrooms that uses social media only as a showcase of what is published on the site or in the print edition, we are recently witnessing the construction of a personal, direct, and lasting relationship between the journalist and their followers. In this case, reference is not made to the presence on social media of the newspaper, but to that of individual journalists who use their profiles to interact directly with their readers on the information landscape and on the news he produces. The journalist, detaching himself from the publishing group, thus builds his own fan base, relaunching a complementary and personalized narration of the news that ceases to be "information" and becomes "opinion". A tenet of journalism is that reporters, working for the news sections of newspapers, remain entirely independent to their personal opinion. The reflection on this issue in the world of Italian journalism is rather scarce and what we intend to do in this study is to analyse the resonance of journalists precisely through the quantitative logics promoted by the platforms based on engagement metrics. Starting from a question that emerges by observing the activity they carry out on social media, we tried to detect the existence of a new figure of journalist detached from the editorial group of reference and we tried to understand how this new figure moves in the informational ecosystem of social media.

2. Methodology

To address the research questions, a content analysis is proposed. In order to shed light about the current online news-making patterns and the any changes of the journalist role, we availed of text analysis techniques to approach the social media posts uploaded by 5 Italian journalists, and the respective newspapers to which they belong. The latter has been duly selected consulting the rankings of the most influential journalists characterized by over a million social interactions.

2.1 The observed subjects

The ranking considered was elaborated by *Sensemakers* through the platform *Shareablee* which monitors the most active journalist on social media every month. The ranking logic is shaped on an interaction index made by the actual «form of cultural currency» (Hermida, 2012, p.317) that is the total of interactions carried out by the posts uploaded on the journalists' official accounts in the 7 days later the post creation date. The interaction value reply to the sum of the *likes*, *comments*, *shares* and *video visualization* raised on the most attended social media in Italy (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube). Following this ranking, that corresponds with beginning of the time span observed in this research, we involve the top 5 journalists and related newspaper they work for: *Andrea Scanzi (Il Fatto Quotidiano)*, *Lorenzo Tosa (The Post Internazionale)*, *Saverio Tommasi (Fanpage)*, *Enrico Mentana*

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(Open), Nicola Porro (*Il Giornale*). Given that *Andrea Scanzi* is already related to *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, we excluded *Marco Travaglio*, who belongs to the same newspaper.

Even though the ranking considers the main social media platforms more used in Italy, our observation focused only on Facebook representation since this platform turned out to be the first social platform consulted as news sources in Italy according to the *Reuters Institute* and to 2020 reports edited by *Blogmeter* and *We are social*¹.

Figure 1 – Sensemakers Ranking “Most influence journalists on social media” (February 2020)



Source: <https://www.sensemakers.it/>

2.2 Profiles Selection

The first selected journalist is *Andrea Scanzi*. He embarks on a journalistic career working for the music magazine *Mucchio Selvaggio*. Later, he wrote for *Il Manifesto*, *il Riformista*, *L'Espresso* and *Micromega*, dealing with culture and politics, but also with customs, music, food and wine. From 2005 to 2011 he signed on *La Stampa* and then in September 2011 on the newspaper *Il Fatto Quotidiano* (founded in 2009 by *Antonio Padellaro* as an independent newspaper, it has often held positions of objective closeness to the *Movimento 5 Stelle*). In addition to his journalistic career, *Andrea Scanzi* has also worked as a writer and presenter. Among his latest books are “*I cazzari del virus. Diario della pandemia tra eroi e chiacchieroni*” (In english: “*I cazzari del virus. Pandemic diary between heroes and talkers*”) and “*La congiura dei peggiori. Da Salvini a Bolsonaro, tutti i figuri che mandano in vacca il pianeta*”

¹ Digital News report 2020; in Digital 2020: July Global Statshot datareportal.com. Blogmeter, Italiani e social media, ed. 2020. Available at : <https://www.blogmeter.it/reports/italiani-e-social-media-2020>. We are social. Special report digital 2020 Italia. Available at : <https://wearesocial.com/it/blog/2020/01/digital-2020-italia/>

(In english: "*The conspiracy of the worst. From Salvini to Bolsonaro, all the figures who ruin the world*"). From 2012 to 2016 he conducted on *La3* the *Reputescion program*, in which he analysed the online reputation of his guests. Since 2013 he is often a guest in the program *Otto e mezzo*, conducted by *Lilli Gruber* on *LA7* while, since 2016, he is a regular guest in *Cartabianca*, conducted by *Bianca Berlinguer* on *Rai 3*.

Lorenzo Tosa, born in 1983, is a professional journalist since 2010. He worked for *Corriere Mercantile*, *Il Secolo XIX*, *Il Fatto Quotidiano* and *Primocanale*. In 2015 he was appointed head of the press office of the regional council group of the *Movimento 5 Stelle* in Liguria but after the establishment of the first Government *Conte*, *Tosa* was resigned from the position leaving the party. The official statement of his resignation has been published on his Facebook profile, causing a big stir in the online representation of Italian public opinion. In fact, during the following months the followers of his page grew rapidly, exceeding 400 thousand users. In 2019 he ran for European elections approaching the list *+Europe* but did not reach the 4% threshold needed to be elected.

Since November 2018 he has been collaborating with the online newspaper *The Post Internazionale* (TPI), which publishes news from international sources and produces articles written by reporters on the field.

