**Problemi dell’Informazione**

Call for papers

**MEDIA and DIVERSITY**

Eds.

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We live in a deeply mediatized world, where public sphere and social and political dialogues are inconceivable, or better inexistent, without media. In democratic systems, the political decision-making processes are somehow tied to the collective perceptions of social issues, therefore the role played by media, in particular news media, has become strategic. Media directly participate not only to the agenda setting and current debates, but, in a deeper perspective, to the construction of social categories and the explanation of social facts. By steadily shaping, framing and giving public visibility to some social groups, media accustom citizens to perceive some distinctions as ordinary, usual, “natural”; thus, they create identities and borders. By emphasizing some distinctions in comparison with “us”, they create the Other. By lighting the fire underneath a kind of diversity and its point of view, they affect social stereotypes and promote the change of mentalities.

In recent years, some relevant studies have provided original and unexpected perspectives useful to understand the power of media in societies by investigating their role in building the categories of minorities, vulnerability and social empathy. In particular, Lynn Hunt has reconstructed the way in which popular media have contributed to the “invention” of the idea of human rights in the passage from the modern age to the contemporary one. According to this author, media stimulated the audience to assume the points of views of the different characters of drama, primarily of the weakest ones, and, consequently, to take in account the human pains of torture and social injustices and to imagine more equal opportunities for all human beings. Another milestone of the literature on this topic is the last work of Roger Silverstone, where is reflect on the role played by media in the formation of the social, civic and moral space. The knowledge of the Other and the relationship with the same increasingly happen inside the *mediapolis*, the space where people coming from differing places can make a reciprocal appearance. *The construction of the otherness*, that is of all the problematic and vulnerable identities, *is a completely mediated process*, whichhas completely revolutionized the collective construction of all the categories of morality (proper distance, dignity, respect, hospitality, justice).What is common in these arguments is that media narrations and public dialogues on minorities are recognized as founding steps in the civilizing processes.

To complete this essential review, it is necessary to mention Luc Boltansky and his work *Distant Suffering. Morality, Media and Politics*. He investigated the change in human morality derived from the new habit of watching scenes of pain and suffering on the media screens, and the ambiguous relationships between these sentiments, human empathy and solidarity policies.

The theoretical framework on media and diversity that we have outlined is the background within which to study information media as well. The role of journalism in the face of diversity has been investigated mainly with respect to the dimension of news content and representations of otherness. Very often the differences taken into consideration are those relating to the different cultural background and the consequences of migratory phenomena. Scientific reflection on other conditions of diversity is rarer, such as those attributable to issues of gender, sexual orientation and disabilities. Similarly, in the studies on journalism and information pluralism has always been understood in a political or at the most cultural sense; less frequently, on the other hand, in terms of a more general tension towards the inclusiveness of the aforementioned diversities and belonging but also, for example, with respect to the multiple forms of social marginality.

Diversity, as a theme for information media, also represents a challenge to professional practices and conditions, starting with pluralism and inclusion policies in editorial offices. In recent times, this debate has found ample space in the US context, also following the MeeToo and Black Lives Matter movements. In this context, another area of investigation, almost unexplored in our country, is the application of inclusion policies and practices to journalistic contexts and professions that are beginning to be widespread in other areas (think of the experiences of diversity management and inclusion in business contexts). Another relevant issue is the issue of the differentiation of contents, authors, themes and languages in relation to different social actors and audiences, which constitutes a significant challenge for journalistic practices undergoing profound change, also in reference to the effects of digitization, hybrid formats and languages, and the economic crisis.

Therefore, in a scenario of uncertainty and accelerated change, diversity is both a challenge and an opportunity for journalistic practice, precisely as a democratic issue, with reference to the pluralization of sensitivities and the need for full participation in the information and communication field of all members of society.

Starting from this complex and multidimensional frame of reference, there are many lines of work on which the authors are invited to send contributions; among these we propose, but not exclusively:

* Media and diversity
* The social construction of the Other in media information
* Information and gender issues
* News media and sexual orientation minorities
* News media and disabilities
* News media, poverty and social marginalization
* Information and religious pluralism
* Diversity management in information, editorial policies and inclusion of minorities
* Journalistic practices and diversity
* Journalistic language and diversity
* Formats and tools for information and diversity

This issue is therefore open to contributions that address one or more (as is more likely, given the “hyper-connected” nature of the crisis and its implications).

Proposals (maximum 750 words excluding bibliography) are required to illustrate the objectives of the paper, the research question and the methodology adopted. They have to be sent to <https://submission.rivisteweb.it/index.php/pdi>

by March 31th, 2021. The selection of proposals will take place by April 10th. The deadline for submitting manuscripts is June 20th. Manuscripts will undergo a double blind review system.