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New Sociology of Intellectuals and Net-Activism

Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to retrace the transformations of intellectuals in the passage from an industrial to a post-industrial society, up until the global network society, through a brief critical review of the main sociological themes that have dealt with this issue. The basic theory is that intellectuals are no longer a social and cultural elite defined by their relationship with political movements, but a mass and a variety of highly differentiated actors who find an environment full of risks and opportunities in the Internet, while taking part in the dynamics of power and counter-power, of criticism and economic production in a global society.

After explaining the critical approach followed and the main definitions used, in the second and third paragraphs we will discuss the classical sociology of intellectuals. The third, fourth and fifth paragraphs will instead be a debate on the most recent approaches. Finally, we will conclude by retracing the main transformation lines that have emerged and the challenges regarding the new relationship between web 2.0 and contemporary intellectuality.

The critical approach and main definitions

The critical approach followed in this essay aims to link the transformations of theory and social research to those in a more general context, assuming that, as Anthony Giddens claims (1994), real phenomena and their conceptualisation, measurement and analysis follow a spiral process. In other words, the subjects of knowledge, the results

of their work and the observed phenomena are built upon a reciprocal relationship. From this point of view, the work developed in these pages relies on a principle of contextualisation (Jasanoff, 2005) which applies the logic of the new sociology of knowledge to reflect on the political and public use of knowledge itself.

The essay's key term is obviously the 'intellectual' category. Although as we will see, different approaches tend to give different definitions of this phenomenon (Eyal and Buchhloz, 2010). In order to clarify and define the topic of this analysis, we define as intellectual a social actor whose actions have a desired and/or undesirable impact on political and public dynamics based on a cultural and symbolic capital defined relevant in a specific social context. The result is that an intellectual isn't just someone who has an intellectual job or is educated: this must be the basis to claim and exert some kind of influence on politics, communication and/or the public sphere. Moreover, in line with Habermas' typical approach (1962), in this essay we will distinguish between 'political sphere' and 'public sphere'; the former defined as an institutionalised realm of power dynamics that involve the political system and the latter as the dimension of debate and civil society action, in regard to collective and political issues.

The classical sociology of intellectuals

The historical and social context in which the classic sociology of intellectuals develops, lives by the complicated and dual relationship between intellectuals and the masses, marked by the rise of new mass parties (Pombeni, 1994): on one hand, the former tend to stand out socially and culturally from the latter; on the other, public intellectuals justify themselves in relation to the masses (working class, middle class) always seeking the right distance with conflict and socio-political movements that characterise industrial society. In a corporate modernity phase, this means simultaneously imagining the problem of the relationship with political parties and with the form of participation and representation that characterises political dynamics.

In his well-known book *The Age Of Ideologies: A History of Political Thought in the Twentieth Century* (1982), the historian Karl D. Bracher suggests that the general interpretative key to the history of the past century is the short circuit between cultural production and political

processes, between intellectuals and the masses, between intellectuals and parties: reconnecting to a well-established liberal interpretation that dates back to Eric Voegelin (1952) and Jacob Talmon (1952), the German historian identifies the main explanation for the formation and rise of totalitarian and dictatorial regimes of the twentieth century with the political mobilization of intellectuals, their explicit militant choices and the redefinition in eschatological and dogmatic terms of modern humanistic culture: through the support of mass parties, intellectuals reportedly led non-intellectuals, the masses, towards their ruin and slavery, based on a widespread sense of alienation and estrangement from the liberal and capitalist project of modernity. This vision is clearly opposed to the diverse idea that could be defined radical, (mainly referred to German idealism, especially to Fichte's Science of Knowledge - 1794) which instead interprets the last century as a long trend of intellectual decadence. This vision upholds the idea that intellectuals betrayed their original mission of public engagement or were relegated to a marginal role, so they ended up favoring or unable to prevent barbarity in history (Asor Rosa, 2009; Furedi, 2004; Flores d'Arcais, 2013; Saïd, 2014): intellectuals were allegedly a vanguard defeated by history and in the end, basically alienated from party dynamics, unable to lead themselves and the masses towards a higher degree of emancipation.