Another selected journalist for this work is the Florentine *Saverio Tommasi*, writer and blogger who after his graduation at the *Accademia di Arte Drammatica dell'Antoniano* in Bologna, worked in the dramaturgical field for almost ten years. His video-inquiries, which featured journalistic language and codes, were branched through social media and then noticed by the online newspaper *Fanpage*, emerged in 2010 and which later created "*Youmedia*", an entirely dedicated section to information videos and complaint. *Tommasi* then began his career as a journalist and video reporter. In his videos he tackles topical, sensitive, and social issues such as immigration, the defense of civil rights, the defense of the LGBT community.

Another selected journalist is *Enrico Mentana*, a news specialist who boasts a long journalistic career started in 1980. He started working for the foreign editorial staff of *RAI*, at *Tg1*, and continued in 1992 with *Mediaset* where he helped create the first news station. When he was 37, *Mentana* was elected *Tg5* director. In recent years he stands out for his competencies, but also for his neutrality, especially in the management of political debates. On June the 30th 2010, he officially moved to *La7* broadcasting network. During this time as director of *Tg La7*, audience levels reached results never achieved before, even outpouring 10% of total share in some editions. In December 2018, he founded *Open*, an online newspaper that aims to bring young readers closer to information. *Open* is a non-profit newspaper, free and supported by *Mentana* first investment and by the proceeds of advertising ads. Being a social enterprise without purpose of gain, *Open* accepts voluntary contributions for social purpose.

Lastly, we selected *Nicola Porro*, a journalist, blogger, author, TV radio host and deputy editor of the newspaper *Il Giornale*. *Il Giornale* is owned by the Berlusconi family since 1977. Due to its liberal-conservative orientation, it is considered among the major Italian newspapers of centre-right. After a degree in Economics, he began a collaboration with *Il Foglio* and named editor for the section *Il Foglio Finanziario*. He collaborated with *Corriere Economia*, where he kept a column called *Visi Pallidi*. At the beginning of his career, he worked for *Mediaset*, the *Midas King* and *Economic Quadrant*. *Zuppa di Porro* is the name of the economic column that he signs every Saturday in the newspaper *Il Giornale* since 2015, of which he is deputy

editor. In addition to managing the *Nicolaporro.it* site and a YouTube page, he appears on *Canale 5* with *Matrix* and on *Rete4* with *Quarta Repubblica* in prime time.

2.3 The empirical base

The observed contents posted by journalists and newspapers have been collected on Facebook via *Crowdtangle*² in the time span that goes from February 2020 to June 2021. The initial population was composed by 20000 posts, duly sampled according to a systematic approach that extracted 2000 records.

The data have been collected following the structure of a proper standard gather grid (Losito, 2003; Amaturò and Punziano, 2013) divided in 2 main domains (*General information and Context information*) and then organized in a Cases per Variable Matrix composed by 2000 observations per 9 variables defined as follows:

- *General information*: Author (Title of Journalist/Newspaper Facebook page); Category (Journalist/Newspaper); Date of post (duly aggregated in trimesters);
- *Context information*: Type of post (Link, Photo; Live Video; Video; Status); Engagement (intended as the sum of likes, comments, shares and other reactions, duly classified in quartiles); Likes, Comments and shares (duly classified in quartiles – Low; Medium Low; Medium High; High); Message (to which we collected the entire corpus of posts).

All the information contained in the dataset has been processed following a multi-stage analytical procedure consisting of the application of the topic modelling aimed to point the features of the subject observed in terms of discourse and agenda setting. Then the application of the Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) makes possible to detect the latent dimensions by which the correspondence between topics and the other context variables is marked (type of post, engagement and posting time). Then, the Lexical Correspondence Analysis (LCA)³ points out to be the best way to a right synthesis of the collected data: from a compact graphical representation of data relationships projected on factors we could indicate previously unobservable concepts. In this way it is possible to find the right key interpretations based on the correspondence between the selected variables and the most characteristic words of the post texts. Finally, we set a Cluster Analysis (CA) in order to go more in depth with the analytical process and turn back a further synthesis of the information contained in our dataset.

² *Crowdtangle* is an insight tool reserved to the academic hub that only tracks public available posts on Facebook

³ The LCA is a factorial technique concerning textual data and useful to synthesize information contained in texts; make graphic displays of association networks among words and between words and texts; show the connections between text and context data. (L. Lebart, A. Salem, L. Berry, Correspondence Analysis of Lexical Tables, in *Exploring Textual Data*, in L. Lebart, A. Salem, L. Berry (eds.), Springer Sciences & Business Media, Dordrecht 1998, pp. 45-79.

2.4 The Topic Modelling

The post texts present a considerable amount of information not traceable in a semantic structure. For this reason, we offered the empirical base to a simple but statistically robust solution: the topic modelling.

