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Transnational actors or just spectators? How the media affect second generations' relationships with the country of origin? Egyptians in Italy.

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History of Egyptian revolution (in Egypt and abroad)[1]

2008

Creation of the Facebook group Egyptians of Italy (Egiziani d'Italia)

June 6, 2010

The blogger Khaled Said was beaten to death by police officers in a cybercafe in Alexandria, Egypt.

Creation of the Facebook group "We are all Khaled Said", by Wael Ghonim, Google Executive for the Middle East, based in Dubai.

December 2010

Creation of the Facebook group Egyptians in Turin (Egiziani a Torino).

January 1, 2011

Attack to the Coptic church in Alexandria, 21 deaths

January 25, 2011

"Day of revolt": protests across the country against Mubarak's regime.

First day of the occupation of Tahrir Square.

January 26, 2011

The Egyptian authorities blocked Twitter and Facebook.

January 28, 2011

"Friday of Rage", the revolution takes off across the country, with hundreds of deaths. In the evening the withdrawal of the police from the streets, imposition of curfew and deployment of the army in the city. Mubarak's first speech to the nation announcing the formation of a new government. Mohammed El Baradei, opposition

[1] Cfr. also Castells (2012) and Ferrero (2012).

leader and former director of the IAEA, arrives in Cairo to participate in the protests. Internet service providers and mobile operators (Link Egypt, Vodafone/Raya, Telecom Egypt and Etisalat Misr) received by the Egyptian authorities ordered to close. Ghonim mysteriously disappears, arrested by security officials.

29 to 31 January, 2011

Security vacuum in the city: popular committees created to protect homes and public buildings.

January 31, 2011

"March of millions": an estimated 200,000 to two million protesters in Tahrir Square

February 1, 2011

*First milioniya (*demonstration of millions of people). Mubarak's speech to the nation: he promises political reforms and declares that he will not be a candidate for the next presidential election

February 2, 2011

"Battle of the Camel". The battle lasts all day. Internet services are restored

February 6, 2011

The Sunday Mass is celebrated by the Egyptian Copts in Tahrir Square and it takes place under the protection of Muslim activists who stand around.

February 7, 2011

Ghonim is released and appears on Dream TV for an interview.

February 10, 2011

Mubarak announces to transfer the power to the Vice President Omar Suleiman. After the announcement the events increase in intensity.

February 11, 2011

"Friday of departure" at 18 Vice President Omar Suleiman announces Mubarak's resignation and the transfer of power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF).

February 13, 2011

The SCAF dissolves parliament and suspendes the Constitution.

March 9, 2011

Evacuation of Tahrir Square by the army

March 15, 2011

Official dissolution of the State Security

March 19, 2011

Constitutional referendum.

March 23, 2011

The Egyptian Council of Ministers passes a law that restricts strikes and demonstrations.

March 30, 2011

Proclamation of the temporary Constitutional Declaration.

April 1, 2011

Thousands of people are protesting in the day called for "Save the Revolution" asking the SCAF to remove the members of the old regime from positions of power who still hold.

April 8, 2011

In the "Friday of Cleaning" tens of thousands of protesters return to Tahrir Square to ask the SCAF to keep the promises made to the revolution.

April 9, 2011

Evacuation of Tahrir Square.

April 14, 2011

Replacing seventeen governors.

April 16, 2011

Dissolution of the National Democratic Party, the former ruling party.

May 24, 2011

It is announced that Mubarak and his sons Gamal and Alaa are on trial for the killing of anti-government protesters.

May 27, 2011

"Second Friday of Anger" protests are organized throughout the country. They are the largest after those that led to the resignation of Mubarak.

May 28, 2011

Mubarak is sentenced to a fine of $ 34 million to have disrupted communications during the revolution.

June 28, 2011

Dissolution of the local administrative councils. Clashes between security forces and protesters in Tahrir Square.

July 1, 2011

Demonstrations around the country for the "Friday of Retribution" give voice to dissatisfaction with the slow pace of the changes made by the SCAF in five months.

July 8, 2011

The following Friday increases the participation of the protesters. “Day of Determination” to demand reforms immediately and the trial of former officials of the Mubarak regime.

July 18, 2011

Government reshuffle.

July 20, 2011

Approval of a new law on parliamentary elections.

July 29, 2011

Islamist *Milioniya* in Tahrir Square.

August 1, 2011

Third evacuation of Tahrir Square by the army.

August 3, 2011

Television begins to broadcast the sessions of the trial of Mubarak and sons Alaa and Gamal, the former interior minister and other members of the government.

August 4, 2011

Dissolution of the Federation of Egyptian Trade Unions.

August 5, 2011

Appointment of 11 new governors.

August 14, 2011

Asmaa Mahfouz is arrested for criticizing the SCAF in a tweet, and for opposing the use of military courts to try civilians. Due to public pressure is released after 4 days.

August 19, 2011

Diplomatic crisis between Egypt and Israel for the killing of six Egyptian soldiers in Sinai by the Israeli Defense Forces.

September 9, 2011

Resumption of the protests in Tahrir Square. The protesters invade the Israeli Embassy. In response, the Israeli ambassador leaves Egypt. The SCAF restores the state of emergency.

September 11, 2011

Strengthening of emergency laws.

September 25, 2011

New amendment of the electoral law: proportional share increased to two-thirds.

September 27, 2011

Official announcement of the election date.

October 9, 2011

"Maspero massacre", a protest consists predominantly of Coptic Christians march to the headquarters of the state television (Maspero building). Protesters ask equality and action against the SCAF attacks on churches. It is estimated that 24 to 31 people, mostly Christians, died in the clashes.

11-24 October, 2011

Registration of candidates in parliamentary elections.

October 25, 2011

Judgment of an administrative tribunal that asserts the right to vote of Egyptians abroad.

November 2011

Registration to vote for Egyptians abroad.

November 18, 2011

"The Friday of one only request", *milioniya* organized by Islamists for a quick transfer of power to a civilian government.

November 19, 2011

Protesters again occupy Tahrir Square and the SCAF use tear gas against demonstrators.

November 20, 2011

Police raids aim to keep the square clear, but protesters return. Violent clashes: police use tear gas and shoot into the crowd.

November 24, 2011

Truce between protesters and Central Security Forces with interposition of the army.

November 28, 2011

First round of elections to the lower house of parliament. Clear victory of the Islamists.

5-6 December 2011

Ballots in the first round of elections for the lower house of parliament.

December 7, 2011

Official settlement of government Ganzouri.

December 8, 2011

Appointment of an advisory council to assist the Government and the Military Council.

December 14, 2011

Second round of elections to the lower house of parliament.

16-18 December, 2011

Violent clashes between protesters and military police in downtown Cairo.

December 28, 2011

Resumption of the trial of Mubarak

3-4 January 2012

Third round of elections to the lower house of parliament.

January 12, 2012

January 25 becomes national holiday: announcement of the official celebrations for the anniversary of the revolution.

January 25, 2012

Turin: celebration of the revolution at the Atc theatre, the participants are Copts and Muslims, first and second generations.

February 5, 2012

First meeting in Milan of the representatives of the Facebook Egyptians of Italy, Egyptians in Italy and Egyptians in Turin.

May 22, 2012

Second meeting of the representatives of the of the Facebook Egyptians of Italy, Egyptians in Italy and Egyptians in Turin. Participants: 80 Egyptians from Milan, Turin, Rome, Genoa, Brescia and other Italian cities.

January 25, 2013

Turin: two celebrations of the anniversaries of the revolution, one organized by the General Union of Egyptians in Italy and the other by the director of the Egyptian school, Il Nilo.

Milan: celebration organized by the General Union of Egyptians in Italy.

INTRODUCTION

Bassam is a young man, Italian citizen of Egyptian origin, who I interviewed more than a year ago for my research. Six months ago he returned to live in Egypt. A few weeks ago he tagged me on Facebook in a video that he commented using these words "The history of a revolution that will not end!!!"[1].

This thesis starts from here. From that revolution which is not over yet, in the words of its protagonists, in Italy and Egypt; from that Arab Spring that those who like to put labels easy have already started calling "Fall"; from that process of rediscover of Egyptian identity that brought new plans in the lives of the second generations and a desire to build an Egyptian community that in these years I have tried to observe and analyze.

But this research starts a couple of years before the so-called Arab Spring[2].

In 2009/2010, in fact, thanks to a Master dei Talenti scholarship of Fondazione CRT and with the support of the Forum Internazionale ed Europeo di Ricerche sull'Immigrazione (FIERI) I carried out a research that was then published (as research report) with the title: "Online integration"[3].

The objective of that research was to investigate the relationship existing in Italy between young people, native and of migrant origin, on one side and social networks on the other. The research showed that technological products consumption was increasing also among the immigrants' young children (Fiorio, Napolitano, Visconti 2007; Caneva 2008; Visconti e Napolitano 2009) and the use of ICTs, in particular social networks, has gradually become an integral part of the

[1] Actually the video was about "The Story of Rabaa". Rabaa (or Rabia) is the name of a Muslim saint after which the mosque in Cairo around which the sit-in pro-Morsi was held is named. After Morsi's removal, on JUly 3, 2013, supporters, mainly inclusive of the Muslim Brotherhood had in fact a sit-in in July 2013 around Rabia Al-Adawiya Mosque in Nasr City, Cairo. On August 14, the military decided to dissolve the sit-in by force after two weeks of negotiations, claiming the existence of weapons inside the sit-in. Until today, protests are being held in different places all over Egypt. The Rabia sign gradually became common in Egypt and the world.

[2] Arab Spring refers to the democratic uprisings that arose independently and spread across the Arab world in 2011. The movement originated in Tunisia in December 2010 and quickly took hold in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan. The use of the term the "Arab Spring" has since been criticized for being inaccurate and simplistic (cfr. Alhassen 2012).

[3] http://fieri.it/2011/03/25/digitali-transnazionali-giovani-migranti-e-seconde-generazioni-sul-web/

social capital of migrants. Moreover digital technologies offered to the second generations new resources enabling everyone to build up their identity, experimenting transnational practices and new forms of political participation.

My first idea for my Ph.D. project was to continue on this issue, focusing on the social network Facebook and trying to understand if the social networks could be considered virtual spaces for presenting political and social demands (Castells 2002), promoting new forms of participation and mobilization in the online and offline public space.

My Ph.D started in October 2010.

On December 17, 2010, in the Tunisian town of Sidi Bou Zid, Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire in protest against police's behaviour. News of his self-immolation spread through- out the town, sparking protests and clashes with police. Events of the Tunisian uprising in December 2010 led to similar revolts later, in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, and other Arab nations.

After Tunisia, in Egypt, the April 6 Youth movement[4], along with important social media allies, saw an opportunity to turn their annual but "little- noticed" protest on Egypt's Police Day (January 25) into a much larger demonstration.

Tens of thousands of people turned out, prompting the swift organization, by social media, of another protest, a Day of Rage, on January 28. The momentum of protest snowballed into seventeen days of massive demonstrations that ultimately forced the resignation of Mubarak on February 11.

I try to analyze the first reactions of the second-generations in Italy to what was happening in their country of origin in Egypt, but also in Tunisia, Libya, Morocco and, together with a colleague of mine at FIERI, we wrote and published a working paper entitled "Transnational actors or just spectators? Initial remarks on the role of diasporas in the North African transition" (Premazzi and Scali 2011). In the

[4] In 2007, a young activist named Ahmed Maher noticed that the Facebook page for the Egyptian football team had attracted 45,000 "fans" and wondered if a political movement could be formed on the network. In March 2008, Maher and colleague Israa Abdel-Fattah created a Facebook page called "April 6 Youth" which supported a planned industrial strike and promoted it through emails and viral "marketing". The page attracted 70,000 members in three weeks, turning the strike into a major protest that embarrassed the Mubarak regime. Group members subsequently used the page to share organizational tactics and other information in preparation for additional protests.

working paper, which was a first attempt to investigate the issue, we tried to sum up the many data and elements emerging from the international debate, and mainly focus on two aspects: the web as a form of organization and communication infrastructure, and the development of forms of "virtual" political transnationalism.

Moreover, at the end of 2011 I had the opportunity to work on the issue for the League of the Arab States and the International Organization for Migration (OIM - Cairo) writing the article "How do political changes in the country of origin affect transnational behaviors of migrants? The case of Egyptians in Turin during and after the Arab Spring" (Premazzi et al. 2012), based on some interviews of Egyptians in Turin. The paper aimed to explore the transnational behaviors of Egyptians first and second generations, with special attention to the relationship among the diaspora, strengthened as a result of the increasing use of new technologies, and the delicate and decisive political phase the country of origin was undergoing following the events of January 2011.

The outbreak of the Arab Spring and the importance of social networks in the revolts and the reactions of the first and second generations in Italy therefore made me think and focus my Ph.D. project on whether and how, through the social network Facebook, Egyptian second generations in Italy were watching and participating in the events in the country of origin.

Media (conceived as technologies as well as contents), as in Silverstone's (1994) concept of "double articulation", have a part in defining the formative experiences of a generation, not only because they are so deeply embedded in the everyday practices as to become a "natural" element of its social landscape and its common sense, but also because historical events, as well as cultural values and their symbolic forms, are often mediated by them. It is what's happened, for example, with the "Arab Spring", and the possibilities offered by ICT of being constantly connected with the countries of origin that has led the second generations to a more conscious reflection on their identity and their "being transnational".

Marfleet (2006) highlights that ethnic and diaspora groups may be at the forefront of political innovation and social change, as online diasporic public sphericules are permeated by local and global forces and conditions. This creates one of the many "heterogeneous dialogues" related to globalization (Appadurai 1996), and becomes

part of “a complex form of resistance and accommodation to transnational flows” (Howley 2005: 33). Moreover, the conditions created by the massive use of old and new media, constituting a factor of profound transformation of attitudes and relationships of transnational migrant communities, can be heavy intervening variables in the redefinition of present and future plans between the generations of fathers and sons.

Transnationalism, refers to the ability of many immigrants to be active in the country of origin as well in the host country, and to maintain social, economic, political and cultural relationships between the two contexts (Ambrosini 2008), This situation, now facilitated by the ICT, initially referred only to adult and recently settled migrants, contradicting the classical assimilation model. This idea was challenged by the work of Portes (2005) and Guarnizo (2003), who argued that often the most integrated immigrants are also protagonists in transnational practices.

Some predict that transnationalism may be important for the first generation, but not for their children (Kasinitz et al. 2002; Portes 2001; Rumbaut 2002). Portes (2001: 190), for example, argues that transnational activities are a “one-generation phenomenon”, but that the involvement of the immigrant generation can have lasting effects on the second generation. Rumbaut (2002: 89) finds that despite variability among different national-origin groups, transnational attachments among the second generation are quite few. Similarly, Kasinits et al. (2002: 119) find low levels of second-generation transnationalism among individuals in New York City. They emphasize that in each ethnic group there is a minority from which transnational ties continue to play a “regular, sustained, integral role in their lives” and therefore further researchis necessary. Others argue that the second generation retain some knowledge of their parents’ native language, traveling back and forth to their parents’ country of origin. Ties may continue but the magnitude and frequency is unclear (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004; Purkayastha 2005; Wolf 1997).

Wolf (2002), in particular, has used the concept of “emotional transnationalism”. In her research about second generation Phillipinos she found that although many children of immigrants may not pursue the kinds of transnational economic and emotional ties with relatives or friends in the countries of origin that their parents

pursue, they nevertheless live a kind of transnational life at the level of emotions, even if it is based in one geographical place. As they manage and inhabit multiple cultural and ideological zones, the resulting emotional transnationalism constantly juxtaposes what they do at home against what is done at Home.

The migrant, of first or second or even third generation, who tries to define their identity by addressing elements derived from the tradition of their ancestral homeland or (maybe together) with the new context of life, experiencing different influences, becomes a paradigmatic figure of the complex and variable shape bricolage through which incessantly subjective identities are defined in late modernity. At the same time, however, a problem arises: the concrete participation in transnational activities tends to decrease, in favor of a more general (and generic) consideration of some form of ancestral ethnic identity (Ambrosini 2008: 73).

The cultural affiliations and identifications, in fact, compare with the processes of self-definition where a reference to somewhere else may not match with transnational practices, except in the form of media consumption or exposure to events and issues of "home" through the relation with the coethnics. Where ethnicity ends as a subjective sense of belonging to a minority group and begins transnationalism as consideration of ties and social practices that transcend the borders connecting different locations is still a controversial point (Ambrosini 2008).

So the questions that oriented my study have been:

were Egyptian second generations transnational actors or just spectators of what was happening in their country of origin? What were the factors that have influenced second generation transnationalism? Which new transnational practices and strategies do they develop?

How digital media are interwoven in the (re)negotiation of affiliations and belongings?

I have organized the thesis in six chapters. The first two regards the theoretical and methodological framework, then, after a description of Egyptian emigration and of Egyptians in Italy I discuss the empirical results.

In the first Chapter I'm going to present the theoretical background of my research.

The Chapter is divided in two part. In the first part I consider the literature on

immigrants' children studies, presenting the main theoretical positions of international literature, and their focus on assimilation, ibridity or transnationalism; secondly I explain in which way some specific elements of these interpretations – and not only one of them – can be useful to explain the situation of Egyptian immigrants' children after the Arab Spring, focusing in particular on the relation between transnationalism and new technologies.

In the second part of the Chapter I consider the theme of community, which is strictly related in my research to the discussion about transnationalism, diaspora communities and new technologies. Indeed, my aim was to understand the process by which new forms of communities can be set up by Egyptian second-generations towards the everyday use of ICT technologies. I discuss the theoretical articulation of the concept of community, considering mainly the debate around online communities and transnational communities.

In the second Chapter I discuss the reasons for the choose of studying transnational practices of Egyptian second generations starting from the Arab Spring. Then I discuss the choice of using an integrated methodology, between online and offline, but also using different methods of investigation (participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus group)[5]. The idea of studying transnational behavior of Egyptian second (and first) generations, between online and offline, their relations with Egypt, their attempts to create community, in fact, could not be studied without considering them also as digital natives (Prensky 2001; Palfrey and Gasser 2009). Indeed, as the diffusion of the Internet (and mobile technology) is becoming more pervasive in social life, so is the need for social scientists to include virtual methods, digitized or natively digital, in their methodological toolboxes. Moreover to understand the internal dynamics of a community like the Egyptian required an in-depth ethnography to try to enter and begin to understand the research field before carrying out interviews. This was so carried out through participant

[5] Thanks to the opportunity of spending a research period (October and November 2012) at the Utrecht University, Department of Media and Culture Studies, where they carried out the project "Wired Up. Digital media as innovative socialization practices for migrant youth", an interdisciplinary research program focused on how new digital media practices involving the Internet impact on the lives, identities, learning and socialization of migrant youth, I had the opportunity to deepen the new conceptual tools and innovative methodological approach they developed to monitor, evaluate and assess the socio-cultural specificities of the interaction between migrant youth and digital media.

observation online of the Egyptian Facebook groups and offline at some meetings as well as attendance at places which were significant for the Egyptian community.

The third Chapter details the various phases of Egyptian emigration. Over the last decades Egyptians have emigrated very differing reasons. Two main destinations have emerged, over the years, for Egyptian migrants: Arab Gulf countries (Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya) and the industrialized countries like Australia, Canada, the United States, and European countries, like Italy, France and the United Kingdom (IOM 2010; Cortese 2010).

The main destinations affect the type of migration experience that can be classified as temporary or permanent migration. According to Nasser (2011), the distinction is simply a geographical one, with all migrants to Arab states defined as temporary, even though some have been there many years. This is also related to the labour migration regime in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, which does not allow permanent settlement or citizenship status for labour migrants, irrespective of how long they stayed in the country. On the other hand, all migrants to Europe, North America or Australia are defined as permanent, including those recently arrived.

Even if there are significantly less Egyptians in Europe than in North America, the positive trend in the flow of Egyptian migrant workers has continued to swell the respective communities (Fincati 2007).

Europe is the destination for a constant flow of illegal immigrants. This flow brings young people with little or no qualifications, as well as many recent graduates who have outstayed their tourist visas (Zohry 2006). Among European countries in particular, Italy is the most important European destination.

So the focus of the Chapter shifts then to Egyptian migration to Europe and Italy (in particular Rome, Milan and Turin), focusing on socio-demographic features and characteristics of the socio-economic integration of this group in the country. The Chapter ends with an analysis of Egypt's relationship with Egyptians abroad.

In the following Chapter I analyze the diffusion and use of ICT among Egyptians in the country of origin and destination. Moreover I consider ICT's impact on one or more social groups in the generational context. This second analytical component is intended to offer ways of reflecting on that which divides and that which enables

different generations of immigrants to meet. Analysis will focus on an unpublished and relevant theme regarding the second generation's behavior to the first in the role of cross-border information and communication gatekeepers. Ultimately it was not possible to ignore how the revolution and its digital dimension provoked Egyptians getting involved in Italy and rediscovering of their identity. I will compare the range of online connection possibilities amongst equals in the homeland and abroad on the one hand, and how digital activism wanes offline. The "Egyptian situation" actually offers a series of general prompts on how immigrants' traditional political participation processes, self-perception and identity are put to the test.

In the first part of chapter Five I describe the role of Internet and socials network particularly during the Arab Spring in Egypt, but not only, - I will provide also a description of some aspects of the Tunisian revolution, interesting for the similarities with the Egyptian one - and the relationship among activists on the field and the diasporas abroad. In doing this I will focus above all on two aspects: the web as a form of organisation and communication, and the development of forms of "virtual" political transnationalism.

The renewed pride in being Egyptian, together with the activism and the renewed attention and participation to what was happening in the country of origin, have also brought to new reflections on present and future plans of first and second generations that have been influencing the intentions of return and the development of forms of "pendulum migration" among first and the second generations.

The development of new practices and forms of transnational political participation has led to the emergence, among Egyptians in Italy, of a discourse and a reflection, hitherto absent, on being a community. The activism that followed the development of the Arab Spring, and the renewed pride in being Egyptians led the second generation to try to build up a community. Observation of this process has been the goal of this research and it is described in Chapter six. The study was particularly interesting because studies carried out so far (Ambrosini and Schellenbaum 1994; Martinelli, D'Ottavi, Valeri 1997; Ambrosini and Abbatecola 2002) described Egyptian community as a "non-community". Facebook groups are configured as the place where the discourse about being a community was articulated, especially since this was led by the second generation. Facebook groups have in fact fostered

renewed pride in being Egyptian and facilitated the emotional participation in what was happening in Tahrir Square and, in the months following the revolution, they were places for confrontation (and sometimes conflict) that then went offline.

CHAPTER ONE

Theoretical Framework

In this Chapter I'm going to present the theoretical background of my research.

The Chapter is divided in two part. In the first part I consider the literature on immigrants' children studies, presenting the main theoretical positions of international literature, and their focus on assimilation, ibridity or transnationalism; secondly I explain in which way some specific elements of these interpretations – and not only one of them – can be useful to explain the situation of Egyptian immigrants' children after the Arab Spring, focusing in particular on the relation between transnationalism and new technologies.

In the second part of the Chapter I consider the theme of community, which is strictly related in my research to the discussion about transnationalism, diaspora communities and new technologies. Indeed, my aim was to understand the process by which new forms of communities can be set up by Egyptian second-generations towards the everyday use of ICT technologies. I discuss the theoretical articulation of the concept of community, considering mainly the debate around online communities and transnational communities.

1. The second generation

1.1. Use of the term "second generations"

The children of international migrants are often called "second-generation" migrants, although they are not migrants themselves. It is clear that the definition of "immigrant", in its traditional meaning of "person in movement, seeking work, in one or another country" is not fully applicable either to minors joining their parents or children born in the host country (Ricucci 2006).

Figure 1. Second-generation migrants: Rumbaut (1994) classification

	Age at migration			
Birthplace	14-18	6-14	3-6	<3
Abroad	Generation 1.25	Generation 1.5	Generation 1.75	Generation 2.0
Immigration country	Generation 2.0			

Figure 1 outlines the definitions used in literature (Rumbaut 1994) to identify the various generations of minors. Two dimensions are crucial: the place of birth, and the age of arrival in the host country. Generally, the distinction between the first and the second generation is determined by birthplace: those born in the new adopted country belong to the second generation. Those who left their home country before the age of 3 are also currently included in this category[6].

Until the mid-1970, the principal criteria for predicting the future of migrants' children in the destination country were the assimilation hypothesis and the hypothesis of deviant behavior (Bosisio et al. 2005; Colombo 2010). In short, studies considered these children destined to full integration in the new society, taking on its values, behaviors and aspirations; otherwise children were destined to subsist in a marginal dimension, remaining attached to their communities' traditions, incompatible to full insertion in modern society (Child 1943; Gordon 1964).

[6] Considering the context of the new European receiving countries (Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal), we can speak of a second generation, but we also need to focus attention on what Rumbaut (1994) calls generation "1.5". The majority of foreign minors in these countries came for family reunions, either *de facto* or *de jure*. The discriminating variable is age of migration. Minors who experience primary socialization in the former country and migrate before reaching school age are presumably comparable to the second generation, and are often defined as such (Manco 1999). Those who arrive at school going age, and have been at least partially socialized, at least in part, in the country of origin, can be regarded as being in the middle of a path – neither linear nor impervious – that leads from parents to peers, either native or from the same country of origin, but born in the adopted country (Zhou 1997). In the present research and in the rest of the thesis I have therefore considered and referred to as the "second generation", the young of the generation 2.0, 1.75 and 1.5.

Significant changes in recent decades have made these interpretations less plausible. Children of migrants seem to be neither tied to an inevitable destiny, nor to completely merge with the natives, thereby abandoning their origins, nor creating closed enclaves, tied to their parents' traditions and blind to the society in which they are now living (Bosisio et al. 2005; Colombo 2010).

More recent studies focus on young migrant children's complex integration processes from two perspectives: one is that of segmented assimilation (Portes 1996; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes et al. 2009), the other is that of transnationalism (Glick Schiller et al. 1992; Levitt and Waters 2002; Levitt 2009).

1.2. The study of second generations. US, European and Italian perspectives

The study of second generations is a crucial issue both in contemporary US and European research on the integration of immigrants. Obviously the US has a long history of immigration, which accounts for its developed and consolidated literature on social inclusion and adjustment for children of immigrants. Approaches and concepts elaborated in the American context have clearly influenced the later European (and Italian) debate (Ricucci 2006).

1.2.1. US perspective and the debate around assimilation

The assimilation theory was elaborated in the 1920s by the Chicago School. It was based on the assumption that with the passing of the generations, immigrants would melt into society, losing their original cultural and ethnic identities (Park 1925).

As explained by Levitt and Waters (2002), the "straight-line" model of assimilation was developed to explain the experiences of white ethnic groups of European origin. This model suggests that the second generation learns an immigrant culture in school, from peer groups and from the mass media. They internalize American culture and identity, and reject their parents' culture and identity. These competing allegiances are processed by totally rejecting the immigrant culture, and ultimately forging an ethnic culture that combines the American and immigrant social systems. Whatever the psychic toll of this shedding of cultural identity for the

immigrant's third- and fourth-generation descendants, assimilation has been rewarded with substantial upward mobility (Levitt and Waters 2002).

As mentioned above, this description proved generally accurate for immigrant groups of European origin. Even as researchers have noted differences in the pace of change across ethnic groups, they have determined that the progress of once-stigmatized immigrants such as Greeks, Slavs, Irish, and Italians merits Greeley's (1976) description as an "ethnic miracle". They have found that time spent in the United States boosts chaces of success, as immigrants acquire the language skills, education and general cultural knowledge needed to compete with native-born white Americans. Second-generation ethnic Americans may even surpass native-born Americans because of the selectivity of the immigrant generation, and the drive and desire to achieve which they instill in their children (Levitt and Waters 2002).

However, the presumed straight-line assimilation of second generations, namely the positive relationship between acculturation and social inclusion, is questioned by Gans' analysis (1992, 1996) of post-1965 second-generation immigrants. Ricucci (2010) shows that the civil rights movement in the USA at the end of the 1960s, along with the catering for diversity debate, soon highlighted the shortcomings in the melting pot model, underlining the system's adverse features: segregation, discrimination and subordination.

Hence, according to Gans (1992, 1996), the social identity of second generations is likely to be negatively affected by structural conditions of economic disadvantage (lower social status of their families, urban segregation, etc.) and discrimination (access to schools, jobs, etc.).

Gans (1992) outlined several scenarios in which children of the new immigrants could do worse than their parents or society as a whole. Gans speculated that second-generation immigrants who are restricted to poor inner-city schools, bad jobs, and shrinking economic niches will experience downward mobility (Levitt and Waters 2002).

Gans, also, points out that achieving a high level of acculturation in the host society does not necessarily entail social mobility. On the contrary, associating with native youngsters, and thereby sharing similar attitudes and aspirations in terms of careers

and social status, can adversely discriminate in accessing sought-after professions and social positions. Moreover, second generations do not share the same goals as their parents, namely to save as much money as possible to send back home, and they are not keen to take up the same unqualified and socially inferior jobs. Identification with illegal and marginal groups may provide an alternative source of social recognition, especially for adolescents looking for acceptance amongst peers.

Gans (2010) recently pointed out that ethnicity has turned into symbolic ethnicity, an ethnicity of last resort, which could persist for generations but which, above all for third and fourth generation "ethnics" (who are socially well-integrated in the society) tends to become lighter and to assume different forms.

The interpretation of Gans has been partially criticized by Portes, McLeod and Parker (1978); for them, the failure of the assimilationist paradigm suggests that "immigrants are a too distinct social category to be entirely subsumed under that of native-born ethnic Americans. The problems, situations and orientations of newly arrived immigrants represent a unique area of concern. In contrast to the case of ethnic minorities, they are also decisively influenced by events outside the US" (Portes et al. 1978: 242).

Using ethnographic case studies and a survey of second-generation schoolchildren in Miami and San Diego, Portes and Zhou (1993) argued that the children of post-1965 immigrants assimilated into different segments of society, with diverging attitudes towards schooling and different socioeconomic outcomes. The mode of incorporation of the first generation endowed the second generation with differing amounts of cultural and social capital in the form of jobs, networks, and values, exposing them to different opportunities and exterting pulls on their allegiances.

The position of Portes and his collaborators remains focused on the theme of assimilation, but claims that assimilation processes are not uniform and can follow different patterns.

The theory of segmented assimilation proposes three patterns of adaptation for contemporary migrants and their children. One path involves increasing acculturation and subsequent integration into the white middle class (straight-line assimilation). A second path involves rapid economic advancement through the preservation of unique ethnic traits (segmented assimilation) (Zhou 1999). In

general, young people from close-knit families, equipped with high levels of human capital, and with close ties to ethnic communities, are able to develop a "selective acculturation" – that is, to adopt the values, behavior and language of the society in which they now live, without losing the key elements of their parents' culture. Portes, Fernàndez-Kelly and Haller (2005), with an explicit reference to the concept of "closure" of Coleman (1988), speak of "community social capital", depending more on the density of the internal ties than on economic or occupational success of an immigrant group.