With reference to different visions of the Enlightenment, both the liberal and radical interpretations bring out the two central issues that dominated the same consideration of social sciences on intellectuals between the first post-war period and the 1970s - a research program we could describe as classical sociology of intellectuals, by tightly binding analytical and normative dimensions:

1. The relationship between cultural and political spheres within the new industrial mass society. An issue based on the opposing duo involvement/detachment between cultural production and political approach and therefore, between intellectuals and mass movements.
2. The individuation of social identity and therefore, of the roles and tasks that intellectuals had and/or should have had in modern society. In this case, the opposing duo is political autonomy/political dependence, between the idea of intellectuals as social actors and autonomous politicians, instruments of a particular vision of the world and those who deny this

possibility, considering intellectuals as a constant instrumental actor in the political game of the main social groups (typical of the twentieth-century social thought of the middle and working class).

The combination of these two dimensions enables the identifying of four main areas of research:

- a) Theories of the new class (involvement/political autonomy): intellectuals are a class in itself that bears specific interests and world views, capable of structuring a training process and giving rise to a new ruling class that is replacing, (through the expansion of bureaucracy and the planning of production processes) the economic entrepreneurial bourgeoisie (Burnham, 1941; Dilas M., 1957; Gouldner, 1979). In this interpretation, both the quantitative growth and the increasing socio-economic role of intellectuals mark a trend in their relationship with mass political movements: initially characterized by vast forms of cooperation, this relationship marks a growing independence of intellectuals who increasingly become actors of an independent movement (and therefore political).
- b) Theories of the organic relationship (involvement/political dependence): intellectuals justify themselves in their social being and they always play a role of criticism or support towards history's two main social classes and related power dynamics; thus they are always at the service of others, not being directly productive and despite carrying out essential tasks to maintain or change the social order, by organising/leading secondary groups, producing ideas and approval (Gramsci, 1992). According to this interpretation, intellectual roles make sense and are considered specifically modern only in their close relationship with political mass movements that end up being led and organised by intellectuals.
- c) Theories of intellectual supremacy (detachment/political autonomy): in this vision, intellectuals are a group characterized by a moral and spiritual supremacy connected to their close relationship with the Truth: this basic orientation helps withdraw their social origin and influences (to which other socio-political individuals are subjected to) making them an independent social group; this shows that intellectuals should

not carry out their tasks at the service of this or that individual interest but, in line with their socio-cultural characteristics, they should put themselves at the service of a general interest or recover an ascetic vision of their role (Benda, 1927) or of a government inspired by Plato's 'philosopher kings' (Mannheim, 1929; 1935; 1950). For this vision, intellectuals must distance themselves from mass political movements to form a vanguard above conflict and individual interests.

- d) Theories of the professional role (detachment/political dependence): intellectuals don't have a privileged relationship with an alleged universal truth since they are fully immersed in an insuppressible 'polytheism of values'. This shows that they may primarily base their credibility on technical and professional training, providing useful support to understanding the phenomena and developing practical solutions without being able to attribute them to some objective reason (Weber, 1919). Therefore, even according to this interpretation, intellectuals must distance themselves from mass movements without claiming a greater ability to govern, but 'being satisfied' with carrying out their professional role, collaterally to the different socio-political groups fighting one another.

Tab. 1. – *Main branches of classical sociology of intellectuals*

IDENTITY AND ROLE OF INTELLECTUALS		RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURAL SPHERE AND POLITICAL SPHERE	
		<i>Involvement</i>	<i>Detachment</i>
	<i>Autonomy</i>	Theories of the new class (Alvin Gouldner) ^a	Theories of intellectual supremacy (Karl Mannheim) ^a
<i>Dependence</i>	Theories of the organic relationship (Antonio Gramsci) ^a	Theories of the professional role (Max Weber) ^a	

a= Emblematic author of reference

Discussion I: the supremacy of politics

The classical sociology of intellectuals, between analysis and self-analysis, has mainly been a political sociology even when moved by an approach related to the sociology of knowledge – as in the typical case of Karl Mannheim (1929). Classical sociology, by focusing on a ‘high’ concept of politics and culture typical of the industrial society (that its development seemed to have weakened since the beginning) led the analysis problem of intellectuals back to Sartre’s central question: ‘what is an intellectual’. This sociology was therefore also an essentialist sociology based on an actual sacralisation and idolisation of culture and criticism’s ability to help build, through the intellectualisation of politics, a more rational world. The classical sociology of intellectuals was a sociology of minorities: intellectuals of the industrial society are a social minority from a quantitative point of view, in a situation in which the population’s average level of schooling is low; but they are also a minority from a qualitative point of view, since they present themselves and are socially perceived as an elite and/or a vanguard able to observe things in a deeper, more thoughtful and more forward-looking way and therefore, worthy of listening and leadership, according to a didactic model of the relationship between intellectuals and non-intellectuals (Bauman, 1987). In conclusion, this sociology has represented that supremacy of the political sphere compared to the public sphere, of organised political movements compared to civil society, which characterised the trend of the industrial society and the democracy of parties (Manin, 2010).