As first step we imported the database in *T-Lab*, a specific software environment for the content analysis able to process proper patterns based on textual context. We submitted the text variable, consisting in the corpus extracted by Facebook to *T-Lab* thematic analysis procedure that is preceded first of all by the following automatic processes: Lemmatization, consisting of 1) the standardization of all the verb forms in the same mode 2) the transformation of nouns and adjectives posed in singular number 3) the removing of definite-indefinite articles; Frequency threshold put on 5 occurrences that led us to exclude in the analysis all the words below this frequency value and reducing finally the vocabulary from 3597 to 1248 total words⁴; finally we proceeded with the exclusion of empty segments that were not significant and relevant for our analysis. Then, we set the topic extraction procedure based on the Latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) that is a «generative probabilistic model for text document collections based on a three-level hierarchical Bayesian model, in which each item of a collection is modeled as a finite mixture over an underlying set of topics. Each topic is, in turn, modeled as an infinite mixture over an underlying set of topic probabilities. In the context of text modeling, the topic probabilities provide an explicit representation of a document» (Blei, Ng & Jordan, 2003, p.993). Following this procedure, we extract 9 topics renamed respecting statistical criteria, such as the consideration of specific words occurrences featuring the topic as well the low-high shared words occurrences among all topics, and by the semantic tagging on selected context in order to «detect the right document meaning solving disambiguation and identifying concepts by a set of words» (Bolasco, 2013, p.126).

Finally, we classified the 9 topics taking account of the related 608 emerging elementary contexts intended as the document analyzed fragments in which the topic itself comes more relevant.

Following Habert (2005), in fact, the more significant parts of documents are supposed by the information weight of its fragments featured by its discursive formulas, their position in the document, the specific weight of each word related its scatter in the document etc. In our case, the resume of elementary contexts, T-lab returned us a hierarchical order based on the informative score of single fragments which text reduction has been synthesized by 95 % threshold.

The emerged topics are:

- *Pandemic Storytelling*: which includes all the argumentation of the observed subject concerning the daily story of normal people during the pandemic period which reflects struggles and health-social needs. Furthermore, in this topic, are included the typical posts oriented to social media marketing strategies. By these posts the authors benefit of other popular accounts audiences, posting celebration contents for birthdays or other anniversaries.

⁴ All the posts were composed in the Italian native language.

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- *Pandemic emergency response*: this topic focuses all the argumentation concerning the safety devices to prevent the infection, as the use of masks and the social distancing, and the related policies discussions concerning their use.
- *Prime Minister Conte*: centered on the governmental issues facing the political decisions concerning the pandemic situation and the following government crisis which drove to the charge change in favor of Mario Draghi.
- *Death Bulletin*: mainly focused on the covid-19 tragic consequences widespread via official data sources.
- *Sensitivity to the women role*: mainly based on gender rights oriented to the women's role and featured by contents referring on abuse and social gender divide.
- *Restriction and mobility*: a topic interested on the mobility issue, quarantine obligation for people who came back from other Countries and new borders policies in time of the pandemic
- *Self-branding*: this topic reflects the current ways to approach audiences on social media outside the editorial lines of the newspapers journalists work for. The journalists use to adopt exhortative language to invite users, with a kind of influencer vocation, in following the activities of page admins.
- *Critical awareness*: considers the first pandemic round in 2020 spring, this topic centers around the argumentation related to the approaches and behaviors that the collectivity and political decision-makers should adopt in eventual next contagious rounds to avoid the struggling consequences already experienced.
- *Product placement*: the contents posted in this topic are focused on commercial vocation shaped on the authors product promotion related, mainly, on the books they wrote.

In order to assist the emerged topic description, a synoptic table which includes examples of elementary contexts, and the most shared words is proposed:

Table 1 – Topic, most frequent words, and elementary context examples.

Topic name	Most frequent Words (Specific, Shared with high probability)	Elementary context examples
Pandemic Storytelling	Years, me, life, see, day, story, become, world, listen, today, friend, pain, forget, moth, stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aggiornamento bimba 11 anni ricoverata per Covid Le sue condizioni sono sempre più gravi. Forza piccola Bimba di 11 anni intubata per Covid a Bologna: "Caso unico, era sana e ora rischia la vita" <p>(ENG: Update: the 11 y.o. child hospitalized in Bologna because of Covid. Her conditions are bad: She suffer a rare situation. She was good and now she risks her life).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Ho scoperto a 43 anni di avere difficoltà a concepire un figlio. Poi ho impiegato quasi

		<p>dieci anni per restare incinta. Mio marito ed io abbiamo tanta energia proprio grazie_a nostra figlia. Mia figlia sta sempre con me, la seguo 24 ore su 24. Forse, se fossi stata più giovane, non sarebbe andata così. Prima lavoravo di più, ero spesso fuori casa.</p> <p><i>(ENG: I realized at 43 y.o. to have complications in get pregnant. I passed 10 years improving to have a child. My husband and I have lot of energy thanks to our daughter. She is always with me. I support her 20h per day. If I had be younger it wouldn't end in this way. Before I worked more and I was more out of home).</i></p>
Pandemic Emergency Response	Home, last, doctor, child, son, resolve, job, achieve, family, work, wife, mother, images, good, wait, create, cure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solo che non sono semplici fresconi da tastiera o @Fragoline74 ma medici, laureati, uomini e donne di scienza. E i danni prodotti dalle loro parole devastanti. In fondo, è semplice. Se decidi di mettere in discussione le basi della scienza medica e il progresso scientifico degli ultimi due secoli, <p><i>(ENG: They're no trolls or @Fragoline74 but doctors, graduated, men and women of science. The damages made by their words, devastating. Is easy. If you decide to discuss the science basis and the scientific progress of last two centuries).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ” Risposta della Santelli: “Non ho messo l'obbligo perché, se lo faccio, devo essere in grado di dare le mascherine ai cittadini” Risposta di De Luca: “In Campania è obbligatorio indossare le mascherine quando si esce di casa. <p><i>(ENG: Reply of Santelli: I not allowed the obligation. If I do I can be able to distribute masks to citizens. In Campania works the mask wearing obligation when people comes out of home).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Misura drastica da domani: in quella regione si esce di casa solo con bocca e naso coperti. Coronavirus, in Lombardia scatta da domani l'obbligo di mascherine e protezione del volto per tutti Open. <p><i>(ENG: Drasting measure stars tomorrow. In that Region is permitted go out from home only wearing masks. Coronavirus, in Lombradia the obligation for all starts tomorrow).</i></p>
Prime Minister Conte	Government, open, video, people, leave, Milan, look, emergency, Guseppe, Prime Minister, Conte, Draghi, page, keep, Christmas, overcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Il Premieri contestato dalla giornalista, Conte risponde così "Se avrà responsabilità di governo, scriverà lei i decreti". <p><i>(ENG: The Prime minister contested by the journalist, President Conte replies: If you will have governmental responsibilities you will write the governmental statements).</i></p>