This enables them to deal with an upwardly mobile society, and to better handle discrimination and racism. The relationship with their parents' communities offers easy access to a solid support network when needed, a protected enclave that offers favorable career opportunities. Sharing family expectations, as well as the new community's symbolic and moral codes, function as guidelines and as motivational spurs in maintaining their autonomy and reaching their goals[7]. In this situation, ethnicity is reinforced and takes on immediate relevance. It facilitates and protects, motivates and offers extra opportunities.

Instead, the third and last pattern predicts downward mobility and incorporation into the underclass (downward assimilation).

The first two categories are able to achieve upward mobility while the third one tends to adopt a negative attitude towards schooling, and migrants remain trapped in urban poverty. This last group brings to mind the theory of ethnic competition, whereby individuals resist acculturation, instead maintaining their separate ethnic identities, behaviours, beliefs, practices and values (Ricucci 2006).

In spite of the success of segmented assimilation theory as mainstream interpretation of integration processes of immigrants' children, other empirical researches on the same populations have shown different pathways. For example, there are ethnographic studies that maintain that children of voluntary migrants can

[7] The theory of "segmented assimilation" suggests also that socio- economic advancement among the Asian second generation often takes place because they uphold the traditions and values of the immigrant community (Crul and Schneider 2013). The Sikh children, like the Central American children, saw success in school not as an avenue for individual mobility but reather as a way to bring honor and success to their families (Levitt and Waters 2002), Zhou and Bankston (1998) found that the social capital of a Vietnamese community protected its children against lowered educational performance in inner-city schools.

resist mainstream American culture while not embracing an oppositional minority culture. Suárez-Orozco's (1987) study found that Central American immigrant schoolchildren contrasted their US experiences with their experiences at home, and so developed an "immigrant attitude towards school that helped them to do well".

A major study of the second generation in New York even speaks of a "second generation advantage" (Kasinitz et al. 2008). Segmented assimilation theory show Americanization to be a possible path for upward mobility among Asian groups. Children of parents resisting Americanization may undergo "classical assimilation" once they reach adulthood and access the middle class.

On this matter Portes claims that: "The purpose of selective acculturation - in fact – is not the perpetuation of the immigrant community, but rather, the use of social capital to improve the opportunities of the children of immigrants with regard to educational and professional success in the receiving society" (Portes 2004: 163). This mode of relation with the host society, accessible, also to families that do not have a high human capital, would help to keep open channels of communication between the generations, to keep young people linked to a community, with the material and moral resources which may originate, to provide them with cognitive references that can guide them in the integration processes (Portes and Rumbaut 2005: 350).

The community social capital and the familiar communion also reinforce each other, with a benefit for the results obtained by the second generation. So integration in the receiving societies and conservation of "ethnic" references do not necessarily opposed to each other. Migratory networks are not inevitably a constraint or a burden that drags towards the past, but they can be a resource for individuals engaged in complex processes of redefinition of cultural identity, in the receiving societies. For the second generation, the choice for a mixed identity is one of the possible choices and an outcome of the socialization processes in which ethnic networks are involved (Ambrosini 2008).

Embeddedness in ethnic communities can have positive effects on the performance of migrant children. On the other hand, ethnic communities can also have a negative impact, when families or the ethnic group expect children to help in the family business instead of completing higher education, for example (Ricucci

2006). The role of the family's social capital can be ambiguous in this way, with the above example favoring a process of "downward assimilation" (Portes 1996).

A number of studies (cf. Portes 1984, 1996; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Portes and Zhou 1993 and Portes and Rumbaut (2001), using data drawn from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS)) have confirmed the hypothesis of the segmented assimilation theory across various immigrant groups: according to this theory, rapid integration and acceptance into the American mainstream represent just one possible alternative.

Alternative paths of adaptation are possible, depending on numerous factors. The most decisive of these are: 1) the history of the first generation for each relevant group; 2) the level of acculturation among parents and children; 3) the difficulties, both economic and cultural, faced by second-generation young people in their quest for successful adaptation; 4) the family and community resources available for tackling these difficulties.

Hence, family networks and social capital are among the factors to be considered when analysing second generations' identity (Zhou 1997, 2001). The development and experiences of immigrant children can not be understood without considering the family background. Family structures and dynamics are key factors that may have an impact on children's well-being, including such considerations as whether the family unit is headed by one parent or two, how many members of the family work, the role of older siblings in helping younger children, children's roles in serving as a useful link between their parents and the host society (Ricucci 2006).

1.2.2. The perspective of hyphen

Current research (Aparicio 2007; Baldassar and Pesman 2005; Butcher 2004; Colombo et al. 2009; Kasinitz et al. 2008; Lee and Bean 2004; Zèphir 2001; Zhou and Xiong 2005) has shown how children of migrants tend to take on various, multifaceted identities, who are interested in their parents' culture, social networks and traditions, as well as being active in the society in which they live and in which they plan their futures. Hyphenated ethnic self-identity (Rumbaut 1994; Portes and

MacLeod 1996; Portes and Hao 1998; Portes 2011; Ambrosini 2011) is the most common way for children of migrants to present and descrive themselves, marking a different way of participating in and being part of the society in which they live.

This hyphenated identification is open to interpretation. Some researchers view the increasing willingness to clearly identify themselves this way, in the society in which they live as well as in their parents' community, as a sign of the spreading symbolic use of ethnicity (Gans 1979, 1997).

Colombo (2010) shows that their enduring identification with their parents' ethnic group is purely from a purely cultural perspective. Generally it is not based on the permanence of networks and truly ethnic organizations with which they closely associate themselves. It concerns expressive forms which demand recognition of a specific identity: a means of self improvement and social inclusion rather than openly withdrawing from society and isolating themselves. Often, expressing a specific ethnic difference is a sign of cultural assimilation because symbolic ethnicity, rather than mechanically taking on the family's original cultural aspects, may endorse an affinity to the host country's cultural traditions. Migrants are limited to embellishing these traditions so that they resemble different ones. Hyphenated identity has nuances of a weak and willing ethnic group, inconsistent and strongly subjective, based on visible but unproblematic symbols. They rarely if ever get involved, and are indiscriminate in their relations with others[8].

Another possible result, further complicated after 9/11, highlights that the tendency to express a certain affinity can also lead to a "reactive" identity, influenced by external prejudices rather than explicit personal choices (Kibria 2002; Purkayastha 2005). Middle-class young people in particular, with elevated cultural capital, who simply wish to be "integrated" and considered equals among their peers, are confronted with prejudice and racism. They are forced to redefine ethnic differences imposed on them. Colombo (2010) maintains that the evaluation of ethnic affinity does not come from a habitus, familiar socialization between cultures or from community networks, with the origin country as the point of reference. It is

[8] After the Arab Sping, young Egyptians reassessed or rediscovered their Italian-Egyptian identity. They showed and shared signs of "Egyptianness" both online and offline. This thesis aims to show how evaluating their own hyphenated identity materializes in individual and communal transnational actions and practices.

the result of a following awareness, which develops only in adolescence. Children of immigrants experience discrimination and stereotypes during their studies and professional training, becoming aware that others see them as being "different". They make the most of the inferiority with which they are labeled, and which is used as an excuse for discrimination, using it in an attempt to overcome their marginalization. Colombo (201: 29) maintains that "Hyphenated identification highlights a reaction to an "invisible barrier" which many children of immigrants perceive, which blocks them from fully integrating and being active in the society in which they are now living".

1.2.3. Transnationalism

Lastly, transnationalism views the spread of hyphenated identification as evidence of spreading transnational social fields and activities (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton-Blanc 1994; Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004). Hyphenated identification could describe the real condition of today's migrants, tied to multiple loyalties which extend beyond a specific place or community. The "bifocality" of everyday migrants' lives (Vertovec 2004), of lives spent "here and there", based on information, interests and emotional relationships which go beyond the nation state of physical locations (Colombo 2010). The growing trend of hyphenated identification marks the decline of a "methodological nationalism" (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004), which implies looking at the nation state as a necessary and suitable context for understanding social life.

Transnational living (Guarnizo 2003) shows how these children, like their parents, can choose to create and maintain relationships, yes feel anchored to both sides. Technology helps by enabling a so-called web transnationalism that goes beyond the real possibilities of detaching themselves from a life anchored to the daily realities (Ricucci 2010).

Young migrants' descendants are, like their native counterparts, increasingly prosumers (Tapscott and Williams 2006), active producers/consumers of digital contents, and *netizens* (Brettel 2008), digital citizens, who find a public space, a

citizenship place in the web (Mazzoli 2009). Websites, in fact, have become spaces of inclusion, participation and political activism, that create a sense of belonging (Jansson 2009) as well as offering visibility for many movements (Castells 2007) and minority groups.

The personal homepages hosted in social network sites are set up by young people as virtual spaces for consumption, production and publishing content (Caneva 2008; Domaneschi 2010). They are new platforms, not only "to be" but also "to act" and to present political and social demands (Castells 2002), promoting new forms of participation and mobilization in the countries of origin and destination, in the online and offline public spaces (somewhat unlike their parents).

Levitt (2001) argues, therefore, that transnational practices and assimilation are not diametrically opposed to one another. Depending on their socioeconomic characteristics immigrants and their children combine incorporation and transnational strategies in different ways at different stages of their lives. They use these to construct their identities, pursue economic mobility and make political claims in their home and host country, or in both.

1.2.4. European perspective

Research on second-generation groups in Europe has drawn upon both the new and the segmented assimilation theory to help describe the integration and mobility patterns of the European second generation (Crul and Vermeulen 2003, 2006). Particular focus has been placed on the two alternative "modes of incorporation": downward assimilation, and upward mobility through ethnic cohesion. In some ways, this reflects the growing disparity between immigrant youth, on the one hand, who are performing well and, on the other, the relatively high numbers dropping out of school and failing to find secure employment. The relevance of structural factors in accounting for second generations' social integration and acculturation has been particularly emphasised in Europe, where researchers have been particularly concerned with the role played by host country institutions, such as the school system and the labour market (Gilborn and Gipps 1996; Gilborn and Safia

Mirza 2000).

According to Rea, Wrench and Ouali (1999), perceived discrimination accounts for negative attitudes of second and third generations in many European countries (Ricucci 2006). According to French researchers like Touraine (1991) and Roy (1991), the dissociation between acculturation in the French value system and socioeconomic exclusion is at the basis of foreign youths' rediscovery or reinvention of religious and ethnic identities. By defining themselves "Muslims" or "Arabs", young Algerians living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods create an alternative, positive identity, contradicting that of the host society which excludes them from equal opportunity (Ambrosini and Molina 2004; Ricucci 2006). According to Roy (1991: 41), "Ethnicity is not a point of departure, but the result of the non-integration and deconstruction of the community of origin".

Similarly, the emergence of groups or individuals enticed by religious ideologies in the UK has been regarded as a reaction to prejudices, discriminations and differential treatment in their society: lower-paid jobs, poor suburban housing, discrimination in schooling and in the labour market (Modood 2004; Leiken 2005). In this context, young people react to unequal treatment and, in many cases, to the challenge of pluralism and secularism in Europe, by further reinforcing their common religious and ethnic identities (Ricucci 2006).

The role played by institutions in integrating or in excluding second generations has been analysed in-depth by the EFFNATIS (Effectiveness of National Integration Strategies towards Second Generation Migrant Youth) project. This considered the situations of young people of foreign origins in Germany, France, UK, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Switzerland and Spain, pointing out different institutional mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion of children of international immigrants (CIM).

Other researchers have attempted to explore discrimination and racial/ethnic prejudice in greater depth. As mentioned above, asserting ethnicity can represent a reactive move to confront discrimination. Yet, according to Berry's studies on acculturation (1994, 1999), the experience of exclusion is just one side of the story. In-group relationships also have to be taken into account.

Social psychologist Berry is reputed for his theoretical model of the different

"acculturation strategies" that a migrant person may adopt when confronted with a new sociocultural context in order to avoid, or at least cope with, the complexity of culture shock. This theoretical model is primarily based on the assumption that these attitudinal and behavioral strategies depend on two main principles: cultural maintenance and contact-participation in the destination society. Cultural maintenance refers to how much individuals value and wish to maintain their cultural identity, and to continue interacting with their culture/country of origin. Contact-participation refers to how much they value and seek contacts outside their own in-group, trying to participate in the daily life of the new society, and to adopt its cultural traits.

According to these two principles, Berry (1994, 1999) identified four possible continuous, not exclusive, acculturation strategies: from separation (preferable for maintaining one's own ethnic identity) to integration (identification with the majority group) (Ricucci 2006). These are flexible, non-preset attitudes, that can be identified by various indicators, namely, the presence of a strong ethnic community, the family's socioeconomic background, and its migratory history. In other terms, the individual is likely to switch from one identity to the other, according to the different contexts faced and the roles they are required to perform.

Figure 2 Berry's acculturation strategies

	Cultural Maintenance = Yes	Cultural Maintenance = No
Contact Participation = Yes	Integration/Biculturalism	Assimilation
Contact Participation = No	Segregation/Separation	Marginalization

In this way, the manner in which an acculturation process is experienced and particularly the way in which people deal with culture shock, environment change and sense of loss, etc., may vary among cultural groups and contexts, even among individuals within the same cultural group, and it may consequently influence in several different forms the way in which immigrants perform into the host society. Comparative studies on acculturation processes have been performed with different

cultural groups in one host society, and also with one cultural group in different host societies. For example, different intergenerational acculturation patterns of Hispanic groups have been widely analyzed in the United States (Knight and Kagan 1977; Marin et.al 1987; Negy and Woods 1992; Rodriguez and Kosloski 1998); while Turkish acculturation processes have been followed in different host societies such as The Netherlands, Germany and Belgium (cf. TIES - The Integration of the European Second Generation - project).

The bidimensional model of acculturation allows for a distinction between private acculturation and communal/public acculturation, a distinction that was not present in the classical, segmented models. Phalet, Lotringen and Entzinger (2000) found that Dutch migrant youths preferred strategies that favoured cultural maintenance in the private domain (at home), and direct contact with Dutch cultures outside the home. Similarly, Turkish-Dutch people chose integration in the public domain and separation in private domains (Arends-Toth and Van de Vijver 2003). However, since second-generation immigrants have not experienced heritage culture directly but through their parents and other migrants, the process of acculturation may affect parents and children in different ways (Ricucci 2006). The discrepancies between parents and children in their attitudes toward the host culture and their acceptance of the host culture's values can be a source of potential conflict within immigrant families (Pfafferott and Brown 2006) possibly affecting adolescents' psychological well-being.

Both US and European approaches to the study of second generations and ethnic minority adolescents appear to positively concur in maintaining some features of the culture of origin. In Putnam's terms (2007), this may represent *bonding social capital* upon which to build more secure and positive relations with the host society, i.e. crucial *bridging social capital*. Yet this approach is limited by taking only the host society as the reference point for second generations' identity building processes. Community relations are regarded as relevant insofar as they sustain and reinforce acculturation processes and social mobility in the country of residence.

1.2.5. Italian context and perspective

The number of immigrant minors in Italy increased especially among those groups who arrived at the end of the 1970s. The proportion of immigrant minors, 22% of foreign population, is higher in the North and reaches levels of between 24% and 27% in various provinces of the Lombardy region (Istat 2012). The presence of immigrant minors in Italy has been an established fact of life for at least 15 years, highlighting the stabilizing character of migratory flows towards the country: a rapid evolution which affected first schools and then society as a whole.

In the 1990s, early publications focused on second generation foreign minors in Italy, defined as "colored but invisible" (Cie 1994). This refers especially to the legislative vacuum regarding their legal conditions, both in terms of the lack of means (and policies) ensuring integration into the education system, learning the language and their handling of the migratory process (Ricucci 2010). A tentative start was made to prepare for the coming second generations, using the experience garnered from the integration process seen in earlier migratory chains from Cape Verde, Somalia, Eritrea, Egypt (Landuzzi, Tarozzi and Treossi 1995). In 1997 the Centro nazionale di docuemntazione e analisi per l'infanzia e l'adolescenza published the book "A face or a mask? The ways to building identity, where there was a chapter on ethnic identity. It was more a presentation of the topic rather than and analysis of immigrant minors' experiences in Italy. The studies soon appeared, confirming growing attention surrounding a rapidly spreading phenomenon. In this setting, there are studies which place the Italian experience in a broader context (Ambrosini and Molina 2004; Queirolo Palmas 2005, 2006; Bosisio et al. 2005; Besozzi 2008; Ricucci 2010) as well as research focusing on the local specifics, such as that of Giovannini and Queirolo Palmas (2002) involving nine Italian cities (Arezzo, Bari, Brescia, Bologna, Genoa, Modena, Padua, Ravenna and Turin). There was the study led by Della Zuanna analyzing paths taken by foreing junior high school students in 10 Italian regions (Veneto, Lombardy, Emilia Romagna, Tuscany, Marche, Lazio, Campania, Puglia, Calabria, Sicily), as well as their results and expectations.

Exploring identities regarding Italy or the home country, as well as familiarity, which can be interpreted as "feeling at home in Italy", are themes with roots that can be traced back to the end of the 1990s (Besozzi 1999; Favaro and Napoli 2002; Andall 2002).

Identities can also be expressed through partnership and membership, as addressed in Frisina's publication (2007) which discusses the association "Young Muslims in Italy". In the 2000s, and because of happenings in the USA and Europe, transnationalism started to catch researchers' attention. Establishing even symbolic contacts with the home territories and cultures is a new development in establishing the new generation's identity and sense of belonging. Rediscovering origins and getting reacquainted with traditions and family connections help in understanding the needs of the local, global, ethnic and cosmopolitan communities, encouraging new generations to explore new identities. These explorations can promote spontaneous and active rediscovery of origins, language and culture, so the new generation can or withdraw from it all, continue exploring, or mix in other characteristics (Ricucci 2010) to create a new transnational custom.

Such structural ties will be ready to be revitalized when and if historical circumstances dictate (Kasinitz et al. 2002), as was the case for the Arab spring.

1.3. Transnationalism and new technologies

In the last decade many scholars have come to acknowledge that international migration can no longer be seen as a one-way process (Kasinitz et al. 2002). Events, communities, and lives, are generally recognized as being increasingly linked across borders. Clearly, developments in travel and in communication technologies are significant in this process. Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (1999) define transnational practices as the economic, political and sociocultural occupations and activities that require regular long-term contacts across borders for their success, while Portes (2011: 464) describes them as "those that take place on a recurrent basis across national borders and that require a regular and significant

commitment of time by participants". Clearly, not all migrants are engaged in transnational practices.

Anthropologists (Basch, Glick-Schiller and Szanton-Blanc 1994: 6) used "transnationalism" to describe the "process by which transmigrants, through their daily activities, forge and sustain multi-stranded social, economic and political relations that link their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders". They were interested in the ways in which newly emerging transnational public spheres replace strictly bound, geographically confined communities to become a space where political claims can be made (Gupta and Ferguson 1997).

Levitt (2009) has called attention to the cultural processes through which the identity of the social groups in emigration is interpreted, renegotiated, sometimes recreated. Cultural and social practices, both in the country of origin and in the host country, are re-elaborated and mixed to create new identities and establish group borders more or less stable or permeable (Ambrosini 2008).

Mass media such as the Internet and satellite TV, play a crucial and ambiguous role in this regard, favoring richer forms of "global imagination" (Giulianotti and Robertson 2006: 174): they provide to migrant groups an "electronic proximity" with their culture of origin and, thereby, they produce social and informational resources to create deterritorialized "community of sentiment" (Appadurai 1996).

With telephone connections, fax machines, the Internet, cellphones, and air travel being increasingly accessible even to working-class populations, if not the poorest migrants, they can now participate in the social and political life of their communities of origin while staying in touch with local networks, even when physically thousands of miles away (Kasinitz et al. 2002).

In his book *Modernity at Large*, Arjun Appadurai (1996) recognized that there are two forces that have changed the world and "have altered the ways imagination operates", allowing the creation of new worlds: mass migration and electronic mediation. These two pillars are also in constant "flux". The circulation of people and digitally mediatised content proceed across and beyond boundaries of the nation states. They provide a space for an alternative community, for identity formation and the creation and maintenance of transnational ties and practices

(Leurs and Ponzanesi 2011). Migration processes are increasingly digitalized. While all social life is becoming subject to processes of digitalization, migration offers a valuable source for studying these transformations. Moving long distances, crossing state borders, residing away from home and living transnational lives are the practices that by definition constitute migrants. These movements in material space have been radically transformed over the past decades by the introduction of new technologies and means of connectivity.

Digital technologies make new resources accessible to the second generations, enabling them to assert their individuality and experiment with transnational practices.

Transnationalism, in general, is far from a new concept in migration studies (Basch, Glick-Schiller, Szanton Blanc 1994; Vertovec and Cohen 1999). At least in terms of theoretical impact, transnationalism has become one of the dominant trends not only in the field of migration studies but also in the study of digital networks. The "digital diaspora" can be defined as a new entity for reconstructing traditional communal identities and bonds, or the reinstating new transnational identities and networks (Brinkerhoff 2009). Digitalizing migration does not simply function as a form of transnational reconstitution or reinstatement of social relationships, but amounts to the production of new forms of social relationships (Haraway 2004).

As Dana Diminescu argues, the question of how "the digitalisation of migration is reflected in the construction of new geographies mapping notions of "being at home" or of "here" and "there", in the context of migration. More concretely, the increasing possibilities for digital co-presence embed the every day lives of migrants in new "home territories"".

Though literature on the use of new media is becoming established, it remains focused on adult migrants, once again ignoring the younger generations (Elias and Lemish 2009). Studies have only recently started to address this in detail. D'Haenens (2003) researched young second generation migrants in Holland, focusing on the connection between strong ethnic affinity and web-based consumption patterns, mostly focusing on users use of news and information sources regarding their home country, or their contact with relations and friends there. Rydin and Sjoberg (2008) came to similar conclusions with their research

focused on children from refugee families in Sweden and Domaneschi (2010) researched Internet usage of social networks and personal blogs in particular, focusing on migrants' forms of identification and of differentiation which arose in online dialogs.

Media (technologies as well as contents, as in Silverstone's (1994) concept of "double articulation"), have a part in defining the formative experiences of a generation, not only because they are so deeply embedded in the everyday life that they become a "natural" element of the social landscape, but also because historical events, as well as cultural values and their symbolic forms, are often mediated by them. This happened, for example, with the Arab Spring wave of protests sweeping North Africa, and was supported by ICT (and social networks in particular), where migrants were constantly connected with the country of origin and which led the diaspora's second generation to a more conscious reflection on their identity and their "being transnational".

Marfleet (2006) highlights that ethnic and diaspora groups may be at the forefront of political innovation and social change, as online diasporic public sphericules are permeated by local and global forces and conditions. This creates one of the many "heterogeneous dialogues" related to globalization (Appadurai 1996), and becomes part of "a complex form of resistance and accommodation to transnational flows" (Howley 2005: 33). For this reason, the conditions created by the widespread use of old and new media, constituting a profound transformation of attitudes and relationships in transnational migrant communities, can be significant in redefining present and future projects between generations.

Transnationalism, refers to the ability of many immigrants to be active in the country of origin as well in the host country, and to maintain social, economic, political and cultural relationships between the two contexts (Ambrosini 2008), This situation, now facilitated by the ICT, initially referred only to adult and recently settled migrants, contradicting the classical assimilation model. This idea was challenged by the work of Portes (2005) and Guarnizo (2003), who argued that often the most integrated immigrants are also protagonists in transnational practices.

Some predict that transnationalism may be important for the first generation, but not for their children (Kasinitz et al. 2002; Portes 2001; Rumbaut 2002). Portes (2001: 190), for example, argues that transnational activities are a "one-generation phenomenon", but that the involvement of the immigrant generation can have lasting effects on the second generation. Rumbaut (2002: 89) finds that despite variability among different national-origin groups, transnational attachments among the second generation are quite few. Similarly, Kasinits et al. (2002: 119) find low levels of second-generation transnationalism among individuals in New York City. They emphasize that in each ethnic group there is a minority from which transnational ties continue to play a "regular, sustained, integral role in their lives" and therefore further researchis necessary. Others argue that the second generation retain some knowledge of their parents' native language, traveling back and forth to their parents' country of origin. Ties may continue but the magnitude and frequency is unclear (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004; Purkayastha 2005; Wolf 1997).

Wolf (2002), in particular, has used the concept of "emotional transnationalism". In her research about second generation Phillipinos she found that although many children of immigrants may not pursue the kinds of transnational economic and emotional ties with relatives or friends in the countries of origin that their parents pursue, they nevertheless live a kind of transnational life at the level of emotions, even if it is based in one geographical place. As they manage and inhabit multiple cultural and ideological zones, the resulting emotional transnationalism constantly juxtaposes what they do at home against what is done at Home.

The migrant, of first or second or even third generation, who tries to define their identity by addressing elements derived from the tradition of their ancestral homeland or (maybe together) with the new context of life, experiencing different influences, becomes a paradigmatic figure of the complex and variable shape bricolage through which incessantly subjective identities are defined in late modernity. At the same time, however, a problem arises: the concrete participation in transnational activities tends to decrease, in favor of a more general (and generic) consideration of some form of ancestral ethnic identity (Ambrosini 2008: 73).

The cultural affiliations and identifications, in fact, compare with the processes of self-definition where a reference to somewhere else may not match with

transnational practices, except in the form of media consumption or exposure to events and issues of "home" through the relation with the coethnics. Where ethnicity ends as a subjective sense of belonging to a minority group and begins transnationalism as consideration of ties and social practices that transcend the borders connecting different locations is still a controversial point (Ambrosini 2008).

Regarding the issue about the relationship between transnational practices and identifications a possible answer can be sought out by overcoming a binary option, in which transnationalism or there is or there is not. It is necessary to talk more of levels or forms of transnationalism: from virtual to those linked to consumption or communication, to those which are expressed in more organized and frequent activities. The question about the spread of the phenomenon could be so reformulated, not wondering anymore, or not only, how many migrants are effectively engaged in transnational practices, but trying to know what forms, modes, degrees of intensity migrants participate in transnational social fields.

Moreover Ambrosini (2008) invited consideration of the second generation as the "transnationalism test": on one hand, according to Queirolo Palmas (2010), the second generation can live "transnational lives" (Smith 2005) and discover new identities and forms of belonging. Smith (2002) finds that rather than low or diminishing levels of transnationalism among the second generation, they actually cultivate these practices as they attempt to redefine identities and social locations. On the other, they are often victims of transnational forces that weaken transnational commitment, forcing them to taking roots (contracts and careers, real estate obligations, new births) in the host country. Also Levitt (2009: 1226) while agrees that children of immigrants will not participate in their ancestral homes in the same ways and with the same regularity as their parents, argues that "we should not dismiss outright the strong potential effect of being raised in a transnational social field" and Basch et al. (1994) argue that it is "likely" that transnational relations will continue among the second generation. Somerville (2007) maintains that transnational engagement among the second generation may ebb and flow according to life-cycle stages or in response to particular incidents or crises (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004; Premazzi et al. 2012).

Levitt and Glick-Schiller (2004) point out that we need to consider the extent to which the second generation is reared in a transnational social field[9], which refers to sets of multiple interconnected networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices and resources are exchanged and transformed (Basch et al. 1994; Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004).

According to Leonini and Rebughini (2010: 18), the second generations "grow up in a society that is, for the most part, transnational and globalized, where the needs for real integration and assimilation into a stated cultural model, closed in a nation's boundaries, are fading away". The Internet seems to have given impetus to these trends, increasing the opportunities for young people, to consume "goods, pictures and representations which have ever looser bonds with the nation state", providing global and transnational cultural references. It enables the "claim of differences to take place now on a supranational linguistic and religious scale, with reference to tastes, aesthetics and traditions which pass over the bonds of a state".

Levitt and Glick-Schiller (2004) discuss the significance of "ways of being" and "ways of belonging" in a transnational space (Somerville 2008). "Ways of being" refers to the actual social relations and practices in which individuals engage, whereas "ways of belonging" refers to a connection to a homeland through memory, nostalgia or imagination (Levitt e Glick-Schiller 2004; cfr. also Haller e Landolt 2005; Vertovec 2004; Somerville 2008). "The ways of belonging combine action and awareness of identity that action means" (Levitt and Glick-Schiller

[9] Transnational social field: this refers to a conceptual means of garnering processes of transnational participation from the lives of migrants, which can be fragmentary, differentiated according to their life circumstances, yet to be analyzed in their social distribution and in their possible intergenerational persistence (Boccagni 2009). The best-known definition of "transnational social field" is: "a group of several social relations networks, each independent of each other, through which ideas, activities and resources can be exchanged, organized and transformed in different ways" (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004). Thus academics studying transnationalism touched upon preexisting theories in the "social field" when trying to delimit the body of interactions, either sporadic or systematic, which can be consolidated between the social worlds and those who emigrate and those who remain (Boccagni 2009); the exchange mechanisms and modalities, as well as reworking ideas, activities and resources between the two poles of the migratory route (Landolt and Wei Da 2005). The analysis centers on "the intersection between migrant networks and networks of those who stay (…) The comparison between migrants' experinces and those of who are influenced, even indirectly, by ideas, objects and information which cross the borders" (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004). In this way the transnational social field is useful in highlighting the perceived rift in immigrants' daily lives, between physical space – the context of immigration – and social space: that marked by the importance of significant social relationships, not necessarily of closeness, of single individuals (Boccagni 2009).

2004: 1010). People can thus engage in social relations and practices that go beyond the boundaries and therefore exhibit a transnational way of being without recognizing it. But when they recognize it and emphasize the transnational elements of their identity, they express a transnational way of belonging.

New technologies provide daily space for one to stretch out in spatial dimensions, which transcend the space where one lives and works. Whereas migration prior to the onset of globalization caused a loss of contact with the home country and its social networks (Sayad 2002), contemporary migration has access to networks, activities and models for living which involve the destination country as well as the country they left behind (Kivisto 2001; Diminescu 2008). As a result migrants are simultaneously integrated in two or more states, being active in emotional and functional social contexts which go beyond national boundaries (Fouron and Glick-Schiller 2002).

The second generation has unusually complex and ambiguous views of home, identity and 'where they belong'. Thanks to ICT first and second generation migrants' "homes", or their notions of "here" and "there", are becoming less "topological" and more transnational and affective. Moreover, second generation's the connection to the 'homeland' – where their parents were born and lived before emigrating – remains largely unexplored. Now, demographic data from various parts of the world with a history of postwar mass emigration shows that second-generation transnational practices, and returning to the country of origin, are increasingly important phenomena.