The new sociology of intellectuals

The transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society has produced a crisis of the classical research program on intellectuals from an epistemological-methodological point of view, as well as from a self-sufficient perspective. In the 1970s and 1980s, five developments marked the rise and ultimate decline of the role of public intellectual that appeared on the public scene with the Dreyfus Affair: 1) the increasing centrality of knowledge in economy (Touraine, 1969; Bell, 1973); 2) the population’s remarkable growth of literacy and schooling in western countries; 3) the rise of new social movements after 1968 which led to a public saturation of the engaged intellectual figure and

the spread of an argumentative style based on the culture of critical discourse (Antonelli, 2012; Gouldner, 1979); 4) the success and development of a new media system based on commercial broadcasting and the leading role of entertainment (Abruzzese, 1978: 5) The disrepute which strong concepts of the Truth fall into and the general weakening of humanistic and social sciences' knowledge in their ability to materialise to a certain and universal knowledge: the *pars construens* that had given meaning to intellectual activity gives way to the supremacy of 'deconstruction' as the main mission of a knowledge different from natural science (Lyotard, 1979).

These five developments on one hand helped the deconstruction of the mass party and the rise of the new democracy of the public (Manin, 2010; Mazzoleni, 2012); on the other hand, the 'disillusionment' and the 'desacralisation' of the bond between the cultural sphere and the political sphere: the sociology of intellectuals stops being mainly political sociology, essentialist, of minorities and of political supremacy compared to civil society. It became: a) a 'sociology of knowledge and communication' because the central issue was the production and use of knowledge in the dynamics of power and counter-power on a mainly public scene and of public individuals; b) 'relational' because many individuals exceeding the classical cultural institutions (academy, school) and political institutions (State, parties) of social modernity use knowledge to structure their actions; c) 'focused on highly differentiated intellectual categories', since the division of intellectual labour and the individuals that animate it grows enormously in a constant tension between professionalism and a selfless approach to knowledge; d) the increasing 'supremacy of the public sphere and civil society compared' to institutionalised politics since the places and extents of the conflict move on a more informal, common ground, linked to communication and the formation of movement actors are not related to institutionalised parties.

The new major questions are: «in what conditions intellectual actors are formed?» And «in what conditions do intellectuals take part in the dynamics of power and counter-power on the public scene?». The new sociology of intellectuals moves along the opposing duo 'objective conditions/subjective conditions', 'structures and institutions' or 'identity and culture' as elements that can answer these questions.

- a) 'Objectivist' approach: this analytical current tends to 'depersonalise' its investigative object and, by adopting an approach related

to Pierre Bourdieu's genetic structuralism, it investigates the different intellectual areas, their socio-cultural features and the different positions of the actors within (Camic and Gross, 2001; Rahkonen and Roos, 1993; Sapiro, 2003; Ringer, 1990; Jacobs and Townsley, 2010). The reference model for this approach is *Homo Academicus* (1984) by Pierre Bourdieu. By starting from the university professor's definition 'dominant part of the ruling class', the French sociologist bases his entire analysis on the implementation of the 'social space' model, that means, viewing the University as a conflictual context to control its distinctive resources (prestige, political-cultural influence), in which one fights from different positions, alternating long phases of 'war of position' to brief but significant moments of 'war of movement'. The first type of conflict dominates the everyday academic life and is based on the use of science and the scientific merit as a resource to legitimize itself, but it doesn't work as the only criterion for recruitment, assignment and exercise of academic power. Arising from Kant's analysis, Bourdieu shows that relations between the different Faculties and between the different academic individuals, there is always a distinction and conflict between those who claim power on the basis of scientific capital (results obtained through research) and those who do so on the basis of social capital – influence developed from being members of the upper class or a dynasty of intellectuals or of a cultural-political faction. This isn't a conflict between good and evil, between 'merit' and 'barony', but between two principles always simultaneously present: the outsiders and the disciplines closest to pure research will gather and use the first type of capital, insiders and the disciplines closest to the field of power (such as Medicine and Law) the second. Pierre Bourdieu traces the brief, but intense phase of the 'war of movement' to 1968: in his interpretation, this event is the result of University's transformation into mass universities, with the consequential downgrading of qualifications and the increase in the number of professors which however, hasn't led to an equal increase in career opportunities. In France, the general crisis of May 1968 arose from the contingent formation of a 'position of homology' (in exploitation and frustration) between those newly wealthy of the Academy and the