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		<p>- 'CHI ATTACCA CONTE ATTACCA TUTTI NOI "Il governo fa quadrato attorno al premier, da Franceschini a Catalfo: "Sta servendo con passione e dedizione il Paese nel momento più_difficile della nostra storia.</p> <p><i>(ENG: Who Attacks Conte Attacks all of us. "The Government support the Prime minister, from Franceschini to Catalfo. "He serves our country with passion and dedication in the worst moment of our recent history").</i></p> <p>Giuseppe Conte, le prime dichiarazioni alla stampa "Serve governo politico solido, non tecnico. Io ci sono e ci sarò "</p> <p><i>(ENG: First Press declaration of Prime Minister Conte "We need a political stable Government, not a technical one. There I am and there I will be).</i></p>
Death Bulletin	Die, Coronavirus, covid, death, hospital, vaccine, tv, Rome, Positive, Fanpage, news, contagious, patient, live	<p>- ULTIM'ORA CORONAVIRUS Oggi 5372 nuovi casi. Tutti i numeri aggiornati: bollettino coronavirus oggi 5 372 contagi e 28 morti per covid i dati di venerdì 9 ottobre?</p> <p><i>(ENG: Coronavirus last news. Today 5372 new cases. All the data: 5372 infections and 28 covid deaths. The bulletin of Fri Oct 9th).</i></p> <p>- CORONAVIRUS, oltre 9mila morti in Italia. Mai registrato un così alto numero di decessi in un solo giorno: 27 marzo 86 498 contagiati di cui 10 950 guariti e 9 134 morti.</p> <p><i>(ENG: Over than nine thousand deaths in Italy. This high rate of daily death was never seen before: March 27th 86 498 infections, 10 950 healed and 9 134 deaths).</i></p> <p>- È morta a soli 33 anni La donna lascia altre due figlie, una coppia di gemelle di 5 anni: incinta a 33 anni muore per coronavirus il giorno dopo aver dato allaluce il suo bambino.</p> <p><i>(ENG: She died only at 33 years old. The woman leaves two twin daughters of 5 years old: pregnant she died after she gave birth to her last son).</i></p>
Sensitivity to the Women Role	Woman, us, ask, president, answer, narrate, time, journalist, speak, put, thanks, big, born, right, freedom, respect, resistance	<p>- E poi ci sono quelle violenze sulle donne invisibili a cui non sarà dedicato nessun monologo. Ce le racconta Lorenza Formicola. Le ver e donne violate di cui Rula non parlerà mai Lorenza Formicola.</p> <p><i>(ENG: And then there's that silent women violence to who nobody will dedicate words. Lorenza Formicola will narrate their stories for us).</i></p> <p>- Ecco quello che è stata costretta a subire Monica Patiño Gomez, 43 anni, avvocatita colombiana esperta in Diritto internazionale, dell'immigrazione e della famiglia che ha trascorso quasi metà della sua vita a Firenze,</p>

		<p>che con la sua associazione sostiene attivamente le donne immigrate in Italia.</p> <p><i>(ENG: This is what Patino Gomez, an Italo Colombian lawyer of 43 years old, has suffered. As international law and immigrant rights expert she lived almost half of her life in Florence, where she support the immigrant women in her association).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chi ha avuto la forza di arrivare fino all'una e venti passate ha potuto sentire questa giovane donna di 30 anni raccontare, con le lacrime agli occhi, la lunga strada per il successo, dall'infanzia senza acqua corrente né soldi per le bollette nella borgata di Quartaccio al sogno di diventare cantante. <p><i>(ENG: Who was connected still 1:20 am could listen this young woman of 30 years old who crying narrated her long journey towards the success. Starting from the childhood without water or money for bills in Quartaccio neighborhood still her dream to become a singer).</i></p>
Restrictions and Mobility	Our, country, days, arrive, think, leave, end, young, sons, come back, attack, murder, virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E proprio per questo motivo, il ministro della Salute Roberto Speranza ha firmato una nuova ordinanza che impone la quarantena obbligatoria di cinque giorni e il tampone alla fine dell'isolamento per tutti coloro che rientreranno in Italia da un paese dell'Unione Europea. La quarantena è comunque già prevista per tutti i Paesi che non fanno parte dell'Unione europea. <p><i>(ENG: This is the reason why the Italian health minister Roberto Speranza has signed a new decree that imposes the obligated 5 days' quarantine and the covid test at the end of the social isolation for all who come back from an European Union Country. The quarantine was already obligated for all who come back from not EU country members).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Malpensa code di viaggiatori per vacanze alle Canarie: a Bergamo 35mila passeggeri in 7 giorni. Nei giorni di Pasqua e Pasquetta gli italiani potranno andare in vacanza all'estero, ma non potranno spostarsi tra Regioni. La notizia ha scatenato diverse polemiche, ma anche molti "vacanzieri" che hanno deciso di prenotare e partire verso i Paesi europei. <p><i>(ENG: At Malpensa airport lots of queue of tourists leaving for Canary Islands. From Bergamo 35 thousand travelers in 7 days. Italians can leave abroad for Easter holidays, but they can't move among Italian Regions. This pattern has caused lots of controversies and lots of Italians who preferred to fly in other European Countries).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In questi giorni la distanza tra individui è fondamentale per la nostra sicurezza: la