The present research aims to explore second-generation Egyptians' transnationalism after the Arab Spring, between the topological and affective dimensions, at personal and community level, online and offline. I have investigated whether digital media create an alternative interactive space between the culture of origin and that of immigration, and how participation and transnational practices are articulated online and offline. I have researched digital networks through which communication and information flows between migrant individuals and groups in different geographical locations, focusing in particular on the ways in which transnational cultural ties and communities are formed across

national borders. I have investigated how digital media influence (re)negotiating affiliations, the sense of belonging and future plans.

1.4. Diapora communities and transnationalism

The concept of "diaspora" has been investigated and developed by scholars interested in transnationalism, and in sheding light on the effects of new communications processes and utilities. Cohen (1997), starting from the classic Jewish case, has distinguished various types of diaspora: the diaspora of the victims (Africans and Armenians), the colonial diasporas (the best example is the British case); diasporas for work (exemplified by the Indian workers Indian or even by the Italians in America), the trading diasporas (Chinese and Lebanese) and the cultural diasporas (Caribbean migrations). All these experiences, historical and contemporary, share some peculiar characteristics: 1) the dispersion, often traumatic, from a country of origin; 2) alternatively, the emigration from their homeland in search of work, opportunities for trade, or colonial ambitions, 3) a collective memory and myth about the homeland; 4) an idealization of the ancestral homeland, 5) a return movement or intention (or the help offered to the return movements), 6) a strong sense of group ethnic, maintained for a long time; 7) a troubled relationship with the host societies; 8) a sense of solidarity with coethnics residing in other countries; 9) the possibility of a peculiar, creative life, in tolerant host societies.

With regard to the concept of diaspora, however, it is interesting to consider the idea of Sökefeld (2006: 267), according to him, in fact, "migrants do not necessarily form a diaspora but they may become a diaspora by developing a new imagination of community, even many years after the migration took place". According to Cohen (1997) the idea of diaspora, however, presupposes a link between "communities" scattered abroad and a homeland that continues to exert a recall on their identification processes, their loyalty and their emotions: 'in the era of cyberspace, a diaspora can, to some extent, be kept together or re-created "in the mind" through cultural artifacts and shared imagination' (Cohen 1997: 26). Cesari

(1997) speaks of the existence of relations, even imaginary or symbolic, with the land of origin, while Ambrosini (2008: 78) considers the diasporas not as something given, but rather as a social construct, in which the narrative, interactions and imagined community ties play an important role.

According to Brah (1996) diasporas are therefore "imagined communities" whose identity is far from be fixed or given *a priori*, but that changes according to historical circumstances. It involves the homing desire which is not equivalent to the desire to move towards an ancestral homeland, since not all diasporas sustain an ideology of return. Diasporas are a social construct, where narrative and interactions play an important role, imagined community ties are established, but also forms of domination and subordination, internal and external tensions are experienced, as well as various ways of identification and belonging[10].

Sökefeld, points out also that, in his opinion, 'there can be no diaspora community without a consciousness[11] of diaspora[12], in other words without an idea of shared identity, of common belonging to that group'. According to Ambrosini, also, the crucial fact for the paradigm of diasporas is their stability over time and therefore the intergenerational continuity of the diasporic identity. According to the scholar (2008: 81), in fact,

[10] Despite the twists and the obvious similarities, however, it is important to note at least two differences between the studies on transnational migration and the literature on diasporas. The analysis of transnational migration have started from the idea that new forms of displacement, not more definitive, nor temporary, but recurrent and circular and, at least for some, even new types of migrants (the so-called transmigrants) have appeared on the scene of international migration. They therefore focus on the present and try to understand the future movements of people across borders: in this sense, the protagonists of transnational phenomena were often seen as the vanguard of the new face of international migration. Only at a later time, resizing the emphasis on the new, some scholars have started to recognize the historical antecedents of contemporary migrant transnationalism, opening a discussion on the relationship between the current cross-border movements and their historical antecedents. The identification of significant elements of discontinuity with the past remains a salient feature of this line of research (Ambrosini 2008).
The studies on diasporas have made the opposite path: they develop their paradigm on past diasporas and try to adapt it to the analysis of some relevant, contemporary migratory phenomena.

[11] As 'consciousness' is a category that is notoriously difficult to ascertain in empirical research I propose replacing it with 'discourse', because consciousness needs to be expressed in discourse in order to produce social and political effects. Hence, we have to refer to discursive constructions of imaginations of community (Sökefeld 2006: 267).

[12] The definition of diasporas as transnational imagined communities does not presuppose a high frequency of actual transnational social relationships. The transnational quality of the community may be purely imaginary and symbolic (Sökefeld 2006: 267).

> in the first generation of migrants, these items are often distributed though their intensity may vary, however, it is in the transmission of identity traits to the second generation and successive generations that the testing ground for the establishment of a minority community referable to the paradigm of diasporas shows up.

The main difference between the studies on diasporas and the literature on transnationalism highlighted by Ambrosini (2008) is in the fact that studies on transnationalism try to operationalize the concept with reference to specific economic, political and cultural activities, that cross the borders and connect the migrants with their countries of origin: to speak of transnationalism, it is necessary that the protagonists are engaged in some not occasional activity that puts them in relation with their homeland.

The concept of diaspora, however, expresses attitudes, a diasporic "conscience": a sense of belonging, a myth of the distant homeland, an emotional bond with their compatriots around the world. It is on a cultural level and in some ways emotional. Though in fact diasporas are known and recognized for the wide range of activities and institutions that have created, the concept itself does not imply a verifiable commitment in this regard.

Crucial to the paradigm of diasporas then, even more than for the transnational one, is the duration in time and then the intergenerational continuity of the diasporic identity. Only in the long term it is possible to recognize if a community of immigrants has kept a sense of belonging to a distant homeland, an effective internal solidarity, a link with other groups around the world, distinctive codes, all elements necessary to define a diaspora.

In the first generation of migrants, these elements are often widespread, although their intensity may vary, however, it is in the transmission of identity traits to the second and subsequent generations that there is the test for the formation of a minority community that can be called "diaspora".

2. Community between offline and online

After having recall the main theoretical positions in immigrants' children studies, I turn now on the theme of community, which is equally important in my research. Indeed, my aim was to understand the processes by which new forms of communities and be set up by Egyptian second-generations towards the everyday use of ICTs. I discuss the theoretical articulation of the concept of community, considering mainly the debate around online communities and transnational communities.

2.1. At the beginning…

I am aware of how controversial the term "community" is in the social sciences, nevertheless I think it is important to use the term in this context, just as a "bridge between sociological discourse and current discourse" (Bagnasco 1992: 1). Anthony Cohen (1985) argues that community as a concept needs to be taken seriously, as it carries important meanings for many people (Georgiou 2011).

People, in fact, refer to community as a commonly shared concept – as a taken for granted consistency, thus, as difficult as it is to define, as problematic as it is to theorize, it is equally difficult to avoid community (Calhoun 1980; Cohen 1985, 1994; Rutherford 1990; Bauman 2000).

In addition, periodically, the most diverse groups worry that community has been "lost" and hope that it has been "saved" and everybody looks back nostalgically to bygone days when community was supposedly more robust.

So "Community" is a multi-meaning word, that in Western societies has traditionally been anchored in neighbourhood interactions. Yet even in the Western world, scholars, pundits, politicians and the public define and use the term "community" in many ways, some of which are ambiguous or mutually contradictory. As far back as 1955, George Hillery noted ninety-four scholarly efforts to define community but he also noted that "the 94 definitions used in this

analysis are not all of the definitions of the community" (1955: 112; see also Hillery 1963, 1972).

Although Hillery's discussion is the most detailed, other definitional reviews include those by McClenahan (1929, pp. 104-106), Hollingshead (1948), Wellman and Leighton (1979), O'Brien and Roach (1984), Perry (1986), Heller (1989), Goldenberg and Haines (1992), Butcher (1993), Shodhan (1995) and Brint (2001).

Taken together, the consensus is that community has come to be defined in terms of:

1. Common locality;

2. Interpersonal relationships of sociability, support and information;

3. Common values, norms and interests, without necessarily interacting or being co-located.

The concept of community was defined first by Ferdinand Tönnies (1963) that, in an attempt to identify the characteristics of modern society he called “contrasting” with the pre-modern society, identified with the community.

The author then uses the term “community” to identify a type of particular social relations, marked by intimacy, gratitude, sharing of languages, meanings, habits, spaces, memories and common experiences, they are made up of blood ties (household and kinship), place (neighborhood) and spirit (friendship).

Almost a century later, Parsons (1951; 1971), in defining the modern society identifies oppositely characters of the community as particularism versus contemporary universalism that considers people regardless their individual characteristics, in the prevalence of ascription on acquired qualities, skills and merit, in affectivity that pervades all spheres of life and in relationships, in which individuals are involved in their totality and not just for certain aspects of their personality.

Then taking their lead from Tönnies (1963) critique of industrialization, many definitions of community explicitly or implicitly treat it as occurring within rather small territorial limits, such as would be found in a rural village or a distinct neighbourhood. As “community” usually is partially defined by social interactions among a set of person who know each other, the composite definition of a

"neighbourhood community" is of a bounded geographical area in which many of the residents know each other. This approach has been the traditional one in the past, arising out of the pastoralist assumption of happy rural villagers as being the paragon of community life, with urban communities struggling vainly to approach this pastoral ideal (Wellman 2001).

Until the 1970s the debate was about whether such communities had been "lost" or "saved" (to use Wellman's 1979 language) since the Industrial Revolution (e.g., Nisbet 1962; Etzioni 1995; Bellah et al. 1996; Wuthnow 1998; Putnam 2000). From the early 1960s, the balance of the debate swung away from bewailing the loss of community to discovering that neighbourhoods and other forms of community have continued to function. Community scholars increasingly used ethnographic and survey techniques to show that commu- nity had survived the major transformations of the Industrial Revolution. Both fieldwork and survey research showed that neighbourhood and kinship relations continue to be abundant and strong. Large institutions have neither smashed nor withered communal relations. To the contrary: the larger and more inflexible the institutions, the more people seem to depend on their informal ties to deal with them. The developing body of research has shown that while communities may have changed in response to the pressures, opportunities and constraints of large-scale forces, they have not withered away. They buffer households against large-scale forces, provide mutual aid, and serve as secure bases to engage with the outside world (Choldin 1985; Fischer 1976; Gordon 1978; Keller 1968; Smith 1979; Warren 1978).

But the problem was that, as a result of the continuing scholarly, policy, and public fixation on communities as neighbourhood solidarities, community studies have usually been neighbourhood studies. It is principally the emphasis on common locality, and to a lesser extent the emphasis on solidarity, that has encouraged the identification of "community" with "neighbourhood".

But from the 1970s onward, the proliferation of long-distance relationships led some community scholars to expand their purview to nonlocal ties among friends, relatives, and workmates (Wellman 2001; Wellman and Leighton 1979).

2.2. Not only an issue of physical spaces

The following theoretical contributions have sought to broaden the concept of community to identify a group of individuals who, in addition to the central element recognized in the shared physical space and the kind of close relationships, shared on one hand, a common identity (based on the presence of some of these features: special interests, a common history, shared ideals, traditions and/or habits) and on the other the achievement of general or specific objectives (Bagnasco et al. 1997).

Claude Fischer (2001) showed that in the land of geographical mobility, the U.S., residential mobility has actually decreased between 1950 and 1999. So, people do not build their significance in local societies, not because they have roots in the space, but because they select their relations on the basis of their affinity.

Rei (1999) defines community as "a group of people who have social ties and shared values, and act not only for themselves, but for the social complex that they constitute" (p. 75). What that matters is the dimension of reciprocal opening. The modern community is a community of individuals, where the sense of belonging, reciprocity and participation arise from shared lifestyles, intentional and chosen and from an ethical-cultural identification, such as "guerrilla gardeners" who practice a form of political gardening in defense of the rights of the earth or "couch surfers" who provide their couches for all those who share the same lifestyle and a certain idea of sociability and solidarity.

In Rei's idea, the physical and moral neighbour do not necessarily coincide. In the communities of the past, there was a strong relationship between place and identity, while today the community is not necessarily based on the territorial dimension. Physical proximity can solicit the help, but it is not a prerequisite, especially in a world reshaped by the flows of people between neighborhoods, cities, countries (Rei 1999).

The notion of "community" has often been caught between concrete social relationships and imagined sets of people perceived to be similar. The rise of the Internet has refocused our attention on this ongoing tension.

Of course, it is not possible to argue that there is no longer a sociality based on the place. But the societies do not evolve towards a common model of relationships. In

fact in our context is the growing diversity of models to establish the specificity of social evolution. The immigrant communities in North America and Europe continue to rely much on social interaction based on places (Waldinger 2001).

But it is the immigrant status and the concentration in certain areas of people with that status that determines the pattern of sociability: it is not the mere contiguity in one place. There is a crucial shift that we must consider: from the the spatial boundary as a source of social relations to the space community as an expression of social organization.

In addition, the spatial patterns do not tend to have a relevant effect on social relations. A number of studies of urban sociologists (including Suzanne Keller, Barry Wellman and Claude Fischer) have indeed shown some years ago that the networks are in fact replacing the places as support of social relations in the suburbs and in the city.

2.3. Virtual community, transnational community

Marfleet (2006), while discussing migration, suggests that we should think of transnational communities of diaspora as "networked communities". For him the development of new technologies of communication has been fundamental in the advance of transnational communities. In the same vein, Appadurai (1996) suggests that everyday subjectivities are been transformed by the construction of "public sphericules" arising from participation in the different spaces of online territories. These "public sphericules" are constituted beyond the singular nation-state, "as global narrowcasting of polity and culture which provide not only entertainment but, potentially, counter hegemonic views of current affairs and a proactive agenda of positive intervention in the "public sphere" (Cunningham 2001: 133). Public sphericule as mediated spaces are defined by the identities of their audiences and might challenge essentialist notions of community. Online diasporic public sphericules are permeated by local and global forces and conditions thus creating one of the many "heterogeneous dialogue" related to globalization (Appadurai 1996) and becoming part of a "complex form of resistance and accommodation to

transnational flows" (Howley 2005: 33). In this sense ethnic and diasporic groups may be at the forefront of political innovation and social change.

Trying to reconstruct the debate that has developed around the online communities: although the Internet has only been widely used since the early 1990s, in fact, the debate about its impact on community is a continuation of concerns since the Industrial Revolution about the impact of technology on community.

As the Internet has infiltrated contemporary life, analysts have had to move from seeing it as an external world to seeing how it becomes integrated into the complexity of everyday life. The debate was around the question: if the Internet have increased, decreased, or transformed community:

- the Internet weakens community: the immerse nature of the Internet may be so compelling that Internet users neglect their family, friends, relatives and neighbors (Kraut et al. 1998; Nie and Hillygus 2002)
- the Internet enhances community: people mostly use the Internet to maintain contact with existing community members, either by adding Internet contact on to telephone and face-to-face contact, or by shifting their means of communication to the Internet (Quan-Haase and Wellman 2002).
- The Internet transforms community: The Internet's connectivity better enables people to develop far-flung communities of shared interest, possibly at the expense of local contact (Barlow 1995; Wellman 2001b).
- Rather than increasing or destroying community, the Internet can best be seen as integrated into rhythms of daily life, with life online intertwined with offline activities.
- Some go beyond seeing the Internet as enhancing community to seeing it as transforming it by creating new forms of online interaction and enhancing offline relationships.

The first step made to try to understand the new forms of social interaction in Internet Era was the one that try to define community as networks of interpersonal ties that provide sociability, support, information, a sense of belonging, and social identity e non come group-like neighborhoods and villages. Such networks could be

locally bound, as in traditional neighborhoods, or global as in some Internet-based community (Wellman, Boase, Chen 2002).

In this sense, according to Barry Wellman (2001: 1): "Communities are networks of personal ties that provide social relations, support, information, a sense of belonging and social identity".

Wellman's idea, taken by Castells (2001), was to consider the online community as a network of social relations, with a variable geometry and changing composition, according to the evolution of the specific interests and the form of the network.

These ties have transformed cyber*space* into cyber*places*, as people connect online with kindred spirits, engage in supportive and sociable relationships with them, and imbue their activity online with meaning, belonging and identity. The plethora of information available on the web and the ease of using search engines and hyperlinks to find groups fitting one's interests enables newcomers to find, join, and get involved in kindred organizations (Horan 2000).

According to this view, when then the online networks are stable in their practice, they can also contribute to the building of virtual communities, different from physical communities, but not necessarily less intense and less effective in acting and mobilizing[13].

2.4. Community and participation online and offline, local and transnational

Castells proposes that the Internet and, by extension online territories, are conceptualized as continuous with society, "an extension of life as it is, in all its dimensions and all its modalities" (2001: 118). For him, while the Internet has been appropriated by social practices in all its diversity, at the same time this appropriation does have a specific effect on social practices itself.

However, the presence of a virtual settlement does not necessarily guarantee the presence of a community. In other words, the fact that there is a system like Twitter

[13] In other examples, these online networks can become forms of "specialized community" that is to say forms of social relations built around specific interests with the risk of producing low levels of commitment and fragility of relationships.

and Facebook that allows people to get together and exchange messages does not necessarily make people feel as if they belong to a community. For that, they need a sense of community.

In fact, as long as Facebook is a place to post music or share personal moods it is not possible to speak of a community. But when, in fact, the information shared begin to stir passions and transmit ideas and political positions, we are witnessing to the birth of an audience around them and consequently to the emergence of a group that creates public sphericule (Appadurai 1996), occupies a public space and can be transformed into a community.

On Facebook, in fact, you can support causes and be member of political, social, cultural groups. It is frequent to read about the lack of interest of young people in politics, at least in its institutional forms, while the Web 2.0 with the emergence of blogs and experiences of participatory and citizenship journalism seems to be promoting a quantitative and qualitative transformation of online participation and increased integration with the offline practices. The blurring of the boundary between participation and communication, between what is political and what is not (for example between participation and leisure) is evident in services like Youtube, Myspace and Facebook, social networking spaces used above all for leisure and transformed into usable spaces for the development of political discussions, contributing to a radical segmentation and fragmentation of the public sphere (Vatrapu et al. 2008).

Internet, as already mentioned, is becoming an area of "micro public spheres self-constituted that have become a vital component of the media and of political reality" (Hayhtio and Rinne 2007: 3). It's true that it is difficult for individuals characterized by attitudes of political apathy find in the web a stirring to participate, but it is also true that, on the other hand, digital media are the ideal tool for people already politically active to experiment new participatory ways (Della Porta and Mosca 2006; Vromen 2007).

The network provides, in fact, a platform more useful and attractive to those who are already predisposed to active participation, but not only. Anyone who surfs online can access to a number of information bigger than any historical period and can reach other people, in different places, in a much faster and more efficient way:

“It is sufficient one or two ambitious individuals to create a good reportage that can put pressure on traditional mass media, offer alternative points of view and reach a global audience with a limited budget” (Palfrey and Gasser 2009: 347).

The social networking sites can help in the coordination and mobilization of social actions and in increasing visibility. The social network offers, in fact, simple and less expensive ways to organize members, arrange meetings, disseminate information and opinions. You can use them to organize boycotts and protests quickly and efficiently. (Ellison, Lampe, Steinfield 2009).

We are faced with the dynamics of informal political action that are based on forms of association and participation based on weak ties, but that are sometimes effective.

The online communities are often engaged on civic and social actions, and they express the desire and tendency to address issues of general interest, to share opinions outside of the formal, istitutional channels, for spontaneous citizens' initiative, thanks to the expansion of the social capital. The new forms of civic participation on the web seem to correspond to the need of individuals to connect individualism and collectivism, to assert their subjective identity, to define their own personal interests, but at the same time, their will to share feelings and a sense of solidarity with a group, to feel part of a group, entering in a community dimension. The web allows, in particular, to exercise the contemporary nomadism, creating, consolidating or ending weak ties to build new ones with individuals or groups, for friendship, but also to share and promote social causes.

Critics (Morozov 2011) argue that the high visibility activism on social networks does not lead to great results. According to them the fact to support a cause or a group on Facebook does not mean anything . In many cases it is true, “it is just a statement of convenience, the digital equivalent of a sticker “save the whales” on the bumper. But it could also be that the fact of joining a group or a cause on Facebook in the future lead to a greater and better involvement” (Palfrey and Gasser 2009: 354). Some, in fact, go outside of Facebook to use specific applications that promote civic engagement and community involvement (Avaaz.org, TakingITGlobal...). These websites can be the starting point for

something that goes beyond a personal statement about a public issue and, once they start, they are more likely to engage in some action in offline society.

The interactive and participatory web 2.0 has facilitated the aggregation and the definition of new identities, the emergence of new social and political actors such as the second generation. Among the more interesting Italian cases it is important to report the experience of the *Rete G2-seconde generazioni*.

The network-G2 is born mainly due to the Italian law on citizenship based on *ius sanguinis* and the consequent difficulty in obtaining the same for those who were born and raised in Italy. The G2 network has therefore been created with a twofold objective: to propose amendments to the Citizenship Law (Law n.91, 1992) and to be accepted as "differently Italian".

The association G2 acts primarily, through a blog and operates through local groups in several Italian cities. The creation of a virtual network of local nodes boosted their capacity for mobilization. The movement, born initially with scarce organizational resources, thanks to the wide use of the web has been able to gain visibility up to be recognized as an interlocutor, representative of the second generation, from the government, going so far as to meet with the President of the Republic, Giorgio Napolitano (Premazzi 2010). The G2 so far have raised their voices "loud and clear", as was the title of the press conference in the House of Representatives in November 2008, to make an appeal to the Parliament to propose a reform of the law n.91, 1992 regarding citizenship and they have organized various activities and campaigns, to the recent "L'italia siamo noi" and "18 anni in Comune"[14].

In this scheme the development of Web 2.0 and social networks are playing a very important role. Even the second generation, in fact, are digital natives, User Generated Content and linker people who are looking for creative and unique ways to express their identity and re-elaborate the world and the contexts in which they live: they create online profiles, post content, are always on (Turkle 2006), always connected to the network.

[14] Promoted together with Anci and Save the Children with the aim of requesting Italian mayors to inform second generations on modalities and procedures to obtain Italian citizenship when they come of age.

To promote knowledge and awareness of their stories and their willingness to "be there" in society in which they were born or where they arrived during childhood, they have created several associations and groups as well as G2, while the web 2.0 allowed them to diversify their communication strategies: creating sites, chats, blogs and Facebook accounts where discussing their daily lives, share advices, information and participate.

In the pioneering research of Parker and Song (2006: 195), the two researchers have studied how the use of the web between the Chinese and Asians in Britain have created new public spheres. They noted that "the Internet provides a medium for the expression of often inarticulate previous minority perspectives". Although they focused on identity expressed in websites "ethnically connotated", the authors acknowledge that this is not their ultimate meaning, stating that "this is merely the initial step in verifying the purpose: they offer to their users and co-creators to engage in a collective discourse and form an active audience".

As also Anna Totaro highlights (2007: 17) there is a new generation that "no longer wants just to be online, but that wants to participate actively in the construction of meanings and metaphors as well as to offer his contribute: a generation that demands the right to be involved".

All this was particularly evident during the Arab Spring with the construction of Facebook groups by Egyptian second generations as we shall see in the following chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

Data and Methods

In this Chapter I discuss the reasons for the choose of studying transnational practices of Egyptian second generations starting from the Arab Spring. Then I discuss the choice of using an integrated methodology, between online and offline, but also using different methods of investigation (participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus group). The idea of studying transnational behavior of Egyptian second (and first) generations, between online and offline, their relations with Egypt, their attempts to create community, in fact, could not be studied without considering them also as digital natives (Prensky 2001; Palfrey and Gasser 2009). Indeed, as the diffusion of the Internet (and mobile technology) is becoming more pervasive in social life, so is the need for social scientists to include virtual methods, digitized or natively digital, in their methodological toolboxes. Moreover to understand the internal dynamics of a community like the Egyptian required an in-depth ethnography to try to enter and begin to understand the research field before carrying out interviews. This was so carried out through participant observation online of the Egyptian Facebook groups and offline at some meetings as well as attendance at places which were significant for the Egyptian community.

1. Why the Arab Spring? Why Egyptians? Why Facebook?

When I started working on my Ph.D. in October 2010, my idea was to investigate the relationship between immigrants' young children, a population that is growing in Italy and that is estimated to reach one million and a half by 2015, and the social network Facebook, today the biggest social network in Italy with more than 21 millions subscribed members. The guideline was based on considering young people as prosumers (Tapscott and Williams 2006), active producers/consumers of digital contents and as netizens (Brettel 2008), digital citizens who find in the web a

public space, a citizenship place (Mazzoli 2009) where non-conventional political participation, either in an individual or associative form, can be exercised.

The research question that has driven my research is: can the social networks be considered as new platforms, not only "for being", but also for acting and presenting political and social demands (Castells 2002), promoting new forms of participation and mobilization in the online and offline public space?

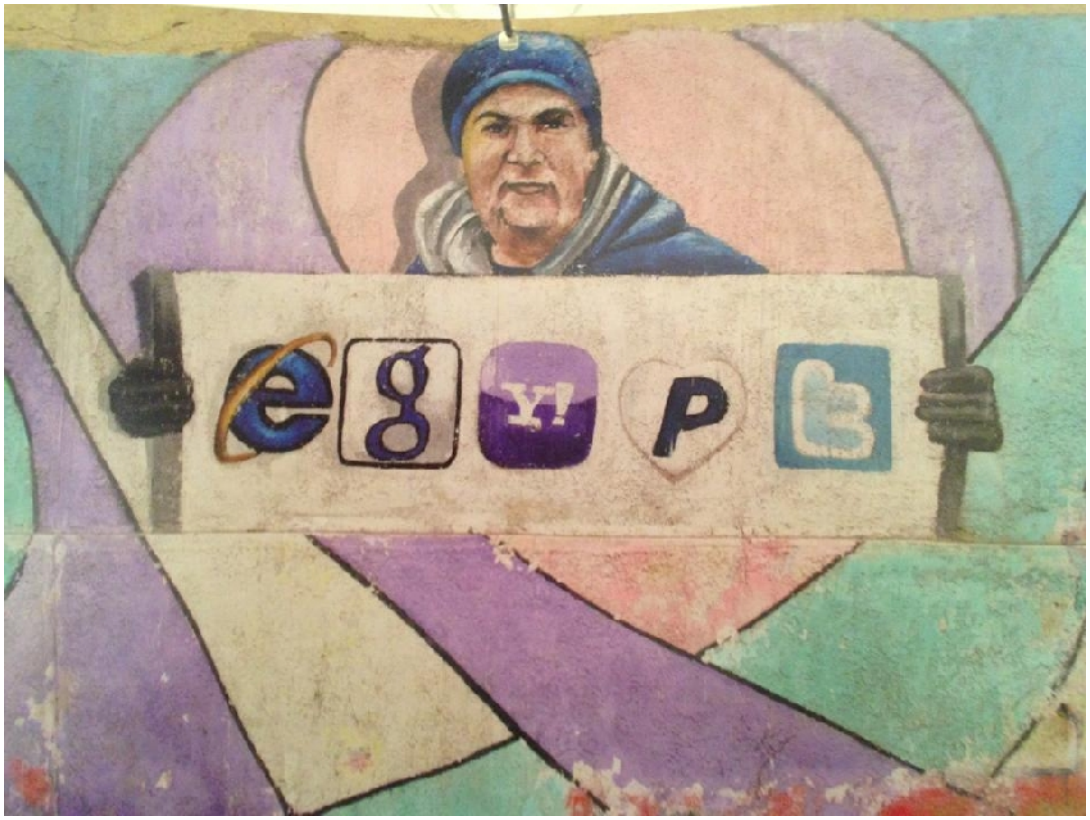
On December 17, 2010, in the Tunisian town of Sidi Bou Zid, Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire in protest against the police's behaviour. News of his self-immolation spread throughout the town, sparking protests and clashes with police. Events of the Tunisian uprising in December 2010 led to similar revolts later, in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Bahrain, and other Arab nations.

After Tunisia, in Egypt, the April 6 Youth movement[15], along with important social media allies, saw an opportunity to turn their annual but "little- noticed" protest on Egypt's Police Day (January 25) into a much larger demonstration.

Tens of thousands of people turned out, prompting the swift organization, by social media, of another protest, a Day of Rage, on January 28. The momentum of protest snowballed into seventeen days of massive demonstrations that ultimately forced the resignation of Mubarak on February 11.

The outbreak of the Arab Spring and the importance of social networks in the revolts made me think and focus my attention on how, through the social networks, second generations in Italy were watching and participating in the events in their countries of origin.

[15] In 2007, a young activist named Ahmed Maher noticed that the Facebook page for the Egyptian football team had attracted 45,000 "fans" and wondered if a political movement could be formed on the network. In March 2008, Maher and a colleague, Israa Abdel-Fattah, created a Facebook page called "April 6 Youth" which supported a planned industrial strike and promoted it through emails and viral "marketing". The page attracted 70,000 members in three weeks, turning the strike into a major protest that embarrassed the Mubarak regime. Group members subsequently used the page to share organizational tactics and other information in preparation for additional protests.



Despite headlines and culture columns, in fact, very few, especially in Italy, have tried to study the real impact of social networks and online socialising tools on the thousands of Tunisian, Egyptian, Libyan migrants all over the world (and especially in Italy). In particular, I have decided to follow Egyptian second generations (and, starting from them, later, also the first) and their relationship with Egypt, their transnationalism, both online and offline, starting from an event that completely changed their perceptions, their images and that perhaps would changed their lives.
The eventual choice, among the different groups that were experiencing the repercussions of the Arab Spring, Egyptians, depended primarily on linguistic reasons: I know English, spoken and known by the Egyptians, as well as Italian, better than French, which is spoken by Tunisians and Moroccans. The lack of knowledge of Arabic was a limit that I shall discuss later. Two other aspects considered in the choice of studying Egyptians were:

- Egyptian migrants were among the first to arrive in Italy and, for a long time, they remained one of the largest groups. In Milan, Rome and Turin, with many thousands of residents and at least two decades of presence in the cities, immigration from North Africa has become a part of the cities' history. They are therefore groups which are now well established, with a high percentage of family units due to a process of gradual consolidation of the community, which has led to the birth of a second generation.
- Egypt, moreover, has witnessed a real revolution whose ripercussions, after two years of uncertainty, are still not clear. So it has been extremely interesting to investigate whether the revolution and the media have contributed to a greater or lesser transnational participation of Egyptian first and second generations, to developing a stronger national affiliations and a new sense of belonging that will lead to the emergence of a community and the differences and the relationship between what happens online and offline. Moreover, I wanted to analyze whether and how political developments in the country of origin represented important variables in the redefinition of present and future plans and attitudes among parents' and children's generations – and in this process the role of new technologies, particularly that of the social networks.