working classes. Some of the most complete and characteristic research which moves alongside Bourdieu's model is Sapiro's analysis (2009) on the different models of public intervention in the French context. According to this research, the many ways of being intellectual depend on three factors: the total amount of the symbolic capital held by various experts, the level of independence from political power and lastly, the level of professional specialisation of 'aspiring' intellectual actors. Based on these structural factors – they are seen as changing features in the evolution of a social field – Sapiro identifies six types of public commitment of intellectuals and their identity: the critic, linked to the figure of a universalistic intellectual; the guardian of moral order; the intellectual-leader and organiser; the intellectual-vanguard; the pure expert; the collective intellectual.

- b) 'Subjectivist' approach: the second type of macro-approach is linked to a deconstructivist epistemological and theoretical option and is more thematically differentiated than the 'objectivist' approach: a first line of inquiry pertains to studies on science and technology as social products incorporated into public communication processes and in the formation of debates – such as ethical ones, on the social use of scientific knowledge and especially, those related to the life sciences. These *Social Studies of Science and Technology* (SSST) mark a crucial break with Merton's sociology of science (1968), mainly focused on reconstructing the internal identity of science (Calhoun, 2010): the focus is now on the symbolic redefinition, in a political context, of knowledge and technology (Collins and Evans, 2002; Latour and Weibel, 2005; Wynne, 2005). Four key principles follow in order to interpret the complex relationship among all these processes (Adler-Nissen and Kropp, 2015): 'the principle of symmetry' states that in rebuilding the social role of a certain knowledge, one must know the events and processes that determined the victory of a theory instead of others; 'the principle of interchange', according to which the scientific field is highly permeable to external influences; 'the situational principle', according to which knowledge must be read in its production and in its impact in close relation to institutional dynamics and with the circumstances that lead to its development; 'the contextual principle', for which knowledge

must always be read in relation to a wider political, economic and cultural environment in which it matures. A second sub-line of inquiry is clearly inspired by Foucault’s work and especially to that particular variation of the power-knowledge relationship included in the concept of ‘governmentality’. For the French philosopher, this concept is referred to that specific ‘art of government’ [...] which through institutions, procedures, analyses, reflections, calculations and tactics assures populations are taken over and guarantees the government of the ‘living’ (Foucault, 1978: 167-168). It’s on this ground, since the publication of the book edited by Burchell, Gordon and Miller, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (1991), that *Governmentality Studies* start spreading on an international level: they start from the assumption that *governance* nowadays is built on the basis of ‘expert’ knowledge that defines the nature of government and the most appropriate means to putting it into practice (Barry *et al.*, 1996; Valverde, 1998; Rose *et al.*, 2006). Finally, the third sub-line refers to the so-called ‘epistemic communities’, groups of experts who, for different reasons, enter the increasingly influential and structured debates on international issues such as peace and global pollution; trying to investigate how their activism has repercussions on international relations (Adler and Haas, 1992; Keck and Sikkink, 1998).

Tab. 2. – *Main areas of the new sociology of intellectuals*

OBJECTIVIST APPROACH	SUBJECTIVIST APPROACH
Genetic structuralism	Social Studies of Science and Technology Governmentality Studies Analysis of the epistemic communities