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		<p>distanza tra nazioni europee, al contrario, mette tutti in pericolo "Ursula Von der Leyen, presidente della Commissione Europea</p> <p><i>(ENG: In these days the social distance is fundamental for our safety: the distance between European Countries, on the contrary, endangers all of us "Ursula Von der Leyen, President of the European Commission").</i></p>
Self Branding	<p>Porro, close, zuppa, explain, school, hope, red, lockdown, new, Fatto, today, Italy, read, word</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - La zuppa di Porro di oggi. A Natale dovevano liberarci, invece chiudono di nuovo Nicola Porro. <p><i>(ENG: Today at "La zuppa di Porro". They could us make free for Christmas, but they're force us at home again).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oggi alle 16, solo su Instagram e dal profilo di Nove, farò una diretta particolare: racconterò tre oggetti per me molto importanti e, poi, se ci sarà occasione farò entrare nella diretta alcuni di voi. Il format si chiama "Caccia al ricordo". Lo hanno già fatto anche Sommi e Gomez. Vi aspetto. <p><i>(ENG: Today at 4pm, only on Instagram and from "Nove" profile I will conduct a particular live stream: I will narrate 3 object very important for me and then if I can I will give space for some of you. This format is entitled: "Caccia al ricordo" as Somuni and Gomez already did. I wait for you).</i></p>
Critical Awareness	<p>Italians, uomo, chiamare, scrivere, tempo, parole, her, exclusive, millions, before, good, italian, Italy, remember, defend, people, together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noi dobbiamo tornare a comportamenti rigorosi come a febbraio, marzo e aprile, altrimenti ci facciamo male". <p><i>(ENG: We must recover the rigorous behaviors of last February, March and April, otherwise we will get hurt)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - di sputare sul suo sacrificio, di offendere la memoria di questa grande donna e gli sforzi e i rischi immani di decine di migliaia di colleghi e colleghe in tutta Italia, spesso per stipendi da sopravvivenza. Non ci sono parole abbastanza esplicite nel vocabolario italiano per rendere tutta questa miseria. <p><i>(ENG: There's no word in the vocabulary to describe the misery of who despises the sacrifices, offending the memory of a great woman and the efforts of thousand Italian colleagues who worked for little rewards).</i></p>
Product Placement	<p>Salvini, found, Andrea, politic, book, bit, amazon, scanzi, peggiori, lega, meloni, politician, right-wing, you, Renzi, PD, first, virus, Cazzari</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - La situazione politica, in breve. Renzi è davvero il peggio del peggio, politicamente parlando. Sempre lo è stato, sempre lo sarà. Il libro "La congiura dei peggiori" lo trovi qui. <p><i>(ENG: The political situation in brief: Renzi is the worst of worst, in political terms. He always has been and always will be the worst. You can find here the book "La congiura dei peggiori").</i></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Come minimo, Salvini, Demolition Man e tutta la stampa a loro vicina lo avrebbe fucilato. In pubblica piazza. Con diretta televisiva e dibattiti annessi. il mio ultimo libro, Demolition Man, lo puoi trovare anche qui. <p><i>(ENG: Basically Salvini “Demolition man” should be publicly executed in a square and all the press he support as well. You can find here my last book “Demolition man”).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - La politica al suo peggio. Il libro La congiura dei peggiori lo trovi anche qui <p><i>(ENG: Politics and its worst. You can find here my book “La congiura dei peggiori”).</i></p>
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3. The Analysis

Later the topic modeling, we set in active mode all the variables even that the Engagement and the Category, set in illustrative mode⁵.

First of all, topics that are strictly connected to the pandemic issues, as Pandemic emergency response, Death bulleting and Restriction and mobility, feature both the two factors as well as the post-type status and native-video. Finally, also *Saverio Tommasi* (Journalist), and *Open* (Newspaper) feature both the two factors. The first factor, the X axis, is instead characterized by Product placement and Pandemic storytelling topics, as by link and photo post type. This factor is featured by all the journalist and newspaper observed, even that of *Nicola Porro* (Journalist) and *Fanpage* (Newspaper). Lastly, we can see how the time span looks perfectly progressive on this factor how the engagement grades of likes, comments and shares increase proportionally to the time span line sliding. The lower grade of engagement is in fact evidenced at the beginning of our time dimension of observation (2020 1st trimester), while the high grades at the end (2021 2nd trimester).