Among the various social networks, Facebook was chosen for two reasons:

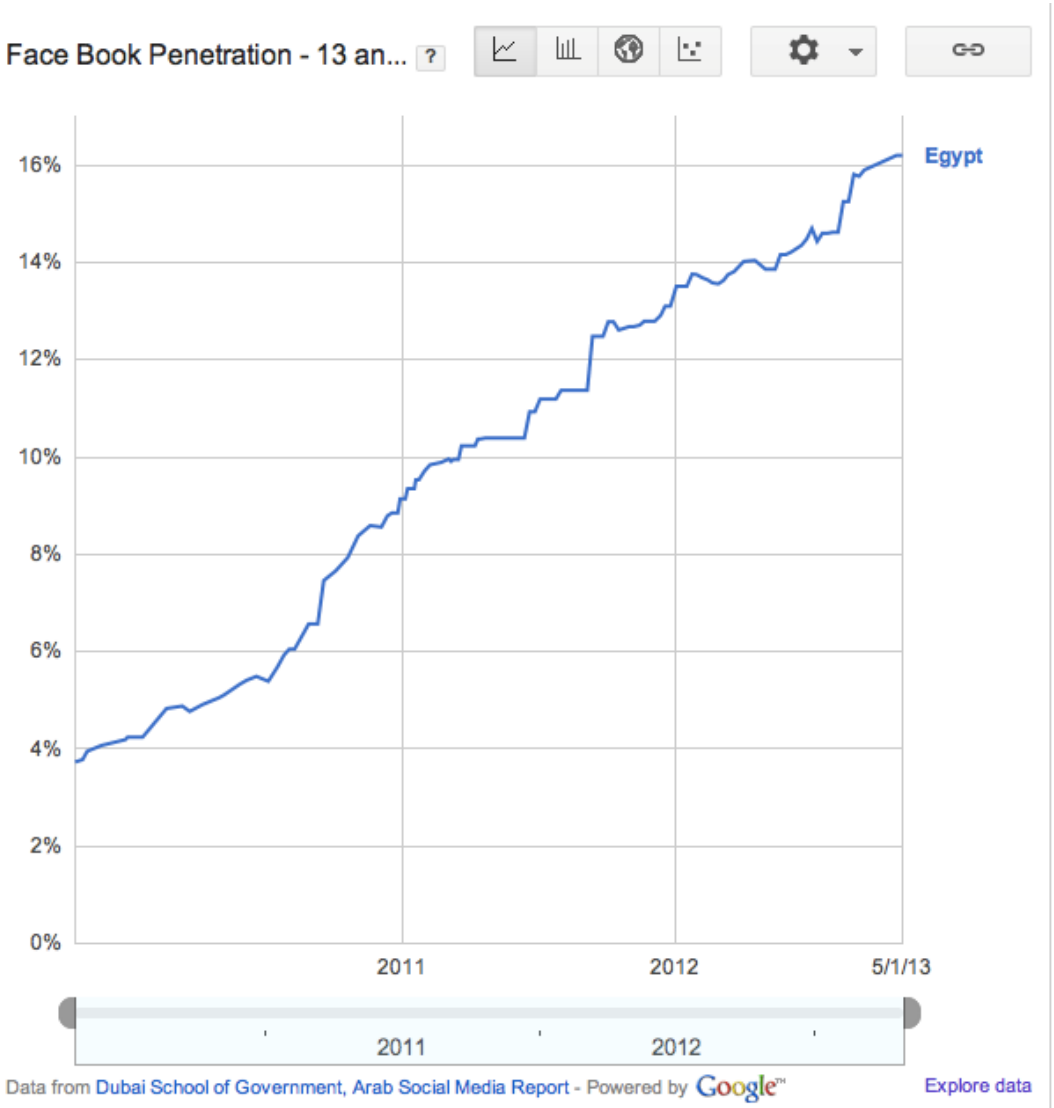
a) Facebook is today the main social network in Italy, with a very high monthly growth rate (in terms of new subscriptions and use frequency). In recent years, for example, an increase of 960% in subscriptions has been recorded: in August 2008 the total of Italian users having a profile on Facebook was little more than 600,000, in May 2010 there were more than 16 million and in May 2012 more than 21 million.

Figure 3 Facebook – Italian users

Source: Osservatorio Social Media, www.vincos.it

Moreover, data on Facebook use and its penetration in Egypt, supplied by the Arab Social Media Report at the Dubai School of Government (2012) , shows that there has been an exponential growth of users in recent years. Between February 2010 and May 2013, the number of Facebook users in Egypt more than quadrupled from 3.1 million to 13.8 million. Most of the latter (9.7 million) are between 15 and 29 years old, while there are "only" 3.5 million over-30s. Egypt therefore has a young Facebook user profile, under 30 years old. After 2011, Egyptian usage continued growing faster than in any other Arab nation.

Figure 4 Facebook Penetration in Egypt



Source: Dubai School of Government, Arab Social Media Report

b) The use of ICTs, in particular social networks, has gradually become an integral part of the social capital of migrants. Digital technologies offer the second generations new resources enabling everyone to build up her/his individuality and differences, experimenting transnational practices. Moreover, Facebook appears as a tool that has to be analyzed not only for its social and entertainment purposes, but also for the chances it offers to produce digital contents, to share experiences and emotions, to exchange advice and opinions, to present proposals and claims and to establish a space for online political debates (Kushin, Kitchener 2009; Giorgi 2009)

and to build up civic and political groups and communities. In Italy, in fact, an increase in the creation of formal and informal groups discussing political issues and, during and after the Arab Springs, the emergence of transnational groups and networks, can be seen on Facebook.

2. Between online and offline

The present study used an integrated research methodology between online and offline, but also using different methods of investigation. The idea of studying transnational behavior of Egyptian second (and first) generations, between online and offline, their relations with Egypt, their attempts to create community, could not be studied without considering them also as digital natives (Prensky 2001; Palfrey and Gasser 2009): today, in fact, social media like Facebook have a part in defining imagination and the formative experiences of a generation, not only because they are so deeply embedded in everyday practices that they have become a "natural" element of the social landscape and common sense, but also because historical events, as well as cultural values and their symbolic forms, are often mediated by them. This has been particularly obvious with the Arab Spring.

Indeed, as the diffusion of the Internet (and mobile technology) is becoming more pervasive in social life, so is the need for social scientists to include virtual methods, digitized or natively digital, in their methodological toolboxes.

Social phenomena which are observed on social media do not remain confined to cyberspace but are shaped by, and contribute to shaping, a single social reality online and offline (Rogers 2009; Jurgenson 2011). Bruckman (2002: 3) spells out this claim: "It's important to remember that all 'Internet research' takes place in an embedded social context. To understand Internet-based phenomena, you need to understand that broader context. Consequently, most 'online research' really also should have an offline component". This, according to Rogers (2009: 20), has "an immediate impact on social sciences in terms of the research potential, the web becomes a privileged space for the study of collective identities".

So conducting offline interactions with informants should not be driven by the assumption that the offline interaction would reveal more authentic or more accurate information than that generated by online interaction. Rather, the rationale for combining offline and online interactions with informants should be grounded in the research context and its goals.

2.1. Bring the Internet back

Early research on Internet-based groups was very much concerned with studying social dynamics taking place almost exclusively in the cyberspace, various forms of what were called "Virtual Communities" (Rheingold 1993). The background of this kind of research was a conceptualization of cyberspace as a new realm, detached by offline social dynamics or, at least, with a high degree of independence from them (De Paoli and Teli 2011).

In that period, the Internet was a surprise for social researchers, leading scholars to questioning how social science methods could be useful in understanding the novelty called cyberspace.

Social researchers were engaged in adapting social science research methods to the realm of cyberspace. As Rogers (2010) pointed out, the conceptualization of cyberspace as an independent realm was dismissed as long as research was proceeding, and new theoretical and methodological questions were emerging.

The novel aspect of the phenomenon was that social relations could take place completely mediated by computers and networks. Research methods were largely based on deploying appropriate techniques to grasping social dynamics located out-there, in the cyberspace (Rogers 2010). But the Internet out-there – as distinct from society in-here – no longer exists: the Internet is now affecting social change with social groups acting outside the Internet but enabled in their communication and interaction by the Internet (De Paoli and Teli 2011).

Therefore, it is clear that the actual methodological and investigative challenge is not the traditional way of finding social dynamics on the Internet, but rather to bring the Internet back into the contemporary world by understanding how it fundamentally affects social change.

In De Paoli and Teli's description (2011), the two researchers show that Slater and Miller (2000) had made clear how Internet usage was strongly dependent on the local contexts of action, undermining the concept of cyberspace as a detached realm. Moving from online to offline helps us, as Slater (2002: 544) urges, "to break down this dualism and see how each configures the other". The *Virtual Society?* project (Woolgar 2002) then elaborated on how the connections between offline and online dimensions were taking place and practically developed; moreover, triangulation of methods increases the validity of interpretation. Extending researcher–informant relationships that emerged online into an offline context could be seen as a way of contextualizing and adding authenticity to the findings obtained online (Hine 2000: 48). Finally, Manovich's Cultural Analytics (Manovich et al. 2009) showed how social researchers can rely on the Internet as a research resource.

Therefore, it is possible to trace a path in Internet research that moves from digitizing methods (i.e. "Virtual Ethnography", Hine 2000) to methods that are natively digital.

Since its early days, the field of CMC research has been overwhelmed by a tendency to rely merely on "virtual methodologies", that is, studying Internet-based phenomena through methodologies implemented by and through the Internet (Bakardjieva and Smith 2001: 69). Even when studies combined offline methodologies, such as interviews, with Internet users (for example, Correll 1995; Turkle 1996), almost no attention was paid to the implications of moving from online to offline with research informants or of triangulating the two kinds of interactions and the data they generated (Orgad 2005).

Turkle (1996: 324) reflects on the significance of conducting face-to-face in-depth interviews with her online informants, as a way to further "explore an individual's life history and tease out the roles technology has played". Turkle (1996) even goes as far as including findings only on those online informants whom she also met in person, a methodological decision she justifies by her concern with the relationship between users' experiences in online reality and real life (Orgad 2005). Bakardjieva

and Smith (2001: 69) stress the need to capture "developments on both sides of the screen", that is "on the screen" and "off the screen".

But according to De Paoli and Teli (2011: 187) "the widespread role of the Internet in our lives requires that social researchers find a new mix of methods, digitized and natively digital, to question how to study societal dynamics through and with the Internet. Researchers need to learn how to take into account the digital inhabiting our collective world".

3. Methods

This research used an integrated research methodology, not only because the idea was to consider the online and offline dimensions together, but also because understanding of the internal dynamics of a community like the Egyptian required an in-depth ethnography to try to enter and begin to understand the research field before carrying out interviews. This was carried out through participant observation online of the Egyptian Facebook groups and offline at some meetings as well as attendance at places which were significant for the Egyptian community.

3.1. Entering the field

Ethnography is an eclectic methodological choice which privileges an engaged, contextually rich and nuanced type of qualitative social research, in which fine grained daily interactions constitute the lifeblood of the data produced. With respect to method, it entails the situational combination of field techniques (note taking, audio-visual recording, interviews, observation and so on) rooted in the ideal of participant observation (living, to some extent, as the "natives" themselves do), itself based on relations of trust and a belief that "data are produced in and of 'thick' interaction between researcher/s and researched" (Falzon 2009:1). More generally, ethnography should be understood as a "style of qualitative research, based on direct and prolonged observation, which has as its purpose the description

and explanation of the meaning of the practices of social actors" (Giglioli et al. 2008: 1).

For its part, participant observation means "establishing a place" in a natural context and, relatively long-term, to explore, experiment and represent the social life and social processes that take place in that context (Emerson et al. 2001). We could add the need to share, to some extent, the daily lives of the subjects studied, in an attempt to reconstruct the subjective vision of social reality, or at least the meanings they give to their actions (Platt 1983; Heyl 2001).

"Entering the field", in my experience, meant learning to meet regularly, in the space of a few months, people with whom until then I had had little or nothing to do, people of whom I could know only what I had learnt while previously interviewing them in their capacity of immigrants.

I had only a superficial knowledge of Egypt and had just started a course in Arabic language and culture. My ignorance of Egypt and of the life of Egyptians in Italy had repeteadly embarrassed me when my interlocutors in the field asked me, as they often did, why I had chosen the Egyptians (some even accused me of having made "a marketing choice").

Once I had chosen the case study, and collected some descriptive data on the socio-demographic profile of the Egyptian population in Milan, Rome and Turin, I started to search for channels - and places - to get in touch with Egyptian immigrants, initially with the second generations. In this operation I was facilitated by the knowledge and experience of professional collaboration that I had already had with various local institutions and associations as well as with already-organized groups of second generations, such as the Young Muslims of Italy (active in several Italian cities), whose board is currently made up mostly of second generations of Egyptian origin. Many of these organizations provided me with useful contacts, to some extent validating me through their mediation.

Some of them, used to promoting moments of social interaction where Egyptians participate to some extent, also offered me spaces and opportunities to meet the people I was looking for. But especially crucial were the contacts with young people. I earned their trust both because I am "young" and because my research on

their relationship with Egypt and the use of social networks fell at a time of great excitement, enthusiasm and rediscovered pride in being Egyptian.

My respondents wanted to talk about Egypt and their relationship with Egypt; they wanted to be known: at last people were interested in them (and they were no longer considered as being only problematic) for something positive, they were looked upon with admiration, the spotlight was on them. They then introduced me to the adults for whom I, both as a woman and as a "relatively young" direct contact would have been more problematic.

As we shall discuss in Chapter 3, the Egyptian community has no associations or meeting places, but I tried to participate in several meetings organized by the Young Muslims of Italy, Section of Turin, to attend the Egyptian school, Il Nilo, on Saturday afternoons, particularly on special occasions such as awarding certificates and on those days when the school was the voting place for Egyptian parliamentary and presidential elections. I also attended restaurants and kebab shops where the owners were figures of reference in the community, participated in the celebrations for the anniversary of the revolution and took part in the offline meetings of online groups of Egyptians as well as informal meetings - especially of women, at the mosque in via Saluzzo, in Turin, and Iftar dinners during Ramadan.

In other words, I considered all spaces and opportunities for socializing and informal gathering of Egyptian immigrants as places relevant to my research. Participation in these formal and informal contexts required, especially at the beginning, some negotiation effort, facilitated by the second generations, above all to ease some people's distrust of me.

I hardly ever had problems of access to the field, such as the possibility of sharing the same physical spaces online and offline. Except for the first few occasions, moreover, I almost never needed to justify my presence. I only had to explain that I had to do some interviews. At first it was easier to explain my presence in terms of a request for ad hoc interviews, rather than in the light of the need for a longer stay. In any case, my presence justified itself over time as a result of a simple mechanism of inertia.

The choice of gatherings among Egyptian first and second generations was dictated not only by the expectation of always meeting new people, but also by the

opportunity to observe the dynamics of the Egyptian community, the relationship between the first and second generations, their relationships with Egypt and reactions to what was happening in their country of origin. More difficult from my point of view was that of the time of real entrance to the place, whatever it was, where people would gather.

When I was doing it alone, not accompanied by Egyptians I knew, it was like crossing an immaterial – yet tangible - border. Once past this threshold, with the ritual greeting to all the present (or at least those I knew), I could generally take a marginal position, sometimes isolated, where I felt more at ease. What I needed, then, was to have the patience to wait for something relevant to my study to happen.

Obviously this situation was different online on the social network Facebook, where I could observe without embarrassment and without creating embarrassment. Even if I should add that most of the people I interacted with online already knew me from face-to-face encounters. Starting off from face-to-face contacts proved indeed invaluable in addressing the issue of digital trust in the (private) digital spaces of social networking sites. The majority of the interviewees have set their profile page settings to private so that other social networking site users outside their list of friends cannot view their personal profile pages. By sending out friend requests to those informants who provided their social networking site contact details, and asking them permission to study their practices and participation in the Facebook groups of Egyptians, a number of personal profile pages were opened up to me with some of whom I also became friends.

Some of the respondents, then, have become, for reasons of expertise or even availability to me, key respondents with whom I have also developed a relationship of mutual friendship, as well as other Italians or Egyptians, already considered as friends, to ask for advice with respect to insights, analysis and interpretation of data and situations.

3.2. Ethnographic semi-structured in-depth interviews and interviews with key respondents

I use this general expression, in line with Boccagni (2009: 86), to describe a model of open interview, partially structured around certain themes, which combines elements of the ethnographic interview and life story, without being identified in either of the two. Strictly speaking a life story should describe a thorough and detailed narrative, based on a relationship of trust between the parts, and containing subjective information inherent throughout the life of the interviewee (Rosenthal 2004).

In the light of this model, my work is recognized in an ethnoscociological perspective rather than life stories, understood as "narrative description of a fragment of lived experience" or as a "narration of practices in situation" (Bertaux 1999: 34): in other words, as limited narratives of limited biographical segments, within which the respondent thematizes freely - in light of his actual experience - the salient points and the points of discontinuity, and from which, above all, one can obtain information relevant to a social structure of the studied phenomenon. In parallel to the ethnographic study and to support it (Whyte 1979), I have therefore conducted a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews through which to explore, even from the slope of the subjective experiences of migrants, the distribution and abundance of their guidelines and their transnational activities.

The motivation to carry out in-depth interviews stems from my assumption that interviews allow for capturing processes such as experiences, thoughts, perceptions, feelings and the production of meaning, self-positioning and attribuiting values. In-depth interviews namely allow asking the "Wh-" questions (Who/What/When/Where/Why/How) that elicit longer, more detailed and layered responses rather than closed, Yes/No questions (Lobe, Livingstone, Olafsson and Simoes 2008: 10).

Therefore, for the research I carried out 60 semi-structured in-depth, face-to-face interviews, 36 with Egyptian second-generations between the ages of nineteen and

thirty-five, and 24 with first generations between thirty-six to seventy living in Milan, Rome and Turin[16].

There is a relatively equal gender distribution with 33 males and 27 females. Interviews in Turin were carried out during September 2011 – July 2012, in Milan during May 2012-October 2012, while interviews in Rome were conducted during October 2012 –January 2013. The sampling was stratified according to gender, birthplace and year of arrival in Italy. Educational attainment is homogeneous and rather high: many of the interviewed migrants had completed secondary education or higher. As far as occupation is concerned, the first generation works in the catering and cleaning sectors and in the retail trade, while the second generations are mainly students. Finally, more than half of the sample have Italian citizenship.

Table 1 Characteristics of the respondents

Year of Birth	**Sex**	**Citizenship**	**Country of Birth**	**Year of Arrival in Italy**	**Education**	**City**
1984	M	Egyptian	Egypt	2009	Bachelor	RM
1975	M	Egyptian	Egypt	2008	Bsc Engineering	RM
1992	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		University student	RM
1969	M	Egyptian	Egypt	2001	Bachelor	RM
1994	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		High School Student	RM
1990	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		University student	RM
1970	F	Egyptian	Egypt	2006	Phd Student	RM
1951	M	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1973	Bsc Engineering	RM
1981	M	Egyptian	Egypt	2003	High School Diploma	RM
1980	M	Egyptian	Egypt	2003	Phd Student	RM
1974	F	Egyptian	Egypt	1996	Master student	RM
1982	M	Egyptian	Egypt	2002	University student	RM

[16] This study has also used data from the project "Transmediterraneans. North African Communities in Piedmont, between continuity and change", that FIERI, together with Sapienza University, MEMOTEF Department, carried out in 2012 and 2013.

1994	M	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1994	High School Student	RM
1992	M	Egyptian	Egypt	2007	Lower Secondary	RM
1964	F	Egyptian	Egypt	1989	BSc Economics	RM
1987	M	Egyptian	Egypt	2006	University student	RM
1947	M	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1983	BSc Psicology	RM
1942	M	none	Egypt	1979	Massage school Diploma	RM
1991	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		University student	RM
1971	M	Egyptian	Egypt	1995	Lower Secondary	RM
1979	F	Egyptian	Egypt	2002	BSc Economics	RM
1987	F	Egyptian	Egypt	2012	BSc Law	RM
1993	F	Egyptian	Italy		University student	RM
1960	M	Egyptian	Egypt	1985	High School Technical Diploma	TO
1960	M	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1981	High School Commercial Diploma	TO
1954	M	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1980		TO
	F	Egyptian	Egypt	2007	BSc Economics	TO
1954	M	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1979	Unconpleted university	TO
1955	M	Egyptian	Egypt	1989	BSc	TO
	F	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1988	BSc Economics	TO
1959	M	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1989	Lower Secondary	TO
1964	M	Egyptian	Egypt	1992	BSc	TO
1969	M	Egyptian	Egypt	2007	Bsc Engineering	TO
1970	M	Egyptian	Egypt	1993/4	BSc Economics	TO
1963	M	Egyptian	Egypt	1990	BSc Law	TO
1967	F	Egyptian	Egypt	1999	BSc Mathematics	TO
1964	M	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1991	High School diploma	TO
1970	M	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1997	Technical High School diploma	TO
1983	F	Egyptian	Egypt	2006	Technical High School diploma	TO
1991	M	Egyptian	Egypt	1997	High School Student	TO
1992	M	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1997	University student	TO

1993	M	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1992	University student	TO
1994	M	Egyptian	Egypt	2007	High School Student	TO
1985	M	Egyptian	Egypt	2006	Masters student	TO
1990	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		University student	TO
1994	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		High School Student	TO
1994	M	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		High School Student	TO
1993	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		High School Student	TO
1977	F	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1983	Bachelors degree	MI
1991	M	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		High School Diploma	MI
1981	M	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		Masters	MI
1977	F	Italian/Egyptian	Egypt	1989	Bachelors degree	MI
1991	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		High School Diploma	MI
1987	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		High School Diploma	MI
1991	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		Lower Secondary School	MI
1981	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		Bachelors degree	MI
1983	F	Italian/Egyptian	Belgium		Bachelors degree	MI
1991	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		High School Diploma	MI
1991	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		High School Diploma	MI
1991	F	Italian/Egyptian	Italy		High School Diploma	MI

Interviews lasted an average of one hour, and were conducted in Italian: sometimes English or Arabic was used in order to help respondents (mainly Egyptian women) express themselves better with the help of a second-generation translator (usually the intervieewee's son or daughter). Conversations with a number of interviewees also continued via e-mail and Facebook.

Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach (using an in-depth interview guide), which included various aspects of life and migration experience. In particular, participants were asked about the following topics:

- Arrival in Italy;
- Sense of community belonging and social participation;
- Intergenerational relationships;

- Transnational ties with Egypt (in political, economic, family and symbolic terms);
- New media use.

The answers to the questions also contained personal reflections and opinions about the current situation in Egypt and views about intentions to return and future plans.

The interviews were audio-taped, transcribed and coded using the qualitative software *Atlas.ti* (Muhr 2004), even if the responsibility of much of the work of analysis and especially the interpretation of results remains on the researcher (Corrao 2000; Trobia 2003). The software *Atlas.ti* allows the assignation of codes that are used to "tag" special sets of keywords and/or quotations that can then be grouped into families. The encoding, therefore, allowed the identification of different sub-themes within each family.

Respondents were reassured about the confidentiality of information and all of them expressed interest in receiving the results of the study.

The following aggregation centers and networks for Egyptian immigrants were referred to in order to meet the interviewed persons in Milan: Negma Egiziani d'Italia, NEGMA Egiziani in Italia, Comitato Immigrati Egiziani, YallaItalia and a few people were reached through other local networks and personal contacts in order to diversify the sample.

To recruit Egyptian migrants living in Rome, local NGOs and immigrant associations were contacted through the website *Roma Multietnica* (*Multiethnic Rome*) and the Facebook group Egyptians of Italy. Snowball sampling was also used to extend the number of respondents. In Turin, Il Nilo, an Arabic culture and language school, Giovani Musulmani d'Italia (Young Muslims of Italy association), ASAI (Associazione Animazione Interculturale) and Giovani al Centro, an association for intercultural activities and the Facebook group Egyptians in Turin were all contacted.

Then to check my hypothesis and discuss findings and interpretations, repeated interviews were carried out with the creators and administrators of Facebook groups and interviews with key respondents.

Table 2 Key respondents

Name	**Role**
Mohamed (nickname Ing Leader)	Creator of the Facebook group Egyptians of Italy
Rania Tahon	Creator of the Facebook group Egyptians in Turin
Khaled Shaker	Member of the Facebook group Egyptians in Turin
Heba Madkour	Creator of the Facebook group NEGMA-Egyptians in Italy
Menna Ahmed	Creator of the Facebook group NEGMA-Egyptians in Italy
Andrea Boutros	Journalist and blogger at YallaItalia
Rania Ibrahim	Journalist and blogger at YallaItalia
Wejdane Mejri	Blogger at YallaItalia, president of Pontes, association of Tunisians in Italy
Martino Pillitteri	Project manager YallaItalia
Khaled El Sadat	Project manager Giovani Musulmani d'Italia Torino
Paolo Branca	Professor of Arabic Language and Literature, Università Cattolica di Milano
Ibrahim Awad	Director of the Centre for Migration and Refugee Studies, American University in Cairo

3.3. Participant observation online and offline

I have set up an Internet ethnography of Egyptian groups on Facebook: Egiziani d'Italia, Egiziani a Torino and NEGMA-Egiziani in Italia, to document practices

and dynamics of consumption, production and sharing of content and the sharing and dissemination of political and social issues as well as the development of new forms of participation and mobilization in the online public sphere. These groups were created at different times by Egyptian second generations in Italy and they increased in numbers of members, posts and participation during and after the Arab Spring.

Just as ethnography requires that the understanding of a population should be achieved from direct observation and sharing the everyday practices through which social actors construct and reconstruct the culture, in spaces and in the precise timing of that construction process, at the same time, "netnography" aims to study the daily practices of cultural production of the users of the web where they unfold: on social media.

According to the Facebook website, the groups on the social network, "let you share things with the people who will care about them most"[17].

The discipline of ethnography on the Internet is very new and not very standardized, so everyone tends to name it as he wishes, creating some confusion and contradictory terminology (Caliandro 2012). Virtual Ethnography is an obsolete term, typical of the early 1990s, which provides a substantial ontological difference between online and offline (Hine 2000; Turlke 1995). Ethnography, generated from anthropology, has been used extensively in sociology and cultural studies, and it has shaped a distinct form within media studies (see, among others, Morley and Silverstone 1990; Gillespie 1995). Ethnography has been adapted in communication research mostly in studies aiming at contextualizing and grasping the multiple dimensions of media consumption (Lull 1990; McQuail 1997). Media ethnography has sometimes become so narrow as to ignore the cultural and political context where media are consumed (Radway 1984; Ang 1996) and underestimate the sociological important of talk and action (Georgiou 2011).

[17] The groups on Facebook can be:
Secret: Only members see the group, who's in it, and what members post.
Closed: Anyone can see the group and who's in it. Only members see posts.
Open (public): Anyone can see the group, who's in it, and what members post.
Link: https://www.facebook.com/about/groups

The term netnography is a neologism coined by sociologist Robert Kozinets (2010), who has developed this method in the domain of theoretical Tribal Marketing and Consumer Culture Theory, and which is configured as a method of qualitative research to study the culture of online consumption, both for sociological and for marketing purposes (Caliandro 2012); yet, according to his own definition, netnography is "an ethnography adapted to the complexity of the contemporary social world", a hybrid method that, through the "combined use" of various research techniques (direct observation of online communities, digital focus group, face to face interviews, e-mail or chat rooms, surveys), tries to come to a knowledge of reality on either side of the screen.

Netnography, therefore, may be regarded as the digital "transposition" of ethnography, which we define as the style of qualitative research, based on direct and prolonged observation, which has as its purpose the description and explanation of the meaning of the practices of the social actors (Giglioli et al. 2008: 1). The limitation of my online ethnography has been my lack of knowledge of Arabic, used by the members of the groups in many posts. For this reason the offline methodologies of the research have been strengthened, even if I still constantly monitored what was happening online, and that always served as a basis for confrontation with members of the groups, especially with the creators and administrators of the groups who have helped me in the translation and interpretation of the posts, but most of all in my analyses.

Among the most important moments in which I carried out participant observation, there were celebrations for the first anniversary of the revolution, organized by the Facebook group Egyptians in Turin at the ATC theatre in Turin on 25 January 2012, the two offline meetings of the Facebook group Egyptians in Turin that took place at Parco del Valentino in Turin, on Sunday 22 April 2012 and 6 May 2012, and the second (offline) meeting of Egyptians of Italy that took place in Milan, Sunday, 20 May 2012. Moreover I participated in the celebrations for the second anniversary of the revolution organized in Turin by the General Union of Egyptians in Italy (UGEI) at the ATC theatre on 25 January 2013.

3.4. Focus groups

Finally I also had the opportunity to conduct three focus groups: one with the group *Giovani al Centro* (Moroccan, Tunisian and Egyptian second generations) at *Centro Interculturale Città di Torino*, Friday 11 May 2012, and two with the group *Giovani Musulmani d'Italia* (Young Muslims of Italy), in Turin, one on Saturday 21 of July 2012 and the other on Saturday 18 of May 2013. At the focus group with the Youth Group at the Center there were 8 participants between 17 and 20 years old, of Egyptian, Tunisian and Moroccan origins, while at the focus group with the Young Muslims of Italy there were 15 young people between 18 and 28 years old (Egyptians, Tunisians and Moroccans). All of them were either born in Italy or born in Egypt, Tunisia or Morocco and brought to Italy at an early age, before most of their childhood socialization or schooling had occurred.

I have used focus groups (Corrao 2000) aimed at deepening the online political transnationalism of first and second generations and their desire to construct an online and offline identity through a historical perspective. When possible, I have attempted to understand whether and how these participation and identification processes have evolved and transformed over time, with particular reference to the Arab Spring. The revolts in North Africa unleashed a process of discovery, identification and enhancement of a specific national sense of belonging and a more active commitment towards countries of origin, very often played out online. Focus-group discussions were conducted among second generations in order to explore the images and experiences of the ancestral home, online and offline, trying to incorporate them as active participants in the research process, and to discuss findings with them.

CHAPTER THREE

Egyptian migration and Arab Spring

Egyptian emigration in the world

"Egyptians have the reputation of preferring their own soil. Few ever leave except to study or travel and they always return… Egyptians do not emigrate" (Cleland 1936: 36).

Despite this, over the last decades Egyptians have emigrated very differing reasons. Two main destinations have emerged, over the years, for Egyptian migrants: Arab Gulf countries (Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya) and the industrialized countries like Australia, Canada, the United States, and European countries, like Italy, France and the United Kingdom (IOM 2010; Cortese 2010).

The main destinations affect the type of migration experience that can be classified as temporary or permanent migration. According to Nasser (2011), the distinction is simply a geographical one, with all migrants to Arab states defined as temporary, even though some have been there many years. This is also related to the labour migration regime in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, which does not allow permanent settlement or citizenship status for labour migrants, irrespective of how long they stayed in the country. On the other hand, all migrants to Europe, North America or Australia are defined as permanent, including those recently arrived.