Discussion II: power and counter-power

When the new sociology of intellectuals tends to minimise the typical prescriptive dimension of classical sociology, it represents the increasing differentiation of the relationship between intellectuals

and non-intellectuals and therefore, compared to those socio-political movements that had been a big part of twentieth-century thought. The focus shifts from the actors to the actions and to their desired and undesired effects, completely aware that legitimate knowledge is now an essential element to any socio-political dynamic. These may or may not be incorporated within the dynamics of power and counter-power that are no longer only structured on the political scene, but on the public, media and economic scene as well, in relation to civil society. Together with intellectual-militants who operate within social movements not linked to institutionalised political parties, there are the actions of experts and consultants, who become more important within the framework of the risk society (Beck, 1986) and post-democracy (Crouch, 2005). So intellectuals represented and analysed within the new sociology are defined by mainly interpretative or technical-professional identities and roles: on one hand, there are weakened intellectuals compared to the modernity, who continue to influence the public debate, whose job is to help connect different worlds of meaning and reveal a higher level of awareness among social actors who oppose power, on the basis of their scientific authority (Touraine, 2007; Beck and Grande, 2004; Bauman, 1987). On the other hand, there is a variety of intellectual figures who act as 'new legislators' in legitimising and supporting power in different social environments (Habermas, 2014).

Intellectuals and the Network

If one of the new sociology's main achievements is bringing to light the diversity of intellectuals, of their actions and use of knowledge in the public sphere and civil society, in the dynamics of power and counter-power, then it's clear that one of the most important current topics is intellectual presence on the Network.

In this regard, we can briefly identify three leading positions:

- a) Techno-enthusiasts: those who consider the Network and especially the web 2.0 as the instrument that is able to release intellectual and potential energies of social criticism previously entangled in the institutional forms of the industrial society and of the first post-industrial society, based on analogue and unidirectional media. The hypertextuality, interactivity and

multimediality typical of the web 2.0 could start new ecologies and new processes of connected intelligence (De Kerckhove, 1997) or even collective intelligence (Lévy, 1994): on one hand, the intellectual's critical role is fully recovered, on the other, its tasks and actions are distributed among a multitude of dispersed entities who cooperate and compete with each other in building an interpretations of events, in the theoretical elaboration and in activism. This orientation has its roots in the libertarian culture that inspired architecture and the use of the first Internet, reproducing an image of the Network and its actors as primarily linked to the hacker culture (Himanen, 2001). The result is a positive verdict of the new intellectuals' ability to renew the forms and procedures of contemporary democracy.

- b) **Techno-critical:** according to researchers belonging to this second interpretation, the Network is far from strengthening critical or even cognitive skills of social actors, as well as their possibilities for action, so it represents the instrument of a growing domain of this new digital capitalism, able to weaken critical ability (Formenti, 2008; Morozov, 2011; Carr, 2011). This position – linked to Habermas' scepticism on the Network's discursive and democratic potential – develops mainly in a more mature phase of the Internet's rise and, by emphasising manipulating aspects and acquisition processes of individual intelligences from the economic mechanisms of the Big Companies on the Network, it forecasts the disappearance of the intellectual figure in the contemporary world.
- c) **Techno-realistic:** those who belong to this third category stress the ambivalence that characterises the Network and the elimination of any distinction between the 'on-line' and 'off-line' of social life (Vecchi, 2015). This shows that although undeniable manipulative aspects are present in the web 2.0, at the same time the Network is a place where a critical debate may occur and it often leads to the collective activism of actors who take part: these new intellectuals, who have prominently appeared in Arab revolutions and protest movements that followed the 2008 economic crisis, are no longer a vanguard, but a subject among others within contemporary movement networks (Castells, 2012).

One of the main problems that cuts across these three approaches is the social basis of new intellectuals present on the Network as well as the processes through which they are (or allegedly are, according to different points of view) manipulated or neutralised. The debate on intellectuals cuts across the debate on knowledge workers, individuals defined by their high level of education, the use for communicative, innovative or creative purposes of expert knowledge within the economic process and the use of new media (personal computer, Internet, mobile phone, etc.) as working and relational tools (Antonelli and Vecchi, 2012; Butera, 2008; Formenti, 2008; Bologna and Banfi, 2010; Beradi 'Bifo', 2004). Knowledge workers are a new chaotic middle class, much more individualised and distinguished than the old middle class of intellectuals: several aspects fade such as the intermediate bureaucratic structures that had been the main employment for 'white collars', their similar tastes that had expanded the mass market and the ability to obtain corporate protections compared to pure market competition. Thus forming:

«an actual social magma. A constantly moving context in which someone goes up and someone goes down in the hierarchy of realisation and life potentialities, but always within a bordered and communal space of action [...]. Each group tends to stand out for more or less subtle distinctions, but without the ability to become a reference class» (Gaggi and Narduzzi, 2006: 9).

According to the techno-enthusiasts' outlook – similarly to the theories of the new class (see above) – knowledge workers are destined to become a new ruling class that uses digital technology to express and release, without political mediation, their critical and vindictive requests and to self-organise and mobilise themselves when their own interests are at stake (Florida, 2002). According to techno-pessimists, knowledge workers are an integral and integrated part of the political-economic system and thus unable to mobilise or critically oppose themselves to the dynamics of power (Morozov, 2011; 2014). Finally, for techno-realists, knowledge workers have a high potential for mobilization and criticism that however, tends to be irregular, fragile and inconsistent (Antonelli, 2013).

Conclusion: new challenges?

To sum up the analytical path examined so far, we can say that the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society and then on to a global society on the Network is characterised by the final decay of the intellectual figure as a cultural and political vanguard of society; of its figure of recognisable enlightened minority and the gradual appearance of a multitude of social actors with a high cultural capital, variously involved in the dynamics of power and counter-power. These dynamics exceed the bind between politics and culture that had represented the breeding ground of intellectuals during the modernity to transversely cross the public sphere, the civil society and the dynamics of communication. The sociology of intellectuals goes from mainly being focused on the 'intellectual' social actor to a wider object of analysis that examines the intellectual action and its effects; produces, spreads and uses knowledge as a critical feature as well as to support power.

The Network's increasing significance in the organisation of every contemporary social dynamic, offers a field for new investigations for this complex sociology of intellectual commitment and the instrument of unusual transformations of contemporary intellectuality. In particular, through a new, emerging bind between economic, communicative, cultural and political processes, through which intellectuals, as a political-cultural elite, gradually seem to become a swarm of actors whose actions mix and blend, producing an increasing overlap between the moment of criticism and debate and the moment of self-organised collective action. In this context, the relationship between new intellectuals on the Net and critical-emancipatory processes could face three limits that are, at the same time, areas of study and depth for sociological research:

- a) Impotence. In a world characterised by increasing communicative complexity and excess, the most important form of impotence that new intellectuals on the Network could experience is represented by the great deconstructive potential and by the great weakness in effectively supporting reconstruction processes of social and political structures that suffered criticism and protest. Two examples: in the so-called 'Arab Spring', intellectuality on the Network has played an essential role in determining the fall of authoritarian regimes in Tunisia and Egypt. However, not only was it unable to lead a completely

different model to success, but it mainly failed to deliver, if not in a small part, a new ruling class, especially in the second case. Even more disturbing is the result of ‘Occupy Wall Street’: in almost every case, neither the considerations nor the actions had any effect; the readjustment policies continued to follow the neo-liberal line and technocrats their interpreters, regained power. The impotence we’re talking about is therefore a political impotence, an inability to go from a ‘critical’ moment and of the movement to political forms.

- b) Favouritism. Intellectuals on the Network only speak to a small part of the population. Despite increasing cutting-edge multimedia and the interaction between old and new media, a large part of the population (the less educated and older individuals) is still largely unfamiliar with the Network. Another kind of favouritism comes from the fact that, very often, among knowledge workers (who are the basis of contemporary intellectuality) and manual workers (at all levels) there is very little communication and an even rarer exchange. The languages spoken are different and often incompatible. A third kind of favouritism comes from the excess of specialised knowledge and from an arrogant tone that many debates take on: so old habits are repeated and they end up distancing intellects and contributions useful to theoretical development and its distribution. Favouritism, in other words, weakens the hegemonic ability of new intellectuals.
- c) Populism. Just as the cultural knowledge and sophistication of intellectuals in the industrial society didn’t protect them from the totalitarian seductions of the twentieth century, neither did the widespread reflectiveness nor the sociability of the web 2.0, protect the new intellectuals from simplification, sensitivity, misinformation and charismatic seduction. Thus, intellectuals’ action on the Network may lead to a decline of the democratic idea, based on an image of an innocent and uncorrupted civil society – of which the intellectuals on the Network feel part of – and a political society home of every suffering.

Faced with these situations, sociology cannot and must not take on a simple analytical-descriptive mission – in accordance with the principles of new positivism – but, being an active part of the examined process and in line with the principles of public sociology (Burawoy, 2005) that

emphasize the social responsibility of the sociologist in promoting the rise of the actors' consciousness, it also offers on a regulatory level its contribution to the debate and action.

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