Looking at the graph and considering the variables’ modalities interested in this factor, in terms of position, reciprocal distance and frequency, we can observe the reflection of the news-making current pattern. On the right side the factor is characterized by a commercial orientation featured by marketing strategies. Here stands only one journalist, *Andrea Scanzi*, particularly focused on the product placement initiatives related to the use of pictures and with a leverage pointed on different actors’ daily life stories occurred in the emergency period. The left side, instead, reflects a news-making conduct not oriented on personal views of the authors. This side is featured by an information orientation where take position all the newspapers and the other journalists (even that *Porro*). This side is characterized not only by a stronger use of status and link posts but also by the related discussion mainly focused on the pandemic issues during the first phase between the beginning and the end of the first emergency phase. In fact, among the topics we can find here

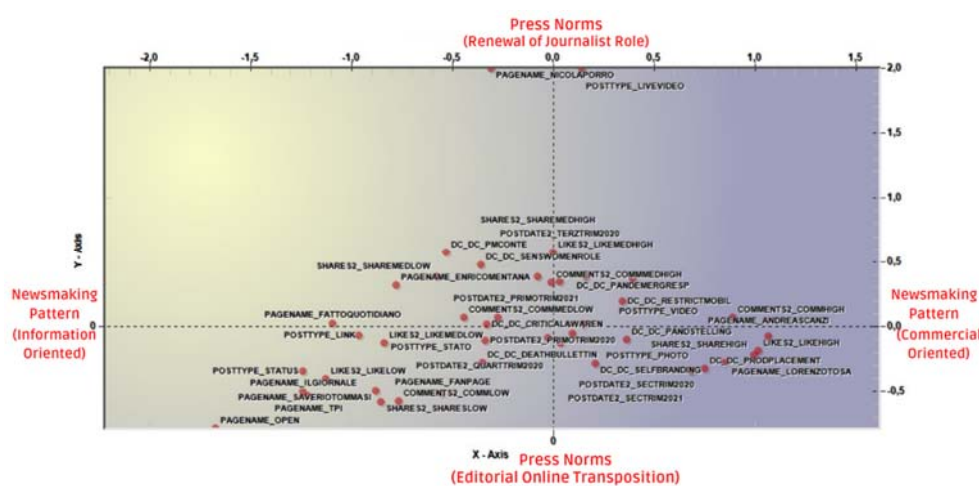
⁵ «In the correspondence analysis is possible to discern two kinds of variables: the active variables directly contribute for the *factor building process*, while the illustrative variables do not. The position on the plan of the illustrative variables is moreover useful to understand the factors emerged» (Di Franco, 2017: 150).

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the critical awareness, the emergency response and the tragic consequences due to the Covid-19.

As far as the second factor is concerned, the Y axis is featured by topics related to the Sensitivity on women role, the Prime Minister Conte (centered on what concerned the Government crisis) and the typical ways to reach and involve the social media audiences, adopted through a personal approach. Hence we can in fact see, among the journalist observed, the only presence of *Porro* and a posting strategy held mainly by live video streaming. This evidence marked out on the upper side of the axis and in line with a renewal of journalist role, is directly opposite to the lower one that follows the traditional editorial customs transposed online and where all the other journalist and newspaper stand. Considered the composition of the graph the second factor has been in this way renamed “Press norms”.

Figure 2 – Multi Correspondence Analysis (MCA). X=Fact 1 (8,65%); Y=Fact 2 (4,89%)



3.1 The Lexical Correspondence Analysis (LCA) and Cluster Analysis

After this first analysis procedure we further synthesized the information contained in our data providing the next step of Lexical correspondence analysis (LCA) and showing the multiple correspondences between words and context elements (i.e. who spread the message).

Looking at the graph, three word-groups emerged, which strengthen the factor building. The words pointed in the 3rd quad remark in fact the informational orientation of the first factor as well the traditional press norms transposed online. In this group, in fact, we can notice words such as: Covid, Positive, Die, Coronavirus, Lockdown, Live, as well as the self-citation of the newspapers and journalist that we saw, in the MCA, be present in this part of the graph, as *Open*, *Fanpage* and *Saverio Tommasi*.

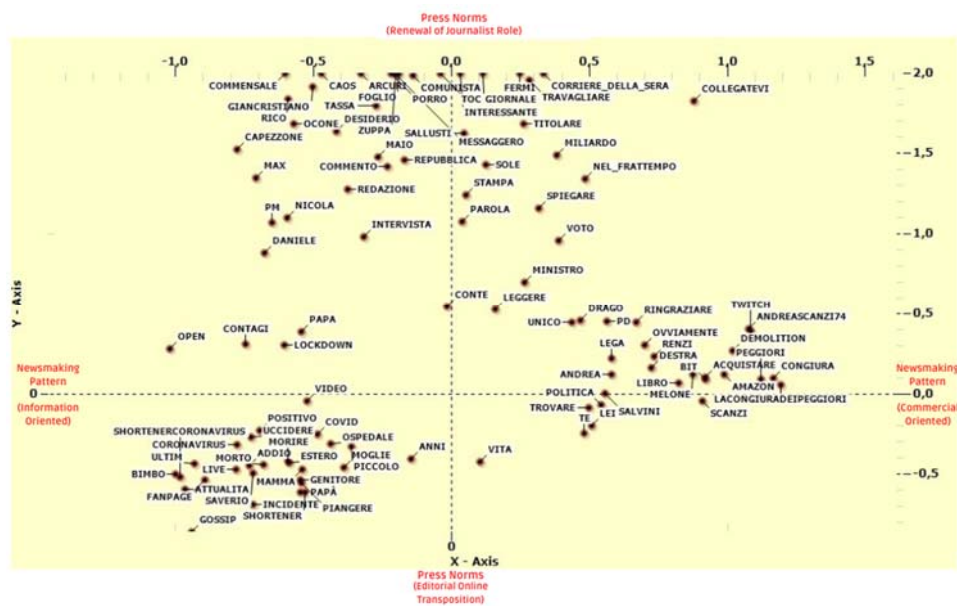
The other word group pointed across the first and the fourth quads accurate feature the commercial orientation of the news-making pattern in light of lemmas such as: Amazon, book, Buy it, and the book title “*La congiura dei peggiori*” written by *Andrea Scanzi*, self-cited and also positioned in this side as evidenced in Fig. 1.

The last word group positioned across the 1st and 2nd squads which well reinforced the approach to the press norms in a personal-addicted way held by those

who renew the journalist role following the logic and the ontological assumption of the digital environment.

In particular they conduct their work coming a part by the newspapers they work for and managing personal social media accounts and facing directly to their audiences. The specific words in this case are: Stay tuned, commensali and *zuppa di Porro*, the title of the press release format held by *Nicola Porro* on Facebook and other social platforms, referred to the daily news and political discourses through the comment of the agenda settings related to the most popular Italian newspapers, whose titles are duly present among the words as *il Foglio*, *Repubblica*, *Il Giornale*, *Il Corriere della sera*, *Il Messaggero*, as well as Interview, editorial staff, comments and Press.

Figure 3 – Lexical Correspondence Analysis (LCA). X=Fact 1 (8,65%); Y=Fact 2 (4,89%)



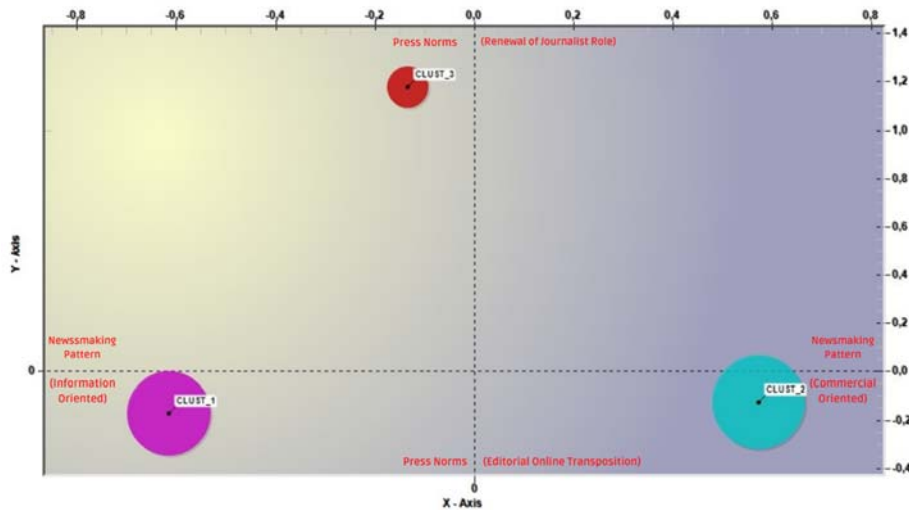
To further go in-depth with the analysis procedures, we implemented a CA to retrieve three class-groups useful to synthesize the how has changed the ways to do journalism due to the digital revolution and the new online path which drove journalists and press professionals to migrate their work on social media also.

As shown in Fig. 3 we retrieved three emerging clusters respectively concentrating the 41,6%, 47,3% and 11,1% of the information contained in the dataset.

The first cluster is positioned in the third quad where the information oriented news-making pattern crosses the classic press norms transposed online.

As shown in Fig. 4 that over imposes the MCA, LCA and CA results, this class concentrates the 41,6% of the information contained in the dataset, and relates it to the processes which permits to communicate and spread contents via a specific medium. The observed subjects present in this class follow a “being medium” process (Boccia Artieri, 2012, p.72), that limits in this way the web environment, and more specifically the social media sphere, as a communication instrument useful to increase the spreading of contents and information. For this reason, the first class has been renamed “journalism via social media”

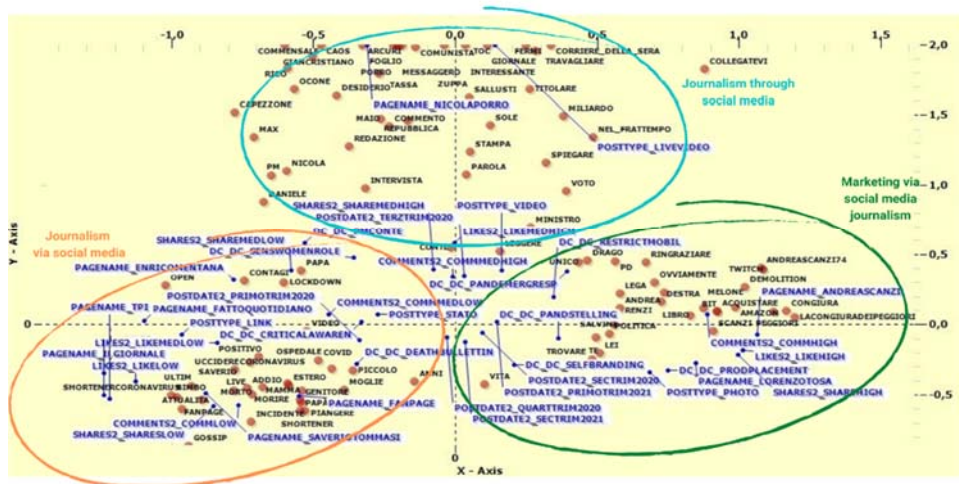
Figure 4 – Emerged clusters and concerning position on the factor graph. Cluster 1= 41,6%; Cluster 2= 47,3%; Cluster 3= 11,1%



The second class, which contained the 47,3% of the information contained in the entire dataset concentrates all the elements which suggest a renewed pattern in doing journalism, close to the promotion and commercial purposes. The words relating to the e-commerce platforms, the use of iconic and visual elements in the posting activities and the exhortative invite to buy a specific product (in our case the book written by *Andrea Scanzi*) led us to rename this class: “marketing via social media journalism”.

The last one, positioned in the upper side of the graph, that concentrates the rest of the information equal to the 11,1% of the entire dataset, connotes an approach in journalism well separated from the classical editorial attitudes migrated, or not, towards the digital scenario. The words and the post type here contained in fact suggest the journalists (in our case only *Porro*) who adopt a communicational attitude well adapted on the online logics, rules and languages, based on a direct interaction live transmitted with an involvement of the author who communicate in this way via, but rather, through a specific medium, being medium. Here is marked a “becoming medium” process featured by the cultural medium codes learned through the media fruition practices (Luhmann, 2000). Following Boccia Artieri (2012) these cases connote a «specific selection criteria useful to distinguish what is newsworthy or not, or better what is informative or not» (p.73) thanks to the interiorization of those specific languages, expressions and esthetic forms of a medium, in this case played online. For this reason, the last class has been renamed “journalism through social media”.

Figure 5 – Factorial graph on LCA with the over imposition of a three-class CA (respectively concentrating: Journalism via social media 41,6%; Marketing via social media journalism, 47,3% and Journalism through social media, 11,1% of the information contained in the dataset)



4. Results and main conclusions

In the analysis conducted, two particularly relevant dimensions of meaning emerge in the debate concerning the impact of social media in the practice of creating and disseminating information contents.

While on the one hand a reworking of the traditional journalistic routines transposed on the web emerges, which uses social media as a communication tool useful for increasing the dissemination of information content, on the other it emerges how much the use of social media in journalistic work transgresses certain routines and established rules of the profession. From the analysis, in fact, a new and interesting profile of a journalist emerges, featured by who uses social media to break down the wall that separates him from his reader, adopting promotion strategies such as to establish a direct and lasting relationship with him that is different from what the reader adopts with the publisher to which the journalist refers.

Challenging the conceptualizations of the detached and objective role in the elaboration of the facts, the figure of journalist who emerged from the analysis organizes and spreads the news with particular attention to monitoring the user-reader feedback that bursts forcefully as a relevant actor in the process web information.

Monitoring, interaction, and promotion remain the three keys to understanding a new way of being a journalist that is best suited to the disintermediate environment of social platforms. The figure that emerged from the study differs in two profiles:

1. The journalist who reinvents traditional news making practices by exploiting the logics, rules and languages of social media but preserving practices already used in traditional journalism. This profile focuses on the user to whom it is addressed with an informative practice aimed at discussion and

exchange of opinion. The promotion is aimed at creating loyalty towards the proposed brand.

2. The journalist who reinvents himself and integrates the promotion practices of his own content in the gatekeeping process.

This profile is completely detached from the publisher to which it refers and puts himself on focus: promotion on social media is considered as an extension of one's work and is aimed at converting traffic into revenues. A continuous and lasting relationship is established with the public, evidenced by the high level of engagement produced, but with exclusively commercial purposes. The journalist thus enters a market practice based on the commercialization of information that was previously exclusive to the publisher.

In conclusion, the study conducted allows us to relate these results with a process, still little debated in the literature, of the online mediatization of journalism. This phenomenon, which has affected political communication before and scientific communication today, is understood as the submission to the rules of communication, standards and needs of the audience populate the medium of interest, in this case social media. The level of engagement - which informs us which type of information content the consumer-reader prefers to interact with and which one feels involved - increases the more one deviates from a type of information presented in a thematic way, with a focus on the impact of 'happened and reported in an impersonal way, choosing on the contrary an informative content presented through a personal, emotional or ironic approach.

The online mediatization in journalism is therefore a horizontal process in which all the actors involved are placed on the same level, in which the space of interaction is wide and direct participation, but at the same time does not exhaust the communicative profile: there are those who , "become a medium" using a style of confidential communication, a first-person exposure and an exhortative and engaging character and there are those who still remain anchored to the top-bottom levels and refer to formal journalistic practices, both in exposure and in content, these are the newspapers that build narratives through official and traditional sources.

In the light of what has emerged, looking at the future of the relationship between the world of information and social media, it would be desirable a convergence between traditional and innovative logics of news making that is able to adapt to the entertainment nature of social media and that knows how to involve and inform the reader at the same time. Further empirical investigations will be necessary, perhaps involving a greater number of subjects of investigation to understand the phenomenon in its entirety.

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