Even if there are significantly less Egyptians in Europe than in North America, the positive trend in the flow of Egyptian migrant workers has continued to swell the respective communities (Fincati 2007).

Europe is the destination for a constant flow of illegal immigrants. This flow brings young people with little or no qualifications, as well as many recent graduates who have outstayed their tourist visas (Zohry 2006).

Among European countries in particular, Italy is the most important European destination.

The beginning of this chapter details the various phases of Egyptian emigration. The focus then shifts to Egyptian migration to Europe and Italy in particular. I will present this in the context of three Italian cities: Rome, Milan and Turin, focusing, on socio-demographic features and characteristics of the socio-economic integration of this group in the country. The Chapter ends with an analysis of Egypt's relationship with its diaspora.

1. The different phases of Egyptian emigration

The history of Egyptian emigration can be divided into various stages, all after the 1950s. I have chosen the comprehensive classification used by Zohry (2003), which shows five distinct migration phases from Egypt: 1) initial phase pre-1974; 2) expansion phase (1974-1984); 3) contraction phase (1984-1987); 4) deterioration phase (1988-1992); and 5) immigration phase (1992-2003). Phases immediately preceding and following the Arab Spring have been added, based on data supplied by the Center for Migration and Refugees Studies of the American University in Cairo (CMRS 2013).

Each phase corresponds to specific migration policies implemented by the Egyptian government (Fincati 2007) which Awad (1999) distinguishes as “management politics” and “structural politics”.

The author describes the first type as short-term interventions that include State involvement in defending their immigrants in destination countries, in selection and recruitment processes to avoid abuses by recruiters as well as uncontrolled outbursts in some professions, such as attempts to influence and control shipment flows.

The second type refers to medium and long-term policy, with the focus on tying migration to furthering national development objectives, as well as cutting into the causes, extent and control of the socioeconomic impact of emigration. This may lead to negotiations on bilateral or multilateral labor agreements. Structural policies

can also help in reducing pressure on the labor markets, improving skills through education and training policies, and thereby discouraging or encouraging emigration in the relevant categories (Awad 1999).

1.1. The First Phase (up to 1974).

From the mid 1950s to 1967, Egypt had a restrictive policy on emigration (Zohry and Harrell-Bond 2003). Collyer (2004) highlights that the rationale for such restrictions was to conserve the skills and labor pool that could be accessed as required, and that a mass exodus would have caused significant damage to Nasser's ambitious development plans. At this time, emigration was only allowed to university students going to the USA or Canada, which started the brain drain (Zohry 2006), or on the basis of political considerations (to promote pan-Arabism and to make Egyptian presence felt in the Arab world) as well as teachers going to the Gulf states and other Arab countries (Collyer 2004; Roman 2006).

The Committee For Manpower was set up only in 1964, allowing emigration applications to be considered, which had previously been extremely restrictive. The Committee issued few emigration permits until 1967, when emigration started to be actively promoted (CeSPI 2008).

Emigration was then temporarily suspended in 1969, and when it was again permitted, it was administered by the Department of Emigration at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Ministry had the role of policy making, coordinating various government agencies and managing emigration levels along with other ministries (Awad 1999; Collyer 2004).

The *Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistic* (CAPMAS) estimated that there were around 70,000 Egyptian emigrants in 1970 (Fincati 2007).

Most Maghreb countries ended large-scale emigration to Europe in the early 1970s, implementing migrant return policies. Egypt, on the other hand, prioritized labor export (CeSPI 2008). Article 52 of the Constitution was ratified in 1971, authorizing permanent and temporary migration, as well as guaranteeing Egyptians the right to emigrate as well as the right of return. Article 73 of the same year

offered public-sector employees the possibility of a year's leave to work abroad for that year. This was then extended to two years, and there was further loosening of legal restrictions. This law allowed many migrants start temporary work in the Arabian Gulf states (Zohry, 2005).

1.2. Expansion Phase (1974-1984).

Various factors have contributed to changing Egyptian emigration policy. Firstly, Sadat's rise to power, which coincided with the end of emigration restrictions, as well as the start of *Infitah* (economic liberalization policy) had direct consequences on Egyptian emigration policy (CeSPI 2008).

The real expansion phase in migration started however after the 1973 war. This was the time of rising oil prices, the start of important development programs in the oil-producing countries, and the resulting demand from Egyptian workers, when the number of temporary migrant workers going to Gulf states rose (Fincati 2007). This policy loosening facilitated Egyptian emigration not just for unskilled workers (especially to Iraq) but also for teachers and health-sector workers[18] (Fincati 2007). The pool of "potential migrants" grew to take in people with average and lower educational qualifications.

Further liberalization encroached with the intervention of the International Monetary Fund in 1976, while the Gulf Organization for the Development of Egypt brought in more incentives, by offering loans for emigration, for example (Collyer 2004).

According to data released by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), the number of Egyptian emigrants went from 70,000 in 1970 to around 1.4 million in 1976, and 2.3 million in 1986 (Zohry and Harrell-Bond 2003; Roman 2006; CAPMAS 1989).

During this second phase (1974-1984), which Zohry calls "expansion", emigration responded to the need to lighten the burden of the national labor market (Nasser

[18] Fargues (2012) maintains that Egyptian education and training policy is part of "Egyptian emigration policy", cf. de Haas 2006.

2008), reduce unemployment, supply Arab countries with necessary labor (especially post-1973), and to ease social tensions (Zohry and Harrell-Bond 2003; Collyer 2004; Roman 2006: CeSPI 2008). In addition to this many of these workers sent a significant portion of their earnings to their families in Egypt. As early as 1979, these remittances amounted to $2 billion; a sum equivalent to the country's combined earnings from cotton export, Suez Canal transit fees and tourism. Since then, emigration has had an important role for the Egyptian state and Egypt's development.

The Ministry of State for Emigration was established in 1981, and Article 111 on "Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians abroad" was passed in 1983. This law, split into 5 chapters, has remained the framework for Egyptian emigration policy ever since (CeSPI 2008). One of the main aspects of the law is the, above-mentioned, distinction between permanent and temporary migration. The law defines permanent migrant as "the Egyptian who stays abroad permanently, by obtaining the nationality of a foreign country or a permanent residence permit to stay in this country; or who stays abroad for at least ten years, or obtains an emigration permit from one of the countries of emigration specified by a resolution of the Minister concerned with Emigration Affairs". While the law defines the temporary Egyptian migrant as "the Egyptian Citizen, who is not a student or seconded employee who settles and sets up his main activity abroad and has a job to make his living, providing that he has stayed abroad for one year and has not taken permanent emigration procedure" (Nasser 2011).

1.3. Contraction Phase (1984-1987).

As the first Gulf War (Iran-Iraq) was erupting (1980-1988), Egyptian emigration began to wane. Falling oil prices, economic recession in the Gulf states, the resulting fall in demand for labor in the construction industry, precocious growth of the emerging Asian economies and an "indigenization" policy in the Arabic countries resulted in large-scale repatriation of Egyptian emigrants. Egyptian emigration underwent a qualitative change at this time, with qualified substituting

unqualified migrants, as well as a quantitative change (CeSPI 2008). In 1983, there were an estimated 3.3 million Egyptian workers abroad. Three years later, CAPMAS estimated the figure at 2.25 million (Fincati 2007).

1.4. Deterioration Phase (1988-1992).

Egyptian emigration also experienced two other phases. The first, from 1988 to 1992, saw the return of many Egyptians (Zohry and Harrell-Bond 2003; Zohry 2003; Roman 2006), a trend which had begun in previous years and again in 1994. The number of foreign contracts with Egyptian labor halved between 1988 to 1989. The outbreak of the second Gulf War in 1990 forced most Egyptian emigrants in Iraq and Kuwait to return home. From 1989 to 1991, the number of Egyptians resident abroad fell from 1.9 to 1.5 million (Nassar 2005; Fincati 2007), with the latest wave of Egyptian migrants coming to Europe (Ferrero 2013).

1.5. Immigration Phase (1992-2003).

The next phase, in 1993, brought the number of Egyptian emigrants to "normal" levels, with increasing immigration from sub-Saharan countries including Sudan towards Egypt (Zohry 2003).
The 1996 census tells us that there were an estimated 2.8 million Egyptians residing abroad (Fincati 2007).
After migration fluctuations in the 1980s and 1990s, Egypt experienced a so-called "permanence of temporary migration" in the 2000s, whereby migration towards Arab countries became less temporary and outnumbered long-term migration to Europe and North America. The last 15-20 years have seen increasing migration – mostly irregular - towards Europe, especially towards Italy and France (MPC Team 2013).

1.6. Before the Revolution.

According to official sources, the number of Egyptians abroad was estimated at 6.5 million before January 25th, 2011 revolution (see Table 3). The 2.2 million Egyptian migrants in the Gulf countries account for one third of the total Egyptian emigrant population. Saudi Arabia hosts almost 60% of the Egyptians in the Gulf (1.3 million), followed by Kuwait with 22%, and the UAE, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain, accounting for less than 20%. Other Arab countries receive about 2.6 million Egyptians, with about two million of these residing in Libya. Other destinations of Egyptians in the Arab region are Jordan (about 0.5 million), Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen, hosting another several thousands of Egyptians.

Egyptians in the OECD countries comprise about 25% of Egyptians abroad. The main destination for Egyptians in the OECD countries is North America (USA and Canada) with about 0.8 million, followed by the United Kingdom (250,000), Italy (190,000), France (160,000), Australia, Greece, the Netherlands, Germany, and Austria.

Table 3 Egyptian Migration by Receiving Country (2010)

Receiving Country	**Number of migrants**	**Distribution by destination for Arab countries and non-Arab countries (%)**	**Overall distribution (%)**
Lybia	2,000,000	41.8	30.9
Saudi Arabia	1,300,000	27.1	20.1
Jordan	525,000	11.0	8.1
Kuwait	480,000	10.0	7.4
UAE	260,000	5.4	4.0
Qatar	88,500	1.8	1.4
Oman	45,000	0.9	0.7
Lebanon	38,000	0.8	0.6
Iraq	15,000	0.3	0.2
Bahrain	12,000	0.3	0.2
Yemen	10,300	0.2	0.2
Syria	10,000	0.2	0.2
Other Arab Countries	5,559	0.1	0.1
Total Arab countries	**4,789,359**	**100.0**	**74.0**
USA and Canada	780,841	46.3	12.1
UK	250,000	14.8	3.9
Italy	190,000	11.3	2.9
France	160,000	9.5	2.5
Australia	106,000	6.3	1.6
Greece	80,000	4.7	1.2
Germany	30,000	1.8	0.5
Holland	30,000	1.8	0.5
Austria	25,000	1.5	0.4

Switzerland	12,000	0.7	0.2
Other non-Arab countries	22,317	1.3	0.3
Total non-Arab countries	**1,686,158**	**100.0**	**26.0**
Total all countries	**6,475,517**		**100.0**

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Manpower and Emigration 2011, author's calculations.

1.7. Immediately after the Revolution.

The Arab Uprising had an immediate impact on international migration in the Middle East and North Africa as reflected in repatriation to Libya, border crossings from Syria to Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey and other neighboring countries in the region, and the slight rise in irregular migration from Tunisia right after the fall of the Ben Ali's regime. The immediate consequences of the Arab uprising in affected countries were the disruption of their economic systems resulting from the fall of their political regimes.

Egypt represents the case of a country that was expected to generate large outflows of migrant, but these large outflows never materialized. Europe was only marginally affected. Its economic crisis kept it from attracting migrants. Its policies made sure that they stayed away (Awad 2013). Political instability and inadequate security following the Revolution were however strong push factors. This also adversely affected investors and entrepreneurs operating in Egypt, leading to higher unemployment (Abdelfattah 2011). This instability had an overwhelming impact on the economy. In 2010, Egypt tourist industry income came to $13.6 billion. This mainstay of the economy dropped approximately 35 percent falling to $9 billion in 2011 (Fargues and Fandrich 2012).

1.8. Two Years after the Revolution.

In 2011-2012, under the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) and then under the first elected Islamist president, the Egyptian economy slowed sharply. Protrst and conflict reflected the sharp political divides between Islamist political parties, on the one hand, and nationalist, liberal/left-wing parties and other social groupings, on the other.

Following the revolution in 2011, Egypt ratified a new constitution on December 26th, 2012. Constitutional guarantees such as the right of entry and exit for Egyptian citizens were stipulated in the 1971 Constitution. Egypt's 2012 constitution introduced rights and protections for Egyptians living abroad. Article 56 reads: "The state represents and protects the interests of citizens living abroad, and it guarantees their rights and freedoms and holds them to fulfilling their public duties towards the Egyptian state and Egyptian society. It encourages their contribution to developing the homeland" (MPC team 2013). This reflects the relationship that the Egyptian government wants to keep with its emigrants as we will see below.

Girgis and Osman (2013) conducted a study in September 2012 which showed that about 8% of Egyptians wished to emigrate. University graduates and urban residents had a higher desire to migrate than other categories: 10.5 percent for urban residents versus 5.1 percent for rural residents and 11.9 percent for university graduates versus 6.3 for interviewees with less than secondary education. As for the migration timeframe, about 42% thought of migration after the revolution. The study points out that 75% of Christians thought of migration after the revolution, compared to 38% for their Muslim counterparts.

Fargues takes up on Hirschman's for an interesting work relating to the Arab Spring and emigration (Fargues 2012). Fargues (2012) considers, in fact, Albert Hirschman's theory of response to deteriorating conditions, given the choice between "exit", "voice" and "loyalty".

The question that Fargues (2012) poses in this work is extremely interesting because it asks if emigration played a role in the political and social movements that were to shake the Arab countries starting from 2011. His answer is that if one regards emigration as an alternative protest – an "exit" instead of "voice" response to discontent and frustration, according to Albert Hirschman's model – then one

must acknowledge that emigration did not bring the prosperity that would have reduced the economic roots of revolt. Indeed, on the one hand, flows of migrant workers were small in comparison with those of new entrants to the labour market, and emigration barely lessened the pressure exerted by unemployed and under-employed young people. And on the other hand, if remittances certainly enhanced the social status of migrants' families, it remains doubtful whether they were able to fuel sustainable development in the home country. Actually, there are no convincing success stories of emigration-based development at the national level in Arab countries.

If migration was not a decisive factor in economic change, did it contribute to political change and play a role in the uprisings? Certainly as we shall see later, models and values migrants have been exposed to in their destination country may have worked behind the scenes in shaping political opinions and ideologies, through a mechanism commonly described as "social remittances" (Levitt 1998) which refers to the transfer of "immaterial" goods by migrants to the motherland. The role of expats in conflicts and in nation building processes have been extensively documented. In the Maghreb revolutions, one could identify initial or preceding expat support in sharing and broadcasting ideas and values (pluralism, democracy, freedom...), which was facilitated by new technologies. However, risings also broke out autonomously, with Egyptians abroad initially feeling lost, wondering how best to help at events which sprang up out of nowhere.

2. Migration to Europe

The best analysis of Egyptian migration, especially to Europe, are those of Zohry (2005; 2009).

According to Zohry (2009), from the beginning of the 1960s, political, economic, and social development led some Egyptians to migrate to North America and European countries. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' estimates based on consular records, the total number of Egyptian migrants in non-Arab countries was about 1.4 million in 2008, comprising about 29% of the total number of

Egyptians residing abroad, with more than half a million Egyptians in Europa. About 80% of Egyptians in Europe were concentrated in three countries; Italy (210,000, 41%), The United Kingdom (74,764, 14.6%), France (70,000, 13.7%) and Greece (50,000, 9.8%).

Table 4 Egyptians in Europe (2006)

Country	**Number**	**Percent**
Italy	210,000	41.1
UK	74,764	14.6
France	70,000	13.7
Greece	50,000	9.8
Germany	40,265	7.9
Netherlands	20,000	3.9
Austria	20,000	3.9
Switzerland	12,000	2.3
Sweden	3,510	0.7
Denmark	2,000	0.4
Cyprus	2,000	0.4
Spain	1,000	0.2
Belgium	1,000	0.2
Other European Countries	4,339	0.8
Total	510,878	100.0

Source: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (Zohry 2009)

Zohry (2009) highlights that Egyptian migration to Europe started about two hundred years ago in the early nineteenth century, after Napoleon's Egypt Campaign (1798-1801). Mohamed Ali, the founder of modern Egypt, sent the first Egyptian mission to Italy in 1813 to study printing arts, and another mission to France in 1818 to study military and maritime sciences in order to establish a strong Egyptian army, based on the European standards of that time. Since then, there has always been open communication between Egypt and Europe. Europeans migrated to Egypt and formed successful minorities in Alessandria and Cairo that survived

until the 1950s. The economic pressures and the transition to socialism in the Nasser era led many European Egyptians – individuals with European ancestry and Egyptian nationality, in addition to those with dual nationality – to migrate to Europe. Considering the most recent phases of migration we can say that Egyptians (re)started to migrate to the West in the 1960s. According to Zohry (2009), successful Egyptians live in most of the large European metropolitan areas.

Among Egyptian migrants in Europe, Zohry (2009) identifies two major groups: established migrants and contemporary (recent) migrants.

By established migrants, Zohry (2009) means those who migrated in the 1960s and early 1970s. This stream of Egyptians to the West was a silent protest against the socialist regime led by Nasser and the nationalization of the main sectors of the economy at that time, which affected the private sector. In addition to this anti-socialist stream, there was another stream of migration including academics and the political opposition. Established migrants include other categories such as students who were sent to Europe on government missions for graduate studies and stayed there after graduating.

It is important to note that among European countries, the UK and France were the most attractive countries for the Egyptian elites, who then became established migrants[19]. Despite the fact that the last King of Egypt, King Farouk I (1921-1965), being exiled to Italy, this was not an important destination for those Egyptians who left Egypt due to Nasser's economic and social policies. This may be attributed in part to the fact that, until the early 1970s, Italy was a country of emigration that sent migrants to other European countries and North America.

By contemporary migration, Zohry (2009) means migration that occurred in the last 15-20 years. Generally speaking, contemporary migration is dominated by unskilled irregular, male migrants who managed to build a network that constantly brings new migrants to Europe.

Hence, Egyptian migration to Europe is different from other streams that target Europe, being male-dominated and temporary labor migration in general, while

[19] A vague comparison between established migrants in Milan and Paris (Zohry 2009) suggests that established Egyptian migrants in Paris are more educated than their counterparts in Milan. This classification triggered two different migration streams: academics and specialists to Paris, and businessmen and skilled workers to Milan.

other migration streams to the same destinations involve both males and females more inclined to stay in the destination countries (Zohry 2006).

Some things are changing, as FIERI research *"Transmediterranei. Le collettività di origine nordafricana in Piemonte tra continuità e cambiamento"* shows, with Egyptians beginning to identify themselves as a community that has completed the "migratory cycle". The migratory chain began in the mid-seventies, reuniting families to make them even stronger, and with second generations having reached the age of majority. These internal migratory dynamics/demographics affect relations with the immigration country and with the emigration country, as well as lifestyles, values, and future prospects when they finish their working lives (Cingolani and Ricucci 2013).

3. Egyptians in Italy

Italy became a destination for Egyptians beginning in the 1970s. The first migrants from Egypt were mainly urban, highly educated, middle-class individuals (from Cairo and Alexandria), who left Egypt as a consequence of the high unemployment. They left looking for new opportunities and cultural experiences. While many migrants headed to Rome to study, many of them did not conclude their studies and joined the labour market (Premazzi et al. 2012).

They left Egypt in search of better jobs. Often Italy was not the first destination, but the latest stage on a complex migration path. The migrant flows in 1980s and 1990s had the same basic characteristics, although with slightly less educated migrants. Egyptians were attracted by the income differential and in some cases by the desire to have culturally enriching experiences (Scannavini 2010).

Migrants during this first phase did not have economic obligations towards their families. Initially they were interested in accumulating savings in order to return home after a few years. But superior economic and social conditions influenced them to prolong their stay indefinitely. In this way, migratory plans changed from being temporary to permanent (CeSPI 2005a).

As mentioned above, Egyptian emigration to Italy swelled during the 1990s, partly due to reduced work possibilities for unqualified migrants in the Gulf states (Nasser 2005; de Haas 2007; Fincati 2007), and partly due to the attraction of the Italian labor market, as well as the relative ease of access into Italy.

There was a steady increase in Egyptian numbers from 1981 to 2008, which at the same time reflected the composition of the immigrant flows. On January 1st, there were 110,171 Egyptian migrants registered, accounting for 3% of legal, non-EU residents in Italy. Egyptians represent the ninth largest non-EU community.

Table 5 First ten groups of non-EU citizens in Italy - 2011

	COUNTRIES	**TOTAL**	**% of total non-EU citizens**
1	Morocco	501,610	14.2
2	Albania	483,219	13.7
3	China	274,417	7.8
4	Ukraine	218,099	6.2
5	Moldova	142,583	4.0
6	India	142,565	4.0
7	Philippines	136,597	3.9
8	Tunisia	116,651	3.3
9	Egypt	110,171	3.1
10	Bangladesh	103,285	2.9
	TOT	**3,536,062**	100%

Source: www.demo.istat.it

According to Fincati (2007), this was partly due to various bilateral migration flow agreements (in the 2000s) and also scientific and technological cooperation (1998), which contributed to the gradually increasing number of Egyptian emigrants going to Italy.

3.1. Characteristics of Egyptian migrants in Italy

As already mentioned, Italy became a destination for Egyptians beginning in the 1970s. The first migrants from Egypt in the 1970s were mainly highly-educated, middle-class individuals, from urban areas (Cairo and Alexandria), who left Egypt due to high unemployment. They left looking for new opportunities and cultural experiences. While many migrants headed to Rome to study, many of them did not graduate, joining the labor market instead.

The social composition of Egyptian migrants to Italy has gradually changed. Since the mid-1980s, the economic crisis in Egypt has put a strain on Egyptian families, pushing new groups of poorly-educated men from rural areas to search for work abroad.

Egyptian migration consolidated during the 1990s, thanks to networks of family members and acquaintances that acted as a base in the settlement phase and during the job search.

As the data shows, the number of Egyptians in Italy has grown from 33,000 individuals at the beginning of the 2000s to over 110,000 at the beginning of 2011, with a growth rate of 226.9% over the last nine years (Premazzi et al. 2012).

Table 6 Egyptian residents in Italy in 2002, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011

	2002	**2006**	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**Var. % 2002–2011**
	33,701	**65,667**	**71,117**	**82,843**	**90,365**	**110,171**	**226.9%**

Source: www.demo.istat.it

According to data from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2012) , there is a marked gender imbalance in emigrants, with 51,993 males compared to 22,606 females. This may be related to civil status, with 60% being celibate as opposed to 39% being married. Unlike trends abroad, the Egyptian labor migrant in Italy is usually young and unmarried;

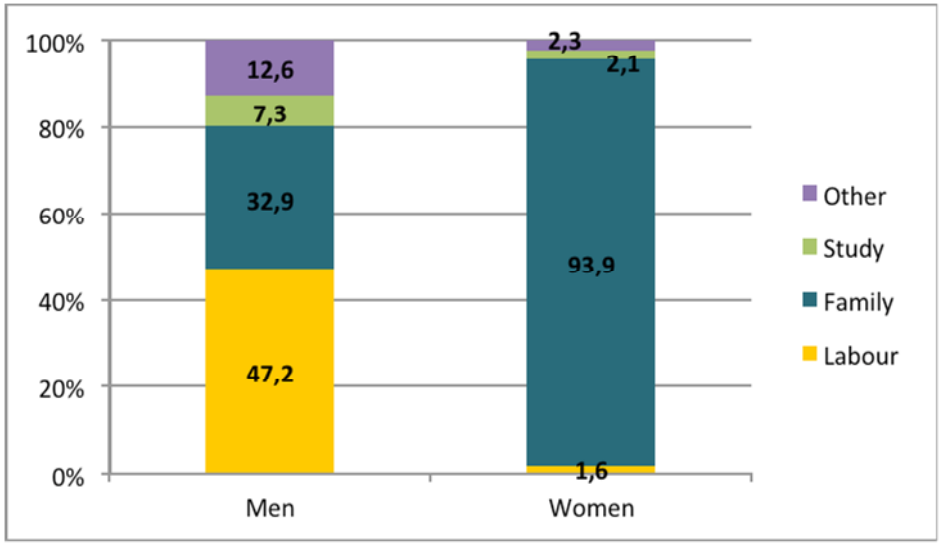
occasionally he leaves alone and at a later point is joined by his family, through family reunification processes; others believe their stay to be only temporary, and so keep their family at home, or else the family stays in the patria due to the prohibitive cost of living for a household in the new country (De Maria 2011).

Some migrants returned to Egypt to get married, subsequently bringing their wives to Italy. The first generation's cultural space, in fact, continues to be that of the homeland and their individual lives continue to be dictated by family ties and reproduction cycles, especially with regard to marriage choices (CeSPI 2005a). This is also confirmed by Cortese (2010: 11), where he talks about reasons for entering the country. "The principal reason for men entering is work (63.3%) with women on the other hand entering for family reunification (91.1%)".

Egyptian women married to first-generation migrants, are mainly housewives. They live in relative isolation and, as already shown in previous research (Ambrosini and Schellenbaum 1994; Cespi 2005a), are highly dependent on their husbands' resources.

Over the years, the number of women has also increased, largely due to family reunification (in 94% of cases) and starting families, resulting in higher birth rates in Italy.

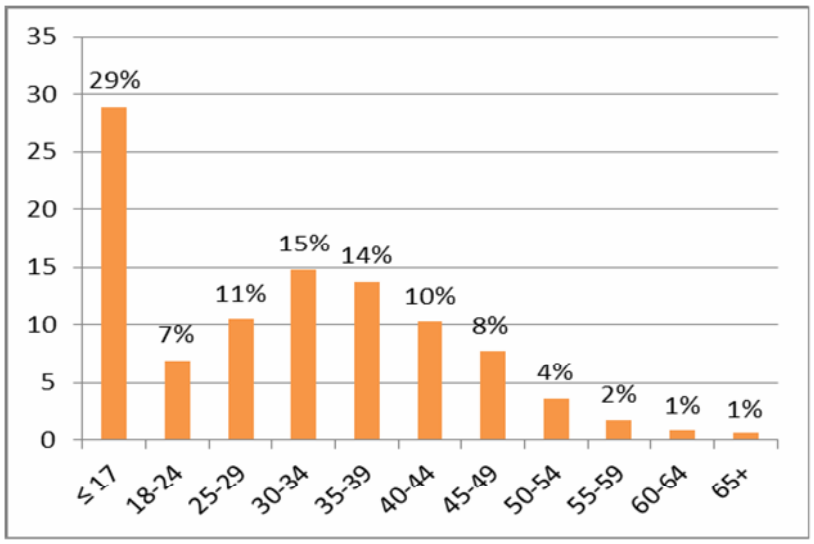
Figure 5 Egyptians who entered Italy with a residence permit in 2006, still in force as of 1/1/2007, by gender and reason (%)



Source: www.demo.istat.it

The establishment of families implies consolidation of a second generation of young people who were born (or who arrived in their early years), raised and socialized in Italy. The population structure by age groups shows a substantial proportion of children (29%). According to data from MIUR – Ministry Education University and Research (Dossier Caritas 2011), there were 2,732 Egyptians enrolled in kindergarten, 3,915 in primary schools, 1,696 in secondary schools, 1,037 in high schools during the academic year 2008-2009.

Figure 6 Distribution of the Egyptian population in Italy by age-group - 2011



Source: www.demo.istat.it

As regards the Egyptian community in Italy, there were almost 32,000 legal minors living here on January 1st, 2011, equivalent to 29% of all Egyptians in Italy. There were 2,347 newborns to Egyptian parents in 2010, which is 14% of those born to north-African parents, and almost 4% of the births to non-EU citizens (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2012).

There were a total of 13,000 minors of Egyptian background registered in the school year 2011-2012, placing 13th in the classification of the number of foreign students. 2% of non-EU students had an Egyptian background. In the school year

2011-2012, the number of Egyptian students registered in Italian primary and second-level schools increased by 12%, an increase of 1,400 on top of the 11,322 registered in 2010/2011. Only 35.5% of the legally resident Egyptians up to 17 years go to school, while the total for non-EU minors is more than double at 72.6% (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2012).

There were 261 Egyptian university students registered in Italy for the academic year 2011-2012 , representing 0.5% of the 51,639 non-EU students, of which 153 were male and 108 female. The latest statistics show a fall in registered Egyptian students as a percentage of non-EU students, going from 0.9% to 0.5%, with the absolute number falling to 176 people (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2012).

There is a significant number of Egyptian minors who came unaccompanied to Italy. They were sent to Italy by their families, without parents or adults with them (Scannavini 2010). Although they arrive alone, they have left behind relatives with whom they maintain strong linkages. They have been entrusted by the family with a strong responsibility.

According to recent research carried out by Save the Children Italia (2010: 10), "parents take on heavy debts to send their sons to Italy, to give them a future that may be a source of prosperity for the whole family". Therefore, every young man has a big burden: he feels a strong sense of duty and responsibility towards his parents in Egypt. First, the money earned in Italy will serve to cancel the debt and further improve the family's economic situation. Although they are adolescents, many of them have only one aim in mind: to find a job, even low-paid, so as to send money home. For this reason, many of these minors accept night shift work doing low-paid black-market jobs at the big city General Markets (Milan, Rome, Turin...) (Terre des hommes and Parsec 2009).

The Save the Children survey (2010) showed that Egyptian boys left their homes with a well-defined path ahead of them. They often have a (fictional) "uncle" awaiting them in the cities of northern Italy and who will not take really care of them.

Being teenagers, these migrants have a lower level of education compared to their compatriots who arrived in Italy 30 or 40 years ago.

Despite the large number of unaccompanied minors, however, most Egyptian migrants in Italy are of working age, between 25 and 45 years old (50%) (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2012).

Cortese (2010: 11) notes from Ministry of Interior data that "the proportion of over 50-year-old Egyptians is extremely low, and that 80% of Egyptians with residence permits are in the prime of their working lives: between 18 and 49". A mere 7% of Egyptian migrants are under 50, against 10% for the other African countries, and 14% for all non-EU states (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2012). This shows that it is a young community, and that some return to Egypt on reaching retirement age.

Table 7 Egyptians in Italy with Residence Permit on December 31st, 2007

Age groups	**Percentage**
Up to 17	3,5
18-24	8,8
25-29	15,7
30-34	22,4
35-39	18,1
40-44	15,2
45-49	8,7
50-54	4,4
55-59	1,9
60-64	0,7
65 e più	0,6
Total	100,0

Source: Cortese (2010) on data Ministry of Interior

Comparing distribution types by age shows two distinct dynamics: 35-49-year-olds are the largest male group (37%), followed by 18-34 year-olds (33%), and then the minors (22%). Under 17-year-old women are the dominant age group (Ministero

del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2012). ISTAT data from 2011 shows the same pattern.

According to ISTAT (2011), Egyptians are concentrated in the northwest (77.5%) and in the centre of the country (15.1%). In Lombardia, Lazio, Piemonte and Emilia Romagna host 92% of the Egyptians living in Italy, with the remaining 18% to be found mostly in the center-north of the country (Fincati 2007). Almost 70% of permit holders and more than 70% of all Egyptians residing in Italy are to be found in Lombardy alone. This concentration is unlike other communities in Italy (Cortese 2010). There is a significantly higher concentration in Lombardy than in Lazio, with Egyptians representing 10% (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2012). The remaining 20% are distributed around Italy's southern regions.

Caritas Migrantes (2005) maintains that Lombardy appears to be in a situation where the "migratory chain" works as an alluring and stabilizing medium. Although more than two thirds of other African migrants ended up in northern Italy, the polarization manifested by the Egyptian community is most particular (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2012).

This peculiar geographical collocation explains, according to Cortese (2010), also the specific areas of insertion of the Egyptian workers that, as we will also see below, refer to the construction sector, the manufacturing activities as well as that of hotels and services.

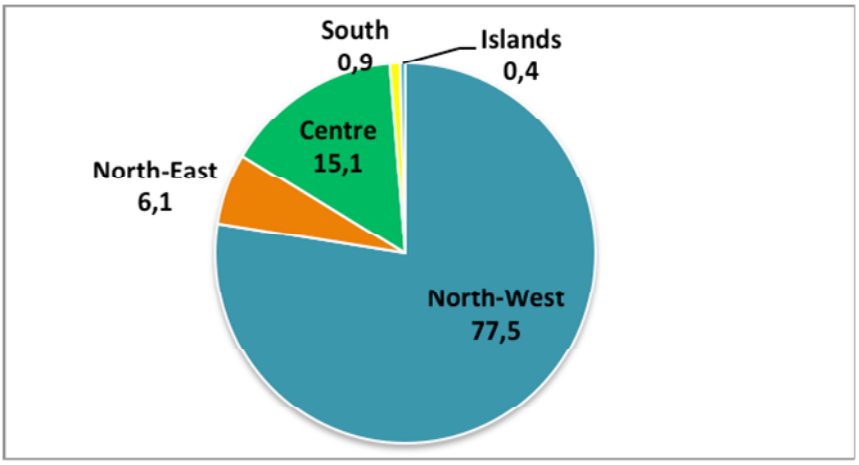
Egyptian migrants' social capital, and their migration networks, are valuable when introducing relatives and friends to the Italian local labor market. According to CeSPI research (2005a), *Gli Egiziani in Italia Tre casi studio: Roma, Milano, Emilia Romagna*, Egyptian migrants seem to be "natural" brokers when it comes to informally integrating migrant workers. Their informal networks are already effective in calling relatives and friends from Egypt as well as assisting small Italian entrepreneurs to select new employees from Egypt. Their job-finding skills are essential in helping Egyptian migrant workers integrate into Italy's job market and society. The majority of migrants recruited by the Egyptian diaspora in Italy come from the metropolitan areas of Cairo and Alexandria. They find work in family business, especially restaurants. In some cases, strong connections between Egyptian migrants and their home towns have created important labor flows,

inserting them in the building sector, for example (CeSPI 2005a). Business start-ups allow owners to employ family members (who can consequently obtain legal residence in Italy) and to rely on available and trustworthy workers, as well as to receive social recognition. These same workers, working with relatives or employers, also receive on-the-job training, human capital that can be re-invested in their own businesses.

Milan has the lion's share of Egyptian residents in the Lombardy Region's 12 provinces. For two years running (2006 and 2007), the Egyptian community represented the largest foreign community in Milan (Cortese 2010).

Recent data from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (2012) shows not only the major metropolitan centers as being attractive to migrants (Milan 46%, Rome 12%, Turin 5%), but also smaller cities (Brescia 7%, Pavia 4%).

Figure 7 Distribution of Egyptian residents in Italy by area of the country - 2011



Source: www.demo.istat.it

Table 8 First ten provinces of residence of Egyptians in Italy (%) - 2011

	City	Total	% women	% of total Egyptian residents in Italy
1	Milan	*51,023*	26.8	46.3
2	Rome	*12,636*	28.4	11.5
3	Brescia	*7,833*	23.5	7.1
4	Turin	*5,051*	34.6	4.6
5	Pavia	*4,273*	31.3	3.9
6	Bergamo	*3,668*	25.2	3.3
7	Lodi	*3,342*	29.9	3.0
8	Cremona	*2,913*	36.0	2.6
9	Florence	*2,287*	29.3	2.1
10	Reggio Emilia	*1,942*	24.8	1.8

Source: www.demo.istat.it

We have already seen that Egyptians are the ninth largest non-EU community in Italy, in terms of absolute numbers as well as having Italian citizenship. Out of 40,223 successful applicants for citizenship, 912 had Egyptian origins, which represents 2% of the total (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2012).
Even though the majority of Italian citizenship applications are equally, in the case of naturalization or when getting married, the number of naturalized Egyptians (63% of the total) is again significantly higher than the number of those granted citizenship when getting married (37% of the total). Predominantly males are granted naturalization (89%), while it is about even for those granted citizenship for marriage reasons (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2012).

On the whole, unlike the majority of successful non-EU applicants in acquiring Italian citizenship, there are more Egyptian men (75%) than women (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2012).

Just over 30% of the Egyptians working in Italy have at least a high school education, while 42% of Egyptian workers have junior high education (Ministero del Lavoro e delle Politiche Sociali 2012).

Caritas/Migrantes estimates that of 75,599 Egyptian residents, 50,413 were employed in 2008. On first coming to Italy, migrants find employment only in menial jobs (dirty, dangerous and demanding). They then try to improve their economic and social status along with their chances of staying in Italy, with many achieving social mobility through entrepreneurial activities (CeSPI 2005a).

For some highly-educated workers - almost 30% of Egyptians in Italy are graduated (ISTAT 2008) - the switch to self-employment represents an alternative route to restricted socio-professional mobility as an employee. The practical experience gained (in human resources and social capital, such as networks) has enabled many to open up their own businesses (Premazzi et al. 2012). Egyptian migrants are prime examples of successful insertion in the labor market, especially due to their vibrant entrepreneurial spirit (CeSPI 2005a). According to Cortese (2010), small businesses have made a significant contribution to the Italian economy. From 2003 to 2008, the number of Egyptian companies active in Italy grew by 32%. One third of Egyptians in Italy are entrepreneurs or are self-employed.

Egyptian business strategy has also been characterized by integration into economic sectors with no or few ethnic connotations, such as the construction, or foodservice industries (pizzerias and kebab shops), with undifferentiated clientele, and where the cultural component is not central to the economic activity.

Egyptian businesses operate in competitive and saturated markets with small mark up. However some Egyptian migrants are active in the import-export sector. As well as working in the Italian market, they are creating new trade links with their country of origin: for example, some Egyptian building enterprises in Italy are demanding Egyptian carpets and artisans goods for interior decoration (CeSPI 2005a).

It should be noted nonetheless that for some sectors, such as the construction industry, a significant share of activities actually hide dependent work relations, where the opening of an autonomous enterprise is imposed by previous employers, in order to outsource social and economic costs, while maintaining dependent working relationships.

CeSPI (2005a) reports the results of the study undertaken by the '*Confederazione nazionale dell'artigianato e della piccola e media impresa*' (2003) and by Infocamere (the database of Italian Chamber of Commerce) that show rispettivamente 1,236 enterprises run by Egyptians and an even greater number of Egyptian entrepreneurs registered in Italy. About half of them (2,683) are located in Milan and another 15% (778) are established in Rome (CeSPI 2005a). They run small businesses in the traditional sectors: restaurants, pizzerias and bakeries, shops, hotels; building and related activities (carpentry); manufacturing activities (metalworking); transport, international trade between Egypt and Italy; and new migrant specific activities such as Internet and international calling shops.

Egyptian entrepreneurial vocation in Italy is one of the highest among migrant nationalities (5,124 Egyptian entrepreneurs out of 46.000 migrants: 11% of Egyptians living in Italy are entrepreneurs; against 19% of Senegalese, 16% of Chinese; 11% of Moroccans and Nigerians; 10% Tunisians) (CeSPI 2005a).

Table 9 Egyptian dependent workers by economic sector at census 2001

ECONOMIC SECTORS	**DEPENDENT WORKERS**	
	Absolute values	**% on total**
Agriculture and fisheries	550	**4,2**
Industry	**4,951**	**38.2**
among which:		
Manufacturing	**2,556**	**19.7**
Construction	**2,318**	**17.9**
Commercial	4,467	**34.4**
among which:		
Hotels and restaurants	**3,024**	**23.3**
Other sectors	3,003	**23.2**
among which:		
Transportation and warehousing	508	**3.9**
Domestic work in private households	588	**4.5**
Total	**12,971**	**100**

Source: Istat (in Cortese 2010)

3.2. Egyptians in three different Italian cities

3.2.1. Egyptians in Rome

Another CeSPI study from 2005 *Gli Egiziani in Italia Tre casi studio: Roma, Milano, Emilia Romagna* (Egyptians in Italy – A Study of Three Cases: Rome, Milan, Emilia Romagna) accurately describes the Egyptian communities resident in Rome and Milan, with the first Egyptian emigrants settling in Rome in the 1970s. They were mostly young highly-educated males, with a higher socioeconomic

status. They came to Italy to finish their studies, as mentioned above, or they were attracted by higher incomes (CeSPI 2005a), or public sector employees, taking the chance to work in Italy while keeping their job in Egypt, as guaranteed by the law from 1983.

Egyptians in Rome mostly come from the big cities (Cairo, Alessandria), the Nile Delta (Tanta and bordering communities such as Kifrakila al bab – el Mahalla el Kubra), from the Sharqiyya governorate (especially Belbes) as well as Al Munufiyya (CeSPI 2005a). Some have wedding contracts with Italian women and therefore got citizenship in this way. Most Egyptians in Rome work in the foodservice industry (moving up quickly from dishwasher to waiter to cook), in construction and the cleaning sectors.

New arrivals accessed the job market by meeting the employer directly, or through Italians they knew, giving rise to a "useful ethnic perception" in some sectors. This in itself has become useful in helping get a foot in the door in sectors such as foodservice. Ambrosini and Abbatecola (2002: 23 in CeSPI 2005a) note that these first immigrants have "ethnic referral networks which are practically limited to family members and a small circle of intimate friends" - a concept we will revisit later on.

The Egyptian population in Rome remained constant during the 1990s, remaining between five and six thousand (CeSPI 2005a). The gender imbalance remained, and immigrants were mostly educated (diploma/degree) and economically active. Many young Egyptians who arrived after 1998 were illegal immigrants, a situation that was settled with legalization in 2002.

A high percentage of Egyptians in Rome are self-employed and entrepreneurs – due to the specific labor market conditions on starting work in Italy, as well as the economic benefits offered by being self-employed, despite not being proficient in Italian, and because they have liquidity available (as they usually have upper-middle class backgrounds).

In Rome there are several Egyptian associations that operate in different fields and who carry different instances mainly cultural, religious and sport related; even if there is no coordination between them. Priorities of these associations , such as the Egyptian League, are the teaching of the language and culture of origin in some

schools, as well as charitable activities (as the repatriation of deceased body) . The affiliation to the different associations is in response to an utilitarian view (CeSPI 2005a), and, because of the lack of results, combined with a strong distrust, condemns these same associations to be often empty boxes. The associations are then built on the basis of common urgency and never shared on the basis of a common national identity. The associations of this part of the population seems to actually "formalize" pre-existing relationships based on mutual awareness and similar financial and family situations. Instances of this kind carried out by associations are shared by only a small part of Egyptian migrants arrived in the subsequent years, especially since the nineties.

3.2.2. Egyptians in Milan

"Wherever you go in Milan, you will hear Egyptians chatting with each other loudly in colloquial Egyptian; they can easily be identified on public transport and many other places in Milan such as via Padova and the nearby Maciacchini metro station." Zohry discusses the Egyptian presence in Milan in the CARIM report (2009), *The migratory patterns of Egyptians in Italy and France*.

As mentioned above, the majority of Egyptians in Italy are concentrated in Milan. Researchers nevertheless perceive a somewhat "underground community" image of the Egyptian community (Ambrosini and Schellenbaum 1994) in Milan, a "non-community" (Ambrosini and Abbatecola 2002). There is in fact a marked lack of formal and recognizable community associations and institutions. We will return to these concepts later.

Immigration to Milan also has a long history, with the first Egyptians arriving in the 1970s. Again, these were predominantly male. In the 1980s, immigration patterns started to change, due to family reunifications and new waves of young immigrants. Those immigrants arriving in the 1970s comprise a very distinct macro group compared to those who arrived in the 1990s (Ambrosini and Abbatecola 2002; CeSPI 2005a). They are distinguished by a subtle yet palpable division based on social and cultural profiles, their subsequent career paths, and their use of available

social capital. Early immigrants were young men (19/20 years old) from upper-middle class backgrounds, who left Egypt temporarily (at least that was the intention) looking for a better way and quality of life. Some wanted to *"travel the world"*, others had political reasons. Economics and business graduates, people with agricultural qualifications and industrial consultants all arrived in Italy to find their qualifications were not recognized, but had to start from scratch. The Egyptian managers we see today were at one time dishwashers, cooks, factory workers. The 'pioneers' who arrived 20-30 years ago started independent businesses in the eighties after getting their permits in order. Then they took care of reuniting the family, though mixed marriages were also quite common.

Those who arrived in the 1990s, however, came almost exclusively for a better economic quality of life. They came to Italy alone but meanwhile have been joined by their families. Unlike their predecessors, mixed marriages are uncommon.

The trends in career paths for both groups is interesting to observe. The first group, which arrived in the late 1970s, did different jobs before starting up their own businesses in foodservice and trade. They established themselves in economic sectors not yet characterized by a specific ethnic group, which were mostly frequented by an Italian clientele, such as pizzerias, restaurants and bakeries (CeSPI 2005a). They predominantly started from scratch as illegal immigrants, while the 1990s arrivals started directly in the sector in which they set up their own businesses, with the help of friends or relatives. This information confirms the migratory chain hypothesis, whereby those who arrived first opened the way for the second group.

Despite the figures, an aspect evident investigating the Egyptian reality in Milan is the absence of a visible community and the existence of an underground community, territorially dispersed. In fact formal meeting places don't seem to exist (perhaps because there are no formal associations that represent the community), and except for few worship centers, favored meeting places are not traceable, as confirmed by CeSPI research (2005a): the Egyptian Coptic church in Via Senato and the monastery of Lacchiarella that today is also the Episcopal seat, and the Islamic Cultural Centres of Viale Jenner and Via Padova.

A significant aspect of the Egyptian immigration, in part already pointed out, is clear from earlier studies and literature: a "reluctance to take on connotations of visibility, marking ethnic boundaries and establishing of meeting places", where recourse is made to self-identification as Egyptians just for "opportunistic" reasons, as if there was a continuing ambivalence between the desire to preserve their identity in the private sphere and the willingness to "compromise" in the public, to meet the needs of the host society and opening to the resources that it is able to offer (Ambrosini and Schellembaum 1994). As for the two main religious communities, still confirming the CeSPI research (2005a), they appear to be strongly distinct, and it is very rare to find Egyptians belonging to these two communities working together.[20].

In Milan, as described previously, lives the largest of Egyptian community in Italy. It is therefore not surprising that especially here there were several attempts to create associations. The majority of community initiatives in Milan were made by Egyptians, with Italian citizenship, who settled for many years in Italy. Significant in this regard is the experience of an association formed in the mid 80s. It was an association of Egyptians arrived in Italy few years earlier, or who have been married for few years, often in mixed marriages, and who shared with some Egyptian fellows destinies and life paths. The goal of this initiative was to create a meeting place, where they could speak their own language, and then meet with their wives and children to spend time together, "a way to bring together" as reported by the president, in which they organized football matches and concerts and had the characteristics of an association of mutual aid, where they organized and paid to repatriate the bodies of the deceased.

The reasons of the weakining of this initiative, according to CeSPI research (2005a), range from the absence of the requirement to hold a meeting because "there was no time", because each of the members "had family and no longer felt this need", because some of the first members had left, and finally because it was

[20] Significant in this regard, however, is the experience of YallaItalia, initially monthly insert in the weekly nonprofit newspaper *Vita,* today a blog. Created in 2007 following the episode of the "Muhammad cartoons" published in Denmark and the attacks on the Via Quaranta Mosque in Milan in 2008, to give voice to alternative views and people not involved in the issue, gathered mostly young second-generation of Arab origin, without any distinction of religion (they were in fact both Muslims and Copts).

suspected of being "controlled" by the Egyptian authorities.

Among those who arrived in the 90s it appears instead the lack of interest in the establishing of an association, as already mentioned above.

It thus confirms that the ties between the compatriots arrived in the '90s establish in very tight circles, on individual or familiar base.

Other more recent attempts to create associations were:

- Egypt 2000, created in 2000. It was located in a bar in Via Porpora "right in front of the consulate" (CeSPI 2005a). The objective of the association was to sustain cultural activities, including the launch of a web site: www.egypt.it[21]. The association also wanted to develop activities with the support of Italian NGOs[22] and the Municipality of Milan and eventually to link with other Egyptian associations in other Italian cities as well as in Europe. In January 2004, the President of the Association also became representative of the *General Union of Egyptian Abroad*[23], based in Egypt, with the aim to support initiatives in Italy and establish, in the future, contacts with other partners of the Union in other European countries, such as Great Britain. The General Union of Egyptian Abroad reconstitued in 2013 and it was "reintroduced to the public" on the occasion of the celebration of the second anniversary of the revolution on January 25, 2013.

- In 2003 the Italo-Egyptian Association (IEA) was founded "with the social purpose of keeping alive the culture and identity of Egyptian nationals in the territory of the Italian Republic and to facilitate their inclusion and integration in that territory in respect of different cultures and laws" (Cortese, 2010: 13).

- Also in Milan, was established in 2003, the Italy-Egypt cultural association *El Nadi El Masri El Itali* to sustain reciprocal knowledge (it was in fact made up of Italians and Egyptians) and support the establishment of Arab language courses in English in public schools. The association also had the objective of

[21] Now the website is no longer active.

[22] Also in 2000 was made an exhibition of cultural promotion of photographs in collaboration with an NGO in Bergamo.

[23] Non-governmental organization, but closely linked to the Ministry of Labour and Immigration, the General Union of Egyptians Abroad (GUEA) was born in August 1985 with the task of maintaining and strengthening the links between the Egyptian migrants and their homeland.

setting up a data base of Egyptian enterprises in the region (and on a later stage nationwide) in order to identify business opportunities. This association was created for profit purposes, unlike earlier initiatives, and therefore did not claim to be representative of the Egyptian community.

3.2.3. Egyptians in Turin.

Egyptian emigration to Turin also has a long history, with the first arrivals coming in the 1970s. Larger numbers of less qualified immigrants started arriving in the 1980s, followed by a wave of family members from the 1990s (Cingolani and Ricucci 2013).

Egyptians in Turin come mainly from the Governorate of Al Munufiyya and al-Qalyūbiyyaand from the big cities of Cairo and Alessandria.

Turin's Egyptian community is younger than that of Rome or Milan, and also than the other communities in the city such as Moroccans, with the average age under 19 years.

According to reliable estimates, there were 2,475 Inail insured Egyptian workers (45% of those resident) in Turin in 2011, meaning that this community plays a significant part in the city's economy.

Egyptians have shown a capacity for penetrating Turin's job market, in occupational niches which seem to be largely unaffected by the crisis, even given the high proportion of self-employed. Here, one in five residents is self-employed. The many Egyptian traders are mostly active in local stores, such as bazaars/butchers and convenience stores (FIERI-CCIAA 2009; Castagnone 2008), as well as being street vendors, especially in local outdoor markets selling fruit and vegetables (FIERI-CCIAA 2010). The foodservice industry, typical of Egyptian small businesses, is evident in Turin mostly as take-outs and kebab stores (FIERI-CCIAA 2009; Castagnone 2008).

In Turin, one of the meeting points is the Egyptian school, “Il Nilo”. The school was founded in 1995 on private initiative of the Association Cleopatra, with the goal of the preservation of the Arabic language and the promotion of Egyptian

culture . The lessons are currently held on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Those who attend classes, pass the exams required by the Egyptian school system until the eighth grade, perform the Egyptian school obligation, earning a diploma recognized by the Egyptian government that will enable them, should they return to Egypt, to continue their studies. Within the school was founded another association of Egyptian families.

The school in Turin is not only a meeting place but also a bridge between the first and second generations: first generation migrants are involved as teachers whereas the second generation learn their parents' language and culture and maintain important ties with their community[24].

Other important meeting places are the worship centers, both for Muslims and for Copts. In particular, the mosque in Via Saluzzo (Porta Nuova area), also base of the Islamic Cultural Center, is the most important point of reference for the Egyptian Muslims, living in Turin.

The mosque in Via Saluzzo is today managed by the ACIST (Islamic Cultural Association San Salvario Turin) that adheres to UCOII (Union of Italian Islamic Communities and Organizations)[25].

[24] The problem that arises, however, in general for the Egyptian community, and in particular regarding the school *Il Nilo*, is its inability to include all the religious souls of Egyptian migrants in Turin. If it is true that schools are a *secular* place it is also true that the Egyptians are a very religious people (Ferrero 2012), which are not only Muslim but also Christian Coptic Orthodox. Some daily practices are strongly influenced by religious affiliation (in particular rules in eating and dressing) and become obvious and possible grounds for discrimination even in a *secular* place as the school. Despite the fact that in the school in Turin, for example, there are also Coptic teachers, in fact, precisely because of these differences, that can sometimes generate criticism and discrimination, the majority of interviewed Copts in Turin think that the school is a place where one can feel excluded and is not considered full-fledged members of the community. Some, however, feel some improvements due to the efforts of the Director and to the mutual knowledge that can help to combat prejudice. The deep division between the two religious communities and the strong polarization due to the combination of religion and politics that, from the country of origin is reflected to the destination country, often exacerbates tensions and disagreements, increasing the difficulty of cohesion among the Egyptians Turin.

[25] The UCOII is an association, founded in Ancona in 1990 by members of the Islamic Cultural Center of Milan and Lombardy, which today brings together 122 Italian Islamic associations and organizations and runs about 80 mosques and 300 unofficial places of worship. Objective of the UCOII, according to the website, is to "promote the integration of Muslims in the socio-cultural reality of the country, playing an indispensable work to elevate the moral and material level and make the Muslims inclusion in the socio-cultural fabric of our country more effective and rapid" and later on, "contribute significantly in a patient but continues and cohesive way to build an Italian Islamic Community, who carries out his full civil and religious function in complete independence from any external force, or country ideology".

The ACIST was established in 2002 and runs the Islamic center of the mosque in Via Saluzzo. In addition to religious ceremonies there are different types of activities held at the center: meetings with imams, Koran courses (often led by women and young people in the mosque).

"The other side" of the Egyptian community in Turin consists of the Coptic Orthodox Christians who have their worship center in the church of the Immaculate Conception in Via San Donato. According to the leaders of the church, Copts living in Turin and province would be approximately a thousand, although practitioners appear to be no more than 150/200 people. Many of them attend church every Sunday for Mass, but also to meet other Egyptians speaking Arabic, eat Egyptian food in a communitarian dimension. During the week, at the church there are also catechism classes for young people and other types of activities. Even for the Coptic community the church has been a point of reference for the dissemination of information on the latest legislative and presidential elections in Egypt.

4. Relationships between Egypt and Egyptians abroad

As regards migration policy before the Arab Spring, emigration and maintaining links with citizens abroad were significant economic and political concerns for most countries in the Southern Mediterranean (Fargues and Fandrich 2012). Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon set up ministries and organizations specifically designed to maintain links with their citizens abroad, particularly to encourage development through remittances (Fargues and Fandrich 2012). Political participation abroad was less encouraged (or not at all) before the Arab Spring, as many governments were distrustful of the diaspora, especially as many political opponents had formed opposition groups abroad.

The Maghrebi governments (Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco) started to allow citizens mobility in the 1960s, followed by Egypt sometime later, as we have seen. Since then, emigration has become an integral part of their national development plans (Fargues 2005). Migration took on a double significance immediately following independence. It was positive in that it took pressure off the labor market,

it boosted earnings and helped boost the skills pool, but it was precarious due to the implicit threat when building up new nation states (Nasser 2008).

The 1970s energy crisis threw Euro-Mediterranean migration patterns into chaos, marking an important change in relations between home and destination countries. There was a need to promote emigration to new destinations (Arab and Gulf states), and to develop relations with the community in Europe, to counterbalance the effects of large-scale repatriation (at least in Morocco and Tunisia). This was due to a change from temporary migration, for work only, to a fully-settled-with-family situation (CeSPI 2008).

The Egyptian government set up the Ministry of State for Emigration in 1981, responsible for administering emigration procedures, ensuring services to Egyptians abroad, and creating a global migration strategy to promote national development[26]. The 1983 law featured a Supreme Committee for Emigration (art. 4) working under the Minister responsible for emigration, intended to bring together those responsible from the other Ministries. The Committee's aim was to train future emigrants, to maintain and strengthen religious, linguistic and cultural contacts with Egyptians abroad, and to decide which supports to provide migrants before, during and after emigrating (art. 5). Article 6 was a (voluntary) register for workers that would be available to the Minister for Emigration, enabling the required skills to be matched with positions in destination countries, also establishing which workers had priority.

The Ministry of Manpower and Immigration was set up in 1993, with the role of controlling emigration policy in the national interest in order to achieve socioeconomic development (Fargues 2006; CeSPI 2008).

Migration relations between Italy and Egypt were regulated until the Arab Spring by a readmission agreement signed in January 2007, and by a labor agreement signed in 2005 (CeSPI 2008). The agreement was intended to enable lists of

[26] Close reading of this chapter highlights how Egypt already grasped the importance of migration at this time. The Minister responsible for migration, in collaboration with other Ministers, has the role of "planning, organizing, implementing and following emigration policy aimed at strengthening relations between Egyptians abroad and their homeland, and (aimed) at contributing to the socioeconomic development of the Nation and the country's national interests"44. One considers the possibility of actively involving highly-skilled emigrants in the country's scientific development, and insists on the need to elaborate tools and strategies enabling migrants to contribute to developing productive projects in Egypt, with their savings and investments.

workers to be compiled in the origin country and, in line with the Bossi Fini law 186/02, to provide professional training and language lessons in the home country. The Italian Development Cooperation (Direzione Generale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (DGCS) - part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) developed the IMIS project (2001-2005), the IDOM project (Information Dissemination on Migration) and the IMIS Plus project (CeSPI 2008) as part of this package (training – recruiting and job seeking) through IOM.

Projects' institutional frameworks are based on cooperation between the Italian Government as a funding agency, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as the provider of technical support, and the Emigration Sector of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration through which the projects are implemented (Zohry 2009).

The IMIS project (2001-2005), as described in the CeSPI report (2008), proposed facilitating matching Italian labor market demands with the supply of Egyptian workers. The objectives were to be socioeconomically inclusive, to support the return of migrants' real or virtual capital (human, economic and social), to better regulate returns, and to develop an attractive economic environment for their investments. With this in mind, an Egyptian worker database was created for those intending on going to Italy, and these workers were supposed to remain in contact with the Italian job market.

Zohry (2009) reports that 170,000 people applied via the project's Internet portal, from which 1,500 were selected for job interviews. Of the selected candidates, only 200 passed the practical test in a vocational training center in Cairo. The selected candidates were enrolled in an Italian language course for three months, and 178 were selected to work in Italy. Despite the poor results achieved by the IMIS project, it was considered a learning experience. It highlighted the need to train potential migrants to match the requirements of the EU countries' economies, as well as the local needs of the Egyptian economy (Zohry 2009).

The Egyptian side criticized the excessive bureaucracy in the recruitment process and the lack of positions available, while the Italian side criticized the Egyptians' poor selection criteria and especially the lack of agreed definitions for the required skills. This is one of the reasons for the almost total absence of employers availing

of the IMIS scheme for recruiting Egyptian migrants. To make amends, the Italian Ministry of Social Solidarity started the *Sharing learning for a better migration life* project. This created supervisory positions in both countries, whereby they identify the common criteria in order to create workers' profiles and ultimately compile lists of candidates to work in Italy.

After the Arab Spring Egypt rejected the Mobility Partnership[27] proposed by the EU. This was because migration, (a policy-making matter before the revolution with a special Ministry), disappeared from the political discourse and was no longer regarded as a priority.

Although most of the discourse in Egypt has primarily revolved around internal politics (especially as the interim military rulers, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, have become increasingly assertive in political affairs), many political figures interviewed or mentioned in the MPC collaborative survey in Egypt (Hafez and Ghaly 2012) underlined the necessity for Egyptian migration abroad, in particular for reconstruction and development of Egypt through migration.

[27] "Mobility Partnerships will be offered to countries immediately neighboring the EU and to Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt, initially. Mobility partnerships offer a concrete framework for dialogue and cooperation between the EU and non-EU countries. These Partnerships focus on facilitating and organizing legal migration, effective and humane measures to address irregular migration, and concrete steps towards reinforcing the development outcomes of migration. Concluding visa facilitation and readmission agreements are to be part of these partnerships".

CHAPTER FOUR

Egyptians online

1. The Web revolution between first and second generations

In this particular moment in history, the role of mass media (in the sense of technologies and content), is becoming increasingly evident in defining the formative experiences of a generation. Not only are they so deeply embedded in everyday practices as to become a "natural" element of the social landscape and common sense, but also historical events, as well as cultural values and their symbolic forms, are often mediated by them. This is what has happened, for example, with the revolutionary wave which swept through Egypt, now known as the "Arab Spring"[28].

The Arab Spring along with north African society's handling of new technologies have clearly featured prominently in reports and analyses from journalists, researchers, commentators, as well as social and political scientists over recent years.

I will consciously limit myself to three areas connecting ICT with Egyptian transnational dynamics between the country of origin and the adopted homeland.

First of all, one should conduct an analysis of media macrophenomena influential in the patria, and how these influence the diaspora. Rapid diffusion of navigation devices and web services, as well as increasing demand for Internet access in the Arab world, are significant factors in changing the nature of transnational relations, especially among second generations. Changing the devices with which one keeps in touch with the country of origin means not only using a different register but especially changing one's own identity perception. This is surely a generational phenomenon, non-specific to second generation immigrants, declining distinctively in immigrant children.

[28] "Arab Spring" refers to the democratic uprisings that arose in Tunisia in December 2010 and spread across the Arab world (Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain...) in 2011.

ICT's impact on one or more social groups in the generational context should therefore not be overlooked. This second analytical component is intended to offer ways of reflecting on that which divides and that which enables different generations of immigrants to meet. Analysis will focus on an unpublished and relevant theme regarding the second generation's behavior to the first in the role of cross-border information and communication gatekeepers. Does the use and knowledge of new technologies widen the gap between the first and second generations? How much does the presence of tech-savvy offspring help in integration processes and in maintaining cross-border relations? What is the relationship between these two concepts?

Ultimately it was not possible to ignore how the revolution and its digital dimension provoked Egyptians getting involved in Italy and rediscovering of their identity. I will compare the range of online connection possibilities amongst equals in the patria and abroad on the one hand, and how digital activism wanes offline. The "Egyptian situation" actually offers a series of general prompts on how immigrants' traditional political participation processes, self perception and identity are put to the test; these are often revolutionized by the capillary-like diffusion of devices, services and digital languages.

2. Technology usage in countries of origin and destination, among first and second generations

The eruption of the Arab Spring revealed the widespread use of advanced technological devices, as well as the use of online services and social networks, in countries previously perceived as being largely technologically illiterate.

On the contrary, the Arab world is seeing a growing number of users - more specifically those who use online social networks. There are however significant differences from country to country.

As far as Egypt is concerned[29], various different sources can be tapped to understand penetration levels of new technologies and especially the web, as well as the number of users of the main online services.

Above all, it is useful to keep in mind the demographics of the countries we are discussing: largely young people. According to data from the World Bank (2011), 31% of the 82 million Egyptians are between 0 and 14 years old, with only 5% being over-65s.

Data on Facebook use and its penetration in Egypt, supplied by the Arab Social Media Report at the Dubai School of Government (2012) [30], shows how there has been exponential growth of users in recent years. Between February 2010 and May 2013, the number of Facebook users in Egypt quadrupled, going from 3.1 million to 13.8 million. Most of the latter (9.7 million) are between 15 and 29 years old, while there are "only" 3.5 million over-30s. Egypt therefore has a young Facebook user profile, under 30 years old. A point of note particular to Egyptian Facebook use is that since monitoring of the service in Arab and Middle-Eastern countries began 4 years ago, Egypt has always had the most users, and the gap has continued to grow.

The number of Egyptian Facebook members makes up a quarter of the 54 million users in the Arab World (as of May 2013). After 2011, Egyptian usage continued growing faster than in any other Arab nation.

The Arab Social Media Report (2012) holds that social media empowers 46% of Egyptians as regards influencing change in their own country.

58% of Egyptians interviewed reported web use as having contributed to a greater tolerance of other points of view. 85% of Egyptians hold that social media have reinforced their own sense of national identity, while 79% of those interviewed said they have an increased sense of being "global citizens".

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[29] Egypt has roughly 20 million Internet users (CIA 2009). Other sources quote lower figures, with about 16 million (Internet World Stats 2009). Nevertheless we are talking about estimated web penetration of around 20-25% - but these estimates date from before the political changes of 2011; according to more recent data, approx. 40% of over-16-year-old Egyptians have Internet access, taking not only private residences but also Internet cafes and places of study into account. This percentage would rise to about 70% when considering urban-based youths. Furthermore 80% of adults have Internet access on their cell phones (Premazzi and Scali 2011). Cell phone ownership (allowing continuous access to web-based services) reached a peak in 2011, with over 83 million devices (one per inhabitant) (CIA 2011). This trend concerns mostly large cities with more resources and better education.

[30] http://www.arabsocialmediareport.com/Facebook/LineChart.aspx?&PriMenuID=18&CatID=24&mnu=Cat

This is despite relatively slow Egyptian connection speeds, according to Akamai in his report State of the Internet 2013[31]: 1,083 kbps (about 1 Megabit per second). Italy on the other hand – hardly a global leader in terms of connection speeds – has average connection speeds of 4,374 kbps (over 4 Megabits per second). Akamai's report lends weight to the idea of countries with significant growth potential in terms of speed and web-based infrastructures. User potential (evident on a generational basis in perspective) can grow therefore only through infrastructural consolidation.

The Arab Social Media Report also supplies data regarding a related albeit less popular platform – that of Twitter[32]. This social network has seen important development in Egypt since 2011, yet does not bear comparison with that of Facebook. There were 130,000 profiles active in Egypt in September 2011 – the first Arab country in this statistic. In March 2013, there were 519,000 Egyptian profiles on Twitter, but the first Arab country in absolute terms was now Saudi Arabia with over 1.9 million profiles (and exponential growth in service use).

Regardless, the Arab world has just over 3.7 million active Twitter users of which half are in Saudi Arabia. Egypt represents 1/7 of overall users and produces 12% of the region's tweets, according to updated March 2013 statistics.

The absolute dominance of services such as Facebook in Egyptian online usage is confirmed by stats regarding "niche" social networks such as LinkedIn, which specializes in online professional networking. As of February 2012, Egypt was ranked third Arab country in terms of LinkedIn profiles (almost 500,000). In May 2013, this figure grew markedly, yet remaining low in absolute terms (872,000 users). Nevertheless, 60% growth in one year suggests a progressive demographic shift in online service user numbers. LinkedIn is aimed at a working public and job seekers, therefore a more adult user profile than that of Facebook.

[31] Akamai is a company that supplies a content distribution platform via Internet http://www.akamai.com/stateoftheinternet/

[32] http://www.arabsocialmediareport.com/Twitter/LineChart.aspx?&PriMenuID=18&CatID=25&mnu=Cat

3. From text to exploring. The power of media

In order to continue the web's and the revolutions' impact on Egyptians abroad, it is useful to establish concepts regarding how media use has changed with the transition from old to modern communication channels, and the changes within family and community dynamics. The type of web use is often related to the authority which the particular media assumes for the subject.
In general, the first generations maintain a more intense use of traditional media, especially TV. This kind of relationship is based in part on a habitual mechanism and is related to usage categories, also due to a lack of ability to use alternative media.

> "I use TV more because on the Internet you can find inaccurate information, which they deny two minutes later. But on TV there is a person in flesh and blood who is speaking, I trust it more" (Abasi, M, 57 years old)

> "My mother and father speak like the television, they are influenced by it" (Abderrahim, M, 20 years old)

Second-generation young adults have a much more negative opinion of TV and its "authoritative" role. Egyptians respond critically to Egyptian TV's role during the revolution.

> "You cannot watch only one channel, because they are partisan! (Said, M, 20 years old)

> "I used to watch TV for a while; then I realized it was unreliable" (Hanas, F, 21 years old)

Use of Egyptian television is changing, and the medium is being judged against other information sources available, such as telephone calls with family and relations (first generation) and checking on Facebook (second generation).

> "Only 50% of the news reported by Egyptian television is true, so the phone is better for us. We call people who are there, and they tell us what is happening" (Alì, M, 48 years old).

> "I log on to Facebook or Twitter to know what's happening. I follow various papers on Twitter, which report contradicting things, so you can get an idea. You kind of know who to follow, through constantly following and asking for confirmation from people in Egypt. Most of the information I get from Egypt is from the Internet. Also because I don't have Arabic TV here, and I don't watch it when I visit my parents". (Abderrahim, M, 20 years old)

Many of the interviewees consider Al Jazeera one of the most important and reliable sources of information. Furthermore, during the revolution, the network based much of its communication work on input from online activists, thus creating, in the words of Jenkins (2007), "a convergent infrastructure of communication". Al Jazeera positioned itself in this crisis as a global information leader, even beating Western competitors. According to Valeriani (2010) this was the first time in the history of communication that a non-Western medium became the primary information source, even for Western decision-makers.

Rania, for example, says that:

> "I did not follow Al Jazeera before, but it was really an open window on Tahrir Square, always providing the latest news. Egyptian government channels actually said not to watch Al Jazeera because its news came from Israel, which is always the same card they play." (F, 35 years old)

Also for Amro and Asab, Al Jazeera was and still is very important:

> "The main channel I used to follow protests was Al Jazeera, both on the Internet and as a satellite channel. It was absolutely the most active of all. Then I used the Internet, the news from Ansa, and information channels on

the web, although the news from Ansa was often less updated than Al Jazeera's, both because of language problems and news transmission" (M, 21 years old)

"First I use the Internet, then Al Jazeera: I call it the medium of information because it informs you and I watch it on TV. It is the most watched channel in the Arab, Egyptian and Moroccan houses". (M, 20 years old).

But because of the rich Egyptian media landscape Al Jazeera was not and is not the only reliable source of news for the people interviewed; there is also Al Arabiya, BBC News and new online channels such as RNN.

"I use Al Jazeera, but I don't trust it so much, I feel it blows up the news: "Look at how many dead, hundreds!" I think it overstates things a bit. I don't even watch our television stations because they say "nothing has happened". I watch Al Arabiya and the BBC on the net. (Mosek, M, 21 years old)

"Al Arabiya is active and useful as well, especially for inquiries and interviews". (Rania, F, 35 years old)

"In Egypt we have lots of channels; so many, they broadcast everything and then some, so you find many points of view. If you follow everything you can get a picture of the situation." (Iman, F, 21 years old)

The history of RNN, as well as that of many other independent media outlets born during and after the revolution, is interesting. It is an example of convergence among old and new media and of news creation and sharing among different platforms, as the journalist Hanan Solayman (2011) writes in her article: "Rassd, which stands for *Rakeb* (observe), *Sawwer* (shoot) and *Dawwen* (blog), played a major role in exposing fraud in the last Egyptian parliamentary elections in November 2010. R.N.N was recently ranked as the 6th most influential media in the Arab world (according to Media Source Company)

following Al Jazeera, Al-Arabiya and Al-Masry Al-Youm and ahead of CNN! Rassd News Network or RNN in fact is a ground-breaking alternative media network. It was launched as a Facebook-based news source on January 25, 2011 and quickly advanced to become a primary contributor of Egyptian revolution–related news. Applying the motto 'from the people to the people', the citizen journalists who created RNN have since added a Twitter feed and launched an independent website dedicated to short news stories favoured by an online audience". Our interviewees generally know this channel, including Mosek:

> "I gathered information through Facebook, the RNN news page on Facebook, which is a very famous page and today it is also an Egyptian TV channel." M, 21 years old)

The Internet, as opposed to traditional media, seems to offer a broader range of devices that can provide information regarding the country of origin concerned. This allows young people to develop a cross-media approach that mixes stimuli and news from various sources and devices. (digital and analogical), creating their own information flow (Jenkins 2007).

> "I look at the Facebook pages as most of these pages are by young people. When they write something you know it's true because you find lots of comments backing it up. If you then read some of the links, the Internet is what helps you" (Hamed, M, 18 years old)

4. Where, how and when? Liquid technology?

Focusing on the frequency and localization of usage, regarding the web and increasingly mobile platforms (given wireless access), may seem dated. Nevertheless there seem to be two different web use strategies evident according to demographic grouping. Second-generation Egyptians demonstrate skills and connection frequency comparable to their peers abroad. They repeatedly use the

Internet and its related services 24/7, thanks to smart phones and mobile support. Cellphones enable continuous and targeted use of online services. This activity is often accompanied by "traditional" surfing on the laptop or PC, mostly from home, just like their Italian peers (Istat 2011).

> "You can use the Internet on your phone on your way home, before falling into bed dead tired. I use the Internet on my phone because it's always connected. The great thing about cell phones is that you don't need to look for things: they come to you. When I get home, I read up stuff on my laptop while lying on the sofa". (Said, M, 20 years old)

On the other hand, adults are less inclined to continuous usage, and only at specific times of the day. In general, they use the Internet to find information and, more often, to communicate with parents and friends in Egypt.
In the latter case, usage is normally on a home computer at fixed times, organized with the other speaker. While most youngsters' Internet use is a consistent part of their everyday lives (as well as social and personal lives), adults use the web as a device for specific rituals, with clear, predetermined times in the day or week.

> *"Do you use the computer to keep in touch with your brothers?*
> Yes, we do use the web too. We usually speak on Sunday and we are online for two or three hours" (Edfu, M, 58 years old)

Still, Internet and cell phones seem to have replaced many first-generation adults' use of traditional devices when communicating with relations, especially the telephone. Those interviewed noted a distinct improvement in the frequency and quality of contact they could engage in during the week, with notable savings through using free technology.
It is interesting to note the extent to which these technological devices are an important feature in strengthening and developing contact with the home country.

> "I used the phone rarely in the first few years because it used to cost 4,000 lira a minute (over 2 euros/min), but now I call them on my cell phone" (Bes, M, 59 years old).

Voice over Internet Protocol *(*VoIP such as Skype or Viber*)* is replacing traditional telephones. This technology has reinforced contacts, even amongst those who had previously lost contact. Software such as *Skype* allow video as well as spoken communication, enhancing the emotive aspect.
Communication using webcam enables a type of social interaction that was previously not possible with traditional telephones:

> "Why use the phone and pay more? Often, my three brothers and I start a group conversation together, and stay connected all day long. I know they are online at all times, so when I open the computer they are there. We don't always talk to each other, but I know that if there is something important, I can open the computer and they will be there" (Aziz, M, 42 years old).

The times for communicating take on a ritual element, connected to working schedules, celebrations and religious events. New technologies include a range of devices which are central to rekindling old friendships, as well as establishing and strengthening new contacts in the old home. This strengthens cross-border relations, especially within family circles. The web offers opportunities for first-generation immigrants to find lost contacts, old faces and environments from the fatherland. More active users can use it to distance themselves from their native setting. While they live their normal lives in Europe, they continue their virtual lives in their homeland, conducting a double existence in limbo between worlds.
According to Dana Diminescu (2008), this raises the question of how "the digitalisation of migration is reflected in the construction of new geographies mapping notions of "being at home" or of "here" and "there" in the context of migration. The development of various forms of communication media is responsible for the most important change in the immigrant's life. (Di Bella 2008), accompanying the passage from what could be defined as "double absence" to the

emergence of a social space with co-presences. (Diminescu 2008). Clearly, the increasing possibilities for digital co-presence, especially video co-presence enabled by VoIP technologies, embed the everyday lives of migrants in new "home territories".

5. Strategic use in relationships. Cross-border connections in the age of www

The Internet is often used to activate processes for rediscovering or building up one's own identity (Elias et al. 2007), for staying in touch with the home country (Parham 2004) and family (Bacigalupe and Camara 2012), or for (cross-border) social networking with other communities worldwide (Conversi 2012; Georgiou 2006; Oiarzabal 2012).

Social networks can actually help develop new, rather weak contacts, but can also become a contact channel for immigrants to stay in contact with their fatherland, for keeping in contact or for finding long-lost relatives and friends, as well as building new friendships. Hiller and Tara (2004: 742), for example, maintain that these channels help "develop new contacts", helping integration in the destination country, "creating relationships with the subjects and with the socio-cultural context presented by the migratory experience".

New technology also allows one to "cultivate and rediscover old relationships", or in the words of Caselli (2009: 62), "to familiarize and to take on (or to learn, in the case of second-generation immigrants) the traditions, culture and the life of the country of origin".

I have noticed that second-generation youngsters often wish to rediscover their family roots, as expressed by Hind, a Turin-born girl with Egyptian parents:

> "The way me and my father keep in touch with Egypt is different... My mother told me that even at the beginning, my father never had close contact with home; he didn't even call every month. He calls them every once in a while, and if something happens he goes there straight away. But normally he doesn't call so often. We are really different in this way. I really need to hear

from them... That Egyptian is my other half; it's not normal not to know it, not to go for six or seven years. So when I was 16, I went there by myself over the Christmas holidays, and I stayed there for a month with my family. That's how I relearned Arabic, as over the years that I hadn't gone there, I had completely cut off contact with that world. Here I don't know any Egyptians. I still knew Egyptian, but I spoke Italian with my father - unlike now. Now we speak Egyptian to each other again." (Hind, F, 19 years old).

Second-generation youngsters rediscover their cultural origins by developing their contact base, which had been controlled by their parents for such a long time.
Although second-generation youngsters often maintain that their behavioral and cultural models are different to those of their parents, their interest in the everyday happenings in Egypt depends largely on how they were brought up by their parents, as underlined by this Egyptian father:

"My children are small, but they already know everything. They know all the relations, the house, they know they have an Egyptian background, they say they are Egyptians, who have become Italian, but really Egyptians. My son says to me, "Dad, I want to go to Egypt, I want to call grandma" … When he hears me on the phone, even in Arabic, he asks "Who are you speaking with, Dad?" So, if you are with your kids, they learn a lot of stuff, right from an early age, and they stay like that" (Abdel, M, 43 years old).

The second and third generations, having developed and taken on a mixed, heterogeneous identity, can act as "a bridge between the homeland and new cultures" using "the web to bolster their own individuality as well as to show another culture to others" (Celato 2009: 96).
According to Faist (1998 in Ambrosini 2008: 70), "they forge a sense of identity and social belonging that no longer starts from loss nor it is a replica of the past; rather it is something that is new yet familiar at the same time, a medley of components from home as well as from the new country".

Further research confirms that new technology has changed the relationship with distant friends and relations (Dekker and Engbersen 2012). The new mode of communication has also had effects on the message (McLuhan and Fiore 1967). One advantage of social media is real time messaging, unlike when using letters or audio tapes.

> "It's also true though that I chat with my cousins practically every day on Facebook. That's why it's different" (Raja, F, 19 years old)

Content is also enhanced: as well as written and spoken communication (like with letters and on the phone), communication is visual when using video chats or when sending pictures. These advantages do not fully cancel out limitations imposed by geographical separation, but they have definitely helped make communication much more intimate and tangible (Madianou and Miller 2012). Social media can help strengthen relations with the homeland through sharing personal details of daily life in the destination country (Brekke 2008; Miller 2011).

6. Internet: not just a virtual newspaper stand

Even when using the web as an information source, first generation users research and explore the digital infosphere using the same classic modalities of the reading-writing paradigm (Mantovani and Ferri 2008) typical of generations prior to digital natives. They see the Internet as a possible "location" for finding information or entertainment, and they apply content-usage patterns analogous to those used with traditional media (newspapers, TV), yet with more sources available for comparison. In this way, the web becomes a "virtual newspaper stand" where one can analyze topics or areas which would be weighted differently elsewhere, and where there is a much wider choice of resources. For first generations, the web is basically an extra device enabling them to exploit mass media using traditional research methods.

> "Egyptian television never tells the truth, so I never listen to the TV. I speak with my family who are living there who know how things are, or else I log on and I read some papers, not just one. I read two, three or four papers and I know who is telling the truth" (Mohamed, M, 48 years old)

Interviews with second generations, however, show web use that (in many cases) presupposes active participation. More than just traditional news sources, the platforms available on the Internet are also places for relationships, with online devices being an essential link. Places to explore, in which one can build up social capital online, using a learning paradigm "for research and work", using web access for work and play while consciously using ICT language (Mantovani and Ferri 2008).

> "The aim is to create an Egyptian community. (…) It's not enough just to be online if you want to protest downtown or to speak with the mayor. The Internet is useful for meeting (in a Facebook group or on a Skype conference call) and just for discussing things, as we can't physically meet up. I can't go to Milan every day but I can open my laptop and see what the others have written, the comments, etc. But it's much more difficult, as what would take a week on Facebook could be fixed in a three or four-hour meeting" (Abderrahim, M, 20 years old)

As such, the web is an instrument for creating new organizational and social opportunities. It is not in this way merely one of many possible information sources; rather it is a gathering of instruments that allow deliberate and focused development of relationship strategies, with the subject playing an active role.
The first generation's fishing net changes into a much more complex communication structure, where the virtual world does not speak only one language and does not live in only one geographical area. Furthermore, unlike first-generation traditions, the web is used as an imaginary place and for organizing, not only as an information source and for communicating.

7. Comparing parents and children. The second generation as cross-border information and social gatekeepers

Apart from analyzing statistics and the Egyptian infrastructure, it is important to ask how ICT and technology for using the Internet are used by the people we interviewed.

My interviews show high web penetration, especially amongst second generations. This seems to be in line with general statistics for web use in Italy of 79% of 11 to 74-year olds, or 38 million people, who have Internet access from some place or device (Audiweb 2012).

The Egyptian families I met generally had a device for Internet access (computer or smartphone), especially if there was an under-30 in the household. This is also in line with Istat (Italian statistics institute) figures which show Italian families with at least one youngster are the most technologically aware. 84.4% have a personal computer, 78.9% have Internet access and 68% of these use broadband (Istat 2011).

Each generation shows a marked difference in the use of new technologies. The second generations share digital-native status with their Italian peers and are different strategically, more instrument-based than their parents and grandparents.

Each generational group is therefore linked to specific behavior regarding new media, and special interests awaken inter-generational relations which grow from such a relationship.

ICT enabling us to keep in touch with other countries is, in fact, just one side of the coin. The obverse deals with the increasing gap between a young generation (sometimes the second), which is able to jump from one social network to another, to strategically surf the Internet, and an aging generation (the first) which is illiterate in this field (Benitéz 2006).

8. ICTs: children's voice, parents' silence

The children of immigrants are digitally literate, unlike their parents. The children are growing in a culture made up of Ipods, Ipads, social networking, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and so on. They write with hashtags, use smartphones and study by surfing the Internet rather than turning the pages of books.

While it is true that each generational segment has a corresponding behavior regarding new media, I am particularly interested in the resulting inter-generational relationships . Istat data (2011) show the correlation between the presence of a minor in the household and the family inclination to technological consumption. For immigrant families, however, this is not simply a quantitative phenomenon linked to the presence or absence of technological tools.

The presence of second generations in the house can, in fact, on one hand provide a definite transnational advantage for the first generations, allowing them to strengthen and maintain relationships with the country of origin, through an empowerment process due to the strategic use of the Internet. The second generations in this sense can act as a bridge to structure new diasporic relations, in relation to the interests and needs of the first generations.

> "*Q. Do your parents use the Internet?*
> A. Yes, for the news. Lately they had missed the speech of the new president and they watched later on the Internet.
> *Q. And how did they learn (how to use the Internet)?*
> A. Thanks to me" (Amro, M, 21 years old)

The issue of the skills is central, however: without the technical knowledge and the instrumental practice of the second generation, for the first generations the web couldn't express the potential for identity construction and transnationalism. The Internet strengthens transnational ties, especially in relation to those within the family. And if the web for the first migrants is as a network through which to find contacts and faces left behind, the mediation in the use of these tools plays a vital role.

This dual role of mediation and gatekeeping of the second generations (between the first generations and the digital tools on one side and the relations with their homeland on the other) turns out to be totally new and certainly interesting to understand their identity paths.

> "*Q. Do your parents use the Internet?*
> A. No. For information they use us, me and my brother! They do not use Internet, they just watch the TV. Sometimes, when we read important articles, we'll talk about (them) and we make them read. But it's me that looks for news and information, not my parents" (Dina, F, 19 years old)

Through the children, Egyptian adults may increase the frequency and quality of contact with distant family and friends, they can keep informed in a new way, they can deepen elements of their identity and culture while away from Egypt.

> *"Q. Do your parents use the Internet?*
> A. My father is starting to use it for work and my mother too. There is my brother who was born in 1999 and he teaches them. My father has become curious because sometimes I go there with my computer and I show him the news that contradicts what we watch on TV. So he is interested and he goes to ask to my brother for the computer to read the news, and things like that" (Mosek, M, 21 years old)

Those second generations are stuck on a crest separating two very differing worlds and life contexts. When their own family members help to train them, they can make the most of their IT skills (even as a digital native), acting as a cross-cultural and linguistic guide on the path to (re)discover the family's place of origin.
This certainly opens up a very important role for the second generations, now able to use their skills to expand the family's social and cultural capital: strategic and decisive elements for migratory paths, if the parents are not afraid of them.

> "Internet is part of young people's lives. They grow in the web culture and if you haven't got a smartphone or a Facebook page you're nobody. They come here to the association, they chat online, they surf on the Internet to do their homework and, above all, they use social networks. There is no difference between Italians, Peruvians, Moroccans or Romanians. And their parents, especially those of a lower cultural level, are worried because they are not able to control either what they say or what they write" (Association operator).

Obviously the second generations are not all exposed in the same way to the virtual globalization of consumption and online relationships, as a recent study (Eve and Ricucci 2011) about foreigners and Italian students in Turin has shown: the social-class effect rather than migratory background, in fact, can also be seen in digital access. It is not only – or mainly – a matter of chance to own the tools (which are now easily accessible through various forms of contracts and leasing), but rather of cultural resources, which is to say the cognitive ability to understand their possibilities, to learn their alphabet, to change from being consumers to being prosumers.

9. Afraid of participating?

The web is useful for more than just keeping informed and staying in touch with those abroad; it opens new social and organizational opportunities .
The web is a set of tools that allow second generation to have an active role and to participate.
Virtual forums seem to have replaced real forums, enabling children of immigration to publicly demonstrate their point of view, asking not to be judged only on the basis of the past or their immigration history. In the new arenas (social networks, specialized websites), young foreigners express themselves "loud and clear", not only adopting positions on matters which concern them here in Italy but they also find themselves linked with events in their home countries as with the Arab Spring (Premazzi et al. 2011). This may raise concerns in the first generations.

"We followed the happenings in Tunisia and Egypt on TV, and we read some things on Arabic Internet sites. We ask ourselves whether our children are like those we see on TV. We are anxious because we don't know what they are writing, what they are saying to their friends, but we do know that those events affected them. We were worried about our children because they spoke too much Italian even at home with their brothers, sisters and friends, and now we are worried because they are writing in Italian on the Internet, posting their photos – even those of our daughters. We can hardly believe it". (Gamila, F, 45 years old)

"The aim is to create an Egyptian community (...) In order to protest in the streets or talk to the Mayor, it is not enough to be on the Internet. Internet simply serves to put us together (in a Facebook group or a conference call with Skype) and discuss among ourselves simply because we can't meet physically: I can not go every day in Milan but I can switch on my computer every day and see what the others have written, comments, etc." (Abderrahim, M, 20 years old)

It is true in fact that this movement excludes the great majority of parents who rarely use the Internet and even more seldom follow their children in their virtual demonstrations. Ironically ICTs, which bring distant countries closer, could paradoxically drive apart people living under the same roof. *Digital divide* hits many immigrant families twice as hard: parents and children are driven apart not only because of communication codes but also because of the ways in which they reflect on their identity and how they present themselves to society.

Between posts and tweets there seems to be a demand for facing up not only to the Italian reality, which has a hard time accepting them, but also to their parents' generation, who seem to drift – even if unconsciously – further and further away the more cosmopolitan the children's identity becomes in the age of web 2.0.

CHAPTER FIVE

Arab spring, transnational practices and return intentions

In the first part of the chapter I will describe the role of Internet and of the socials network particularly during the Arab Spring in Egypt, but not only, - I will provide also a description of some aspects of the Tunisian revolution, interesting for the similarities with the Egyptian one - and the relationship among activists on the field and the diasporas abroad. In doing this I will focus above all on two aspects: the web as a form of organisation and communication, and the development of forms of "virtual" political transnationalism.

The renewed pride in being Egyptian, together with the activism and the renewed attention and participation to what was happening in the country of origin have also brought to new reflections on present and future projects of first and second generations that have been influencing the intentions of return and the development of forms of pendulum migration among first and the second generations.

1. The web as a form of organisation and communication

The Internet and the tools provided by online socializing platforms have indeed represented an undoubted opportunity for the movements that have originated revolts in north Africa. There is an ongoing international debate on the actual "responsibility" of Facebook, Twitter and other similar tools, between those who consider them as fundamental for the happening of those events and those who aim to minimize their role (Salerno 2012).

The young people who took to the streets in Tunisi and Cairo master the web and the technological supports, they can use them and are familiar with digital languages like millions of other young people their peers in the world. They represent the first generation of digital natives in the Maghreb.

Beyond the debate on the importance of online services for the spread of mobilization, it is also interesting to focus on their recipients. What and who did Egyptian and Tunisian bloggers and activists communicate with?

We are in front of a two-headed communication: the web was used during the protests for organizing demonstration and giving practical information (for example on how to behave in case of tear gas throwing) (Zhou, Wellman, Yu 2011) and for keeping constantly in touch with the diaspora, connected through the Internet with the rest of the world. Social media offered, in fact, affordable access to social movements by reducing the costs of mobilization and organization and accelerating the dissemination of information.

The public and strategic use of the web is stressed by Abdul Aziz (M, 26 years old), vice president and spokesman of the Young Muslims of Italy:

> "Social networks were used by young people and gave the first boost. Facebook and Twitter, above all, were fundamental to spread messages, organise demonstrations and influence people. Through social networks, young people at Cairo received precise instructions on what to do during revolts, on how to protect themselves in case of tear gas throwing, on which streets to avoid when leading crowds. In mosques moral involvement and awareness occurred while more technical and practical information was communicated through social networks"[33].

Because of Internet graces the words went from the real space to the virtual one and vice versa and the virtual space worked as complementary to the real space.

[33] In a reconstruction of how Tunisian revolution began, Al Jazeera tells how people, even the more moderate who tried to stay away from clashes, found in the webone of the ways to exercise their political action. Dhafer Salhi, a local lawyer who witnessed Mohamed Bouazizi's act of self-immolation, said he asked the head of police to meet with the young man's family that day to try to neutralize the anger on the street.
"I told [the head of police] that if you don't get [the Bouazizi family] in, the country will be burned", Salhi said. "He refused, for arrogance and ignorance".
Frustrated by the lack of accountability by officials, Salhi became an active participant in the protests.
The lawyer used Facebook to organise protests, sending out invites to his friends. He was one of the web activists targeted by the Tunisian authorities in the phishing operation. They managed to hack his Facebook account, but Salhi simply created a new account.

According to Hagi and Mejri (2012: 29) the slogan "Merci le peuple! Merci Facebook!" (appeared on the building of the Bank of Tunisi) "points out at least two flows of this vast movement of words: the one that has gone from the houses toward some among the more visible and shared public spaces (the walls of the city) and another that from the first spaces of action and confrontation has gone beyond the censorship and spread in the virtual space. Words and images that have allowed to transform from "dégage" to "engage", from spectators to actors, and that have involved many young people internet users and cyber activists, both in the countries of origin and in the countries of destination.

The activists, in fact, used to go on the field, risk, photograph, interview, document and later they were immediately connected to internet through a Usb or any other connection available and they used to post on the web what they have seen, listened, recorded, filmed because whoever knew, over every censorship and as soon as possible. Then Egyptians and Tunisian abroad used to comment and contribute to the diffusion worldwide

> "Tunisians abroad have played a vital role - explains Wejdane Mejri, collaborator of Yalla Italia and president of the Pontes Association of Tunisian in Italy - From there they could only send videos (thanks to the support of the group Anonymous that managed to circumvent government censorship) without comments. Videos of repressions, murders and violences touched us deeply and caused us feel deep anger and indignation. We had to do something. And so from Milan, Paris, Montreal, we have republished them online with comments and slogans of support to demonstrations".

Wejdane's words confirm the idea of Henry Jenkins, professor at the University of Southern California and author of the book "Convergence Culture", who states: "The highest value today is the spreadability and now consumers have an active role in creating value and enhancing awareness through the circulation of media content".

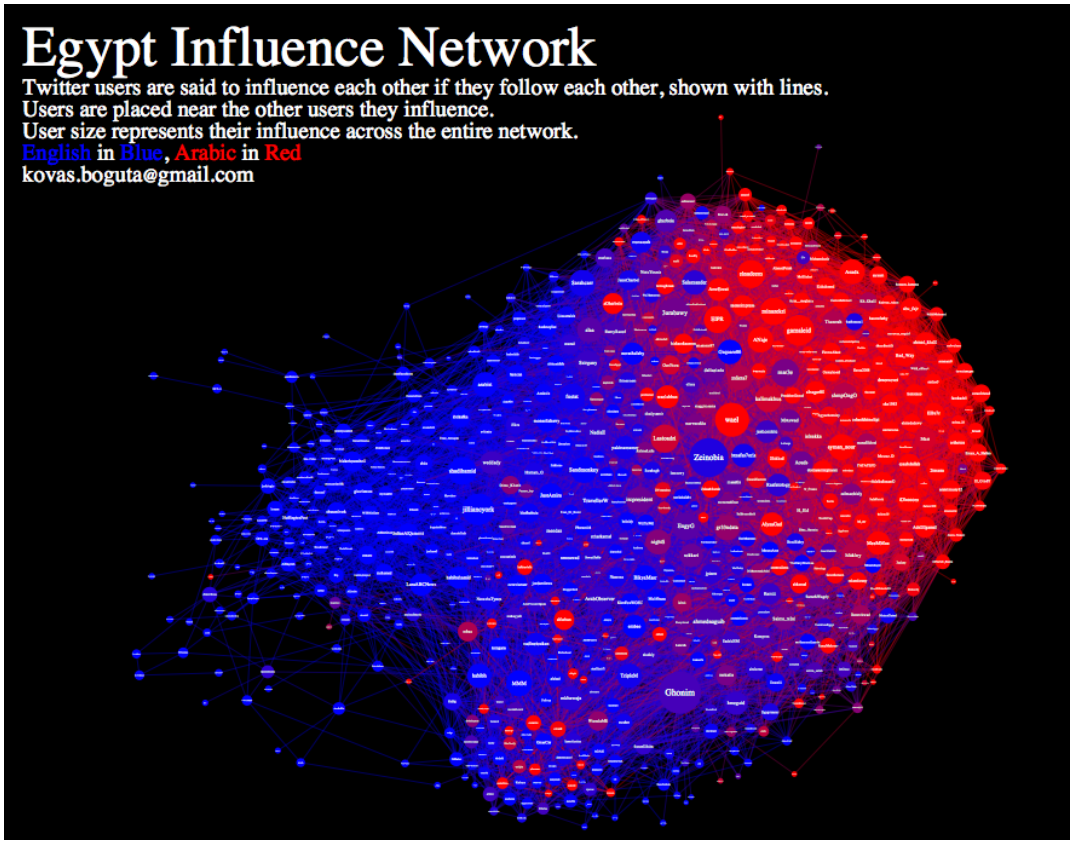
Through images, words and stories that circulated on the web, a circular movement of words and images was originated allowed to be documented in real time on the

web and that represented a way to express themselves, to communicate, to inform that was, according to Hagi and Mejri (2012: 29), "integral part of the revolutionary process".

In this process the technological medium was crucial in the process of behavioral change, assuming the role of amplifier of the information sharing, strengthening the speed of diffusion (Hagi and Mejri 2012).

An online service that well exemplifies this contact and ongoing support is Twitter: short sentences, reports, short links that propagate in the web. This image shows the network of connections of Twitter during the events happened in Egypt: how and to what degree the various nodes of the network communicated with each other and established a connection.

Figure 8 Egypt Influence Network



It is a complex network of communication that is difficult to summarize, but that shows two central elements. The first is the hybrid characteristic of languages

which, in particular, sees a vast area of influence leaders to be in a position intermediate between English and Arabic. This transnational dimension allows to make some considerations about the feeling of globality that finds part of its strength in the international dimension of communication. The diagram shows a communicative infrastructure with a high potential implied in the presence of two distinct communicative polarizations (Arabic and English) and a dense central network between languages and connections. As a consequence, the area of more intense communication is just the hybrid zone.

The fact that there are two polarizations and a broad area of linguistic (and therefore information) exchange indicates the great propensity for online collaboration as a constant attitude in the relation mediated by the technological means. Without collaboration and without propensity to share, revolutions couldn't have been organized.

Another analysis of more than 3 million tweets made by Zhou, Wellman and Yu (2011), containing six popular hashtag codes relevant to the Arab revolts, such as #egypt and #sidi- bouzid (Tunisia), found that the major spikes in usage were driven by tweeters living outside of the Middle East. Internet-connected Egyptians were aware of this global attention and, thus, strategically voiced their concerns.

1.1. The revolution will be broadcasted by YouTube

In 2008, a Professor at Kansas University, Michael Wesch, carried out one of the first studies on YouTube (the most popular video sharing web platform). Wesch took into consideration the giants of American communication, such as ABC, which in 1948 was the third largest network, after NBC and CBS, to start broadcasting television in the United States. In 60 years of uninterrupted transmission (1948-2008), Wesch said, the first three American television networks in history totalled 1.5 million hours of broadcasting.

This was a significant time which, however, in 2008 was equivalent to the number of hours of video uploaded on Youtube in just six months. In the same year 9,232

hours of video, amateur and professional, were uploaded every day, to the daily equivalent of about 400 traditional television channels.

Of course, it would be a mistake to think that the two types of media can be comparable, given the specific codes of communication services for online socializing. The point is not to compare the quality and type of content produced by a major television network or a member of a social network, but to acknowledge the potential of the various tools in quantitative terms. Internet today is potentially and in fact the largest set of existing communication tools, available horizontally to anyone with a suitable technological support, network access and a little knowledge of the medium.

One of the most interesting videos of the revolt in Egypt is undoubtedly the one that has produced one of the iconic images of the new Egypt: the torn of the giant poster of Mubarak[34].

In the video, besides seeing people trying to destroy the signs of power, you can observe an entire audience of people who participates in "action" in a unique way: they shot the scene with their mobile phones and shared it online. The video was uploaded on YouTube on January 26, during mobilizations, when it was still unknown if the dictator would have abdicated. Why and who were those symbolic images recorded by hundreds of hands for?

Also in this case, the Egyptian diaspora abroad was the main target of the communication, the other element in the game of online communications (Premazzi and Scali 2011).

2. Not just spectators, the role of diasporas abroad

The role of diasporas in conflicts and in the processes of nation building is well reviewed by the literature (Demmers 2002; Oiarzabal 2012. See also Diaspeace project).

[34] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIKCj_GAdKY

Looking at the revoluts in Maghreb, we can identify an initial, perhaps we could say previous, support of the diaspora with regard to the sharing and transmission of ideas and values (pluralism, democracy, freedom ...), made easier by the development of new technologies (Premazzi and Scali 2011), called social remittances by Levitt (1998): ideas, behaviours and social capital that flew from receiving to sending country communities as Rania Ibrahim (F, 35 years old) also said:

> "Egyptians and Tunisians who live in Europe abroad have been educated for democracy, they know they can talk and you can talk about freedom, justice… and through social networks they share ideas and experiences with their peers who live in Egypt".

But it is also true that the revolts developed independently on the field.
Moreover, the diaspora felt lost wondering what was the best way to offer support to their coetnics in their country of origin.
The Tunisian diaspora in France, for example, during the worst time of the crisis in Tunisia, has strongly advocated a discontinuity in foreign policy and the interruption of the relationship between Elysee and Ben Ali. The pressure on the French authorities was originated in part by news that came from Tunisia, in part by Tunisian bloggers and activists in France. The peculiarity of this mobilization is that the Tunisians identified the French Government as their official interlocutor.
Similarly did the Association of the Young Muslims in Sweden, which, in a press release, asserted their regret and disappointment regarding the attitude of the Western governments, "which have refused to take a stand in favour of people's rights and against the Egyptian and Tunisian regimes".
In Italy many demonstrations in support of the protests in Egypt were organized. During these the role of new technologies primarily Facebook appeared to be crucial in order to arrange places and times of meetings and demonstrations and the same happened on this side of the Mediterranean Sea. Social networks help in unifying Egyptian first and second generations, as it was highlighted by the article *Milano chiama Il Cairo* (Milan calls Cairo) by Alessandra Coppola, appeared on

the blog *Nuovi Italiani* (New Italians) of *Corriere della Sera (January 30th 2011)* which tells of the importance of Facebook for organizing demonstrations in Italy, such as the one in front of the Egyptian consulate in Milan.

In Italy, furthermore, after some considerations made by different associations and groups, secular and religious, national and transnational, debates were organized in order to tell what had really happened and why and, most importantly, in order to reflect on the concept of democracy. The idea, shared by most of the associations of first and second generations, was to explain that the support given to the demonstrations was a support for democracy regardless of any religious belonging, tanto nei paesi di origine quanto nei paesi di destinazione: those who took to the streets were there to ask for democracy. Abdel Aziz, vice president of the Young Muslims of Italy, has stressed, in our interview, how they considered important to reflect, as young Europeans of Arab origin, on the concept of democracy both in the Arab world and in Europe, and to wonder whether all of us, natives and immigrants, as Europeans, are ready to the democratization of the Arab world. The riots were actually totally driven by young people who demanded democracy and freedom, beyond any religion (Ferrero 2012) or national and political belonging, and the support received - perhaps also because of this - was truly global and transnational, as told by a Moroccan citizen, resident in Italy:

> "From what I could observe from my Facebook profile, at the beginning of the demonstrations in the other African countries Moroccans wanted to show their solidarity to the young protesters, changing their profile picture with pictures of flags of Egypt and Tunisia, posting videos of demonstrations. Those events monopolized the "discussions" on Facebook among my Moroccan contacts, perhaps because the Arab spring represented an awakening for a popular discontent".

2.1. The participation of the second generations

But how have Egyptian second generations reacted in their daily life to what was happening on the other side of the Mediterranean? Which feelings they have followed, communicated and participated in those events with?

> "I spent three weeks of total blackout with Milan, glued to television news in Arabic and connected to my cousins in Cairo, through Facebook, as if I were there!" said Rania Ibrahim (F, 35 years old).

These words and feelings were shared by many other young people, second generations, who are often treated as foreigners both in their parents' country of origin and in the destination country, young people, often digital natives as well as second or third generations, who followed the events and actively used social networks to maintain constant contact with family and friends who were directly involved in the events, and to communicate with thousands of compatriots living in other states.

What seems to have occurred thanks to the web, during the weeks of the revolution, is what Cohen (1997: 155) defines "affective bond betwen communities scattered abroad and a homeland that continues to exert a recall on their identification processes, their loyalty and their emotions". Through social networks appears to have been realized what some scholars had previously highlighted, using the concept of diaspora, namely that "individuals and communities around the globe, can live, some how, near, living a form of proximity" (Balbo 2006: 51).

Since their parents, the first migrants, left their country and often risked their lives to give their children a better chance, and since their peers in Egypt went into the streets and risked their lives every day to give themselves and their children democracy and freedom, second-generations in Italy were forced to ask themselves: "and me?". So, confused in a mix of enthusiasm and frustration, pride and guilt, they started to participate with every tool at their disposal, online and offline and to connect with other Egyptians at local, national and transnational level.

> "What has happened is tragic and beautiful, even for we who are here. We wrote on our wall or on the movements' walls "Go on!" But sometimes those who directly participated in the protests, those who really took to the streets, discouraged us saying "Well, thank you very much, but you're not here!" But it was my way of showing support and trying to help. So during those weeks I felt even more frustrated because they took to the streets and I could only follow things from a distance and write my support. I wanted to be there, they were momentous changes, and even now I want to be there because during these days Al Tahrir Square is a laboratory of ideas". (Rania Ibrahim, F, 35 years old).

The same thoughts were shared by Randa Ghazy, a second-generation writer of Egyptian origin, on the blog *Gli altri siano noi* (The others are us), of the Italian newspaper *La Stampa*:

> "We would like to be there in Tahir Square, to shout out, to be witnesses and active actors of this change in the Arab world. Although we didn't experience the breadlines, the frustrating unemployment of young people, the corruption and the daily sense of injustice, which is typical of those who live in Egypt but also in the neighbouring countries where people experience the same outrageous behaviour by their leaders, nor the resignation and the awareness of being denied the most basic human rights and freedom of expression, our hearts are with you. Maybe we, young Arab-Italians, who grew up with macaroni and democracy, we should have done more! We are proud now as immigrants and children of immigrants. I confess there will be a subtle sense of guilt in saying I was not there; it was chosen for me to live in a world of possibilities. But there will be also a sense of pride in saying I was Arab, I am Arab, and besides kebab, hookah and belly dancing we are freedom fighters".

The majority of my respondents were very active, posting and sharing news and video and through the creation of Facebook groups and online discussions. In the early stages of the protests, these online groups, along with all the news coming from Egypt, certainly fostered a renewed pride in being Egyptian and facilitated the

emotional, but also physical, participation, through organization of demonstrations, events and conferences, to what was happening in Tahrir Square (Premazzi and Scali 2011). Also over the following months they stayed in touch with those who were in Egypt, sharing information and making comments about political news with relatives and friends, but also updating the pages of the official Egyptian and Italian groups with news, videos and posts.

> "We talk about politics, I write something on Facebook. I always write there what's happening in Egypt, in order to report here what is happening there". (Alaa, F, 21 years old)

> "I use Facebook, Twitter and the press as sources of information and to keep in touch with the guys who live there and talk about politics". (Sherin, F, 32 years old)

Similarly, on the wall of the Facebook group Egyptians in Turin, the creator explained to me that:

> "the group was really useful during the revolution, because we posted everything there: patriotic songs, songs for the country, songs for the young men and women who died in the square, songs that make us cry, make us dream to be in Egypt, we posted news and everybody did it". (Heba, F, 19 years old)

The revolution brought also an early sense of unity in the Egyptian community, supported mainly by young people, proud and eager to do something for both the Egyptians in Italy and for Egypt, as their peers in Egypt were doing.

> "Before there was never a union of Egyptians because there were different political ideas that prevented them from being united. But in the end even though we have different ideas, in that case we were all

> Egyptians and we had to return to our homeland and be more united among ourselves...” (Ahmed, M, 20 years old)
>
> “The fall of the regime in January gave us a push forward and made us believe in change... the Facebook group was created to help Egypt and the Egyptians in Italy, to elevate the name of Egypt and to remind the generations born in Italy of their country of origin” (Mohamed, M, 25 years old)

2.2. First generation vs second generation, between perceptions and reality

Some first-generation migrants have perceived some differences between them and the second generation in relationships and empathy with respect to the revolts that happened in Egypt in January 2011, as Bahaa (M, 58 years old) notes:

> “Not all the young born here are interested in what has happened in Egypt. My generation has followed the events more closely because we suffered when we were young. Those born here didn't feel the lack of democracy and freedom. They don't care. It isn't the same as for young people who stay there, that have experienced the dictatorship. Those born here, they go to Egypt only for holiday, for having fun, for going on the beach, for visiting relatives. Those more involved were young people in Egypt and we, migrants of my generation, abroad. We want to see, to participate in this change. I have always followed politics”.

But what happened during the revolts was the sharing of a mix of enthusiasm and frustration, pride and guilt, also among first-generation immigrants. For the first generations, in fact, the projection of their identity and affiliation toward the homeland can represent for a long time a “reserve of sense” - or at least a source of

emotional support - useful to face the difficulties of the life in immigration (Viruell-Fuentes 2006). This obviously appears different for the second generations.
Migrants often feel a "genuine sympathy" for their relatives who remain in conflict-ridden areas (Pirkkalainen and Abdile 2009). Migrants may also feel guilty at the thought of being safe while their relatives are suffering (Byman et al. 2001). Such feelings may motivate diaspora to engage in "virtual conflicts" or even participate in or mobilize forces for the "real conflict" (Demmers 2002), as happened to some first generation Egyptians like Fadil (M, 46 years old):

> "All of us went from Turin to Egypt, my family, then there in that square we met other Egyptians from Turin. (...) Egyptians in Turin followed the events a lot. It was really important. We had to help, give a hand, feel side to side. In the last 10 years things got worse and from here we see them better. It is like your son. If you are side by side daily you can't see he is growing, but if you see him once a year you realize immediately that he has grown".

First-generation migrants' commitment was not limited to (physical or emotional) participation during the revolts. They first also foresaw concrete opportunities for action for their country, and many of them also plan to engage in specific projects as it was the case of the dissemination of information and support in organizing the polling procedures:

> "In Egypt in January everything changed. We have to be more linked with our country because now it needs us. Before we didn't have freedom and we weren't able to do much. Now we can do more for helping the elections, following the polling procedures..." (Fadil, M, 46 years old)

But as we have already seen before, despite the perceptions of the first generation, the Egyptian revolution was for the second generations, a very important divide in their process of reflection on identity. It was an important moment of rediscovery and enhancement links to their roots. As Abdelfattah (2011) underlines, it has given

back to Egyptians, both of first and second generation, “a feeling of belonging and patriotism”.

The loyalty of migrants to their country of origin or destination, in fact, according to Christiansen (2004), “is never stable or permanent, and a factor that influences this fidelity is the possibility of participation or, said in another way, the degree of exclusion that the new or the old country have on migrants”. If before the second generation preferred to declare themselves more Italians than Egyptians, if before and didn’t imagine their future in Egypt, with the revolution, a new pride in being Egyptian has spread especially among young people, sometimes leading to new plans about their own future.

> “With the burst of the revolution we felt more motivated” (Hind, F, 19 years old).

> “Obviously after the revolution inside of us a feeling of belonging to Egypt heated, the sense of being Egyptian, and therefore the idea of meet us, also only to speak of what was happening there or to try to think about what we could do, even if we are in Italy" (Raja, F, 19 years old)

> “Of course, after the revolution it turned on in us a feeling of belonging to Egypt, the sense of being Egyptians, and then we came up with the idea of joining together, even only to talk about what's going on there or to try to think about what we could do, even if we are in Italy. Beyond doubt what happened filled us all with enthusiasm, and so I entered since the beginning in the group and I gave my willingness”. (Heba, F, 19 years old)

The new enthusiasm arisen from the Arab Spring has had the role to unify generations in the sense of belonging and the belief about changes and future opportunities in Egypt. The combined dynamic of the rediscovery of their roots, the birth of a new pride in being Egyptian also have transformed the parents’ country of origin from not only the past, but also a new future in which they can be involved not only as an audience but as participant actors. Another impetus

for participation in transnational life is also the desire of the second generation to keep the immigrant bargain with their parents (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995, 2001; Smith 2000, 2001; Guerrero-Rippberger 1999) and to show them that they have not forgotten their roots.

> "I thank my mother who gave me this love for the country. And this love has increased after the revolution, because before I didn't know anything about Egypt, nothing about politics: I only knew the name of the President, but I didn't know how was the country, how they lived there. When my dad watched the news on the TV I ran in my room. Now I watch the news everyday to see what is happening there. I follow pages that I never imaged, I know all the parties, the parliament, the ministries; even my mum is surprised and says "you look really interested". It is strange for me to be so interested in Egypt. With what is happening I might be there; during the revolution I cried when I saw the people in Tahrir Square and I could have been one of them but I was and I still am here". (Rania, F, 19 years old)

> "After the revolution I would like to see the new Egypt. Perhaps you are more proud to be Egyptian than before because around you people are more proud. You are more curious and more proud, yes". (Ahmed, M, 20 years old)

Egypt was no longer just the past, the place that had forced to emigration of the parents, but it could represent a new future, a place where to return, a place where to do something, a place where being protagonists of a change.

3. Arab Spring, return intention and new technologies

Among the factors influencing migrants' future plans among which, return intention, there are not only individual and social factors in which migrants' lives are embedded but also contextual factors both in the receiving and sending countries as it was the case of the Arab spring: as sending countries are facing

major political, social and economic crises or changes, return intentions may strongly be affected by these events.

3.1. Return between desire, possibility and opportunity

3.1.1. Myth of return

> When we go there we are fine, when we are here we are fine, there is not much difference. Our generation has always had the intention of returning, even if years have gone by and we are still here. Most of us live a life like a transit, a stopover. They come here and always think of returning. We have to live here like we are here forever, then when we will decide to go back to Egypt there will be no problems, but if you don't have this mentality you can't build anything here. There are people here who live in an attic and in Egypt they have a big house, but the big house there is empty and here they live with difficulties, then they die and they will not have experienced life, neither here nor there. (Kebir, M 48 years old)

I have chosen to open this paragraph with the words of Kebir, an Egyptian man arrived in Turin in 1990, because his words sum up well the sense of uncertainty that many first-generation Egyptians live, suspended between the desire to put down roots in Italy and to return to their homeland. This uncertainty affects their daily life, plans and objectives over time, producing a continuous oscillation in migration plans, that brings at the end to have lived "neither here nor there". But Boccagni (2011: 471), with reference to migration from Ecuador, invites to consider "return migration significant even when it remains only a projection into the future in an almost mythical form. It provides Ecuadorian migrants with a valuable construct with which to make sense of their life experience and endure it better".

The Egyptian first generation tacitly constructs return as a moral obligation, a long-term commitment to return as an expression of loyalty to his/her identity as an Egyptian. This is the sign, as in the case of migrants from Ecuador, of "an immigrant's conviction that, whatever challenges he has to face overseas, home doors will always remain open for him in the motherland" (Boccagni 2011: 471). Even when a migrant fails to return physically during his/her lifetime, there is a tacit assumption that everybody is entitled to find a final resting place back in the homeland.

> You have to think that we also have a place at the cemetery, but most of the people who die are brought to Egypt. (Kebir, M, 48 years old)

Also the second-generation Egyptians often cherish the wish to return. However, compared to their parents, they seem to show more awareness of the irrationality of their desire and more strongly highlight their doubts to really be able to live in the country of origin of their parents.

> If you talk with an Egyptian he will tell you that all the Egyptians want to return, but who will actually manage to return? What will they do there? (Mosaab, M, 28 years old)

> It's also true that I was born here and it's 19 years that I'm here, but I have never felt Italian, and I probably will never feel Italian. It's just a desire, even if irrational, to return to Egypt (Dalia, F, 20 years old)

> I have also to say that my father, when I used to go to Egypt, always showed the good part: we went there in summer, it was all fun, and I did everything I wanted. So I don't know how it would really be to live in Egypt, I don't know the daily life in Egypt. To return to Egypt is just an idea, now, after five years, anything can happen. (Shuruq, F, 20 years old)

> I hope to graduate in time and then return to Egypt to (...) even if sincerely I know that there are no job opportunities! (Sara, F, 20 years old)

As King and Christou (2008: 2) state: "They will not actually be 'return migrants' in the strict sense, but first-time emigrants to their parents' country of origin". For this reason it is likely that they will find difficulties in adapting when they will return to the community of origin, where they could fail to re-adhere to the values of identity and community of the country of origin (Ricucci 2010). This situation could also end up by reinforcing notions of how "Italian" the second generation is, and convince them that their parents' home country can never become *their* home (Kasinitz et al. 2002; Kibria 2002).

3.1.2. Family obligations and economic considerations

Intention of return is affected by several factors, costs and benefits, which are evaluated based on the experiences in Italy and the knowledge of the Egyptian reality. According to the article "Turkish Immigrants' Hopes and Fears around Return Migration" written by Şenyürekli and Menjívar (2012), the factors that shape the decision to return are family concerns, economic insecurity, legal status and career goals. Regarding family concerns, in their study, the authors highlight that "on the one hand, they were attracted to Turkey because of worries that something would happen to their aging parents. On the other hand, they were attracted to the US because of their US-born children" (Şenyürekli and Menjívar 2012: 9). I found similar concerns for our Egyptian respondents.

> "But I want to return to Egypt because I have a difficult situation there: six sisters, and my aging parents. 7 women and my aged father, I can't let them sacrifice in Egypt alone and stay here". (Ayoub, M, 36 years old)

> My parents are in touch with their families. They are very attached, indeed even more recently. They always think about going back, but it gets difficult since

they are here and have a family here (...) But contacts with their relatives are increasing because they feel the need to go back to their country. (Amro, M, 21 years old)

For the first generation the myth of return often has a strong family dimension, influenced both by the ties with the relatives left behind and by the family created or reunited in the country of destination, while the second-generation myth of return seems to be more an individual act, economically driven reflected in one's reconfiguration of study and future work plans.

"Despite having lived sixteen years out of nineteen in Italy, I feel more Egyptian! My dream is that my country, when I will finish school, will get better economically, and that I will be able to return to work and live in Egypt (...) All young people have a new hope! I believe that many young Egyptians, like me, who live in Rome, they hope that, one day, they could live in Egypt!" (Menes, M, 18 years old)

Moreover, the second generation is also aware of the lifestyle that they have in Italy and that they do not want to lose it when they will return to Egypt. Hence, the strategy is to choose a professional path that allows them to return to Egypt with a certain status (doctor, engineer) or with a salary that can afford them to maintain the lifestyle they have in Italy.

"I see [among my peers] that there is a desire to return, but I don't know how many actually will be able to live there. I also don't know if I can live there and I only will return when I will have a salary of €1000 per month as I don't want to come back as a poor guy. Yes, there are many who speak of nostalgia but will they really be able to live there? Look at the classmates of my sister, all are daughters of diplomats so it's obvious that they return but they return as cool guys." (Mosaab, M, 23 years old)

"I will have my future career here unless miracles will happen. In the next 50-60 years I think it would be unfeasible to return to Egypt, because of the habits and the standard of living. I'm more accustomed to a life here than in Egypt (…)

> Yes, more than anything else in Egypt you are not appreciated for what you have done, you are not valued by Egyptians (...) Even in terms of economic standards I can't go to live there after a life that I will have here after more than 30 years. When I will finish my study in medical science I can't go to live with the 800 Egyptian pounds that they give at the beginning to a doctor in Egypt. Also an Egyptian can't live with that salary. Here I can live comfortable, you have a more normal life compared to what you have experienced in previous years. There you have to change everything. Let's say that if Egypt will become a country more similar to Italy, maybe I would think about returning". (Mosek, M, 21 years old)

3.1.3. Indefinite return - pendular life between "here" and "there"

Another path that appears feasible and beneficial and that allows to not lose the benefits neither "here" nor "there", is pendulum migration (de Haas and Fokkema 2010). Sinatti (2010) shows that it is extremely widespread among Senegalese first generation. In her opinion, this process seems to confirm that "return becomes increasingly less permanent and assumes a variety of forms of commuting more or less frequently between home and host countries. The desire to be closer to the homeland while not giving up migration completely, in fact, pushes many Senegalese to find ways of regularly coming and going, thus configuring forms of "unsettled return" or "mobile transmigration" in a continuous effort to negotiate between the benefits offered by staying in migration and sustainable permanent return" (Sinatti 2010: 164). My research shows that pendulum migration becomes a common idea for both the first generation after retirement and those of the second generation who aspire to create transnational business and therefore do not lose the benefits of being "here" and "there", conscious of being able to act as subjects trustworthy "here" and "there". Going back and forth is the strategy, either for the future or for the present, that allows them to have the best of both worlds and shows a real dual identity.

"When I will retire, we will be few months here and few months in Egypt." (Said, M, 58 years old)

"I have a house in Zagazig. My brother bought a house with 8 floors and we have taken a flat. We don't have the idea of going there and always stay there, also because the house in Turin is our house, but we agree that we are going to go there maybe 3 or 4 months and then come back to Italy. When one is retired and has nothing to do, one gets bored, so instead of that we want to change a little bit, to go some months in Calabria, some months in Egypt". (Kebir, M, 48 years old)

"I believe that one who is retired will stay in Egypt, but maybe then he will come to Italy to see his children. One who has worked here regularly will take his pension to be able to live both there and here, so I think he will return to Egypt and sometimes he will come back to Italy for the children. I don't say that I would return to live there forever. I say that I would die there and be there maybe a year or two in Egypt but then return to Italy (...) In my opinion, it will be in this way, so there won't be people who will stay here until death or there until death, they will be in the two countries because both are their countries". (Edjo, M, 52 years old)

"My elder son was born on August 1989, now he's 22. He's currently in Egypt, studying, and he will come back here at the end of January. After high school, in Turin, he attended an IT training course funded by the Piedmont Region, but he couldn't enroll at the university. So he came back to Cairo where he's now attending his third year at the faculty of Information Technology. He comes here to Turin every summer to help me. (…) When he will finish the university there he will come back here and have his degree recognized. I have another son and a daughter, the youngest.… They will decide what to do, if they want they have a future here. They have a future in Cairo as well, because I have a business partner there with an import-export transportation company. They have a chance both here and in Egypt, it's up to them to decide what they want to do". (Babu, M, 47 years old)

"But I would do something different if I had the economic and professional chance: I would like to work in both countries, Egypt and Italy. It would be the best choice, but it's difficult. So I think that the best choice would be to work in-between the two countries, while the more unfeasible would be to work in Egypt". (Jahi, M, 21 years old)

"I have always dreamed of being a bridge between the two countries, I have never had the opportunity until the first interview I did a few weeks ago with a Belgian NGO. Now I'm waiting for the second interview and then I will go to work with children in Cairo. You know the second generation is also a subject trustworthy for Westerners because you know he was born here and also for Egyptians. A definite return is difficult because Egypt has so many minds and then the second generation will certainly be unpopular because they are more preferred candidates since they are from the West, but for sure there are also a lot of deserving young people who have never left Egypt and certainly they will not like the return of the second generation". (Bassam, M, 23 years old)

"So I want to have two years more of experience and then return to Egypt. I would hate to definitely leave Italy and I hope to return often and create business between Egypt and Italy". (Menefer, M, 26 years old)

3.2. Impact of Arab Spring on return migration

With regard to the question on what effects the Arab Spring has had on the stay-return dilemma, my findings show that the revolts in Egypt have really represented a turning point in the relationships, interests and participation in the country of origin for the first and second generation. The widespread enthusiasm about changes and future opportunities in Egypt due to the Arab Spring holds for both generations and has resulted in different forms of action and socio- political participation: in Italy, at the beginning of the Arab Spring, many demonstrations in support of the Egyptian revolts were organized by the first and second generation together as it was the case of the sit-in in front of the Egyptian Consulate in Milan.

Furthermore, in different Italian cities, debates were organized by both the first and second generation in order to tell to the Italians what had really happened in Egypt and why and, most importantly, in order to reflect on the concept of democracy. The idea, shared by the first and second generation, was to explain to the Italian society that the support given to demonstrations was a support for democracy regardless of religious belonging (Premazzi and Scali 2011).
For some of the young second generation, the rediscover of their Egyptian identity due to the Arab Spring makes them to feel a moral obligation toward Egypt, pushing them to a new reconfiguration of their present and future life, study and work plans. It becomes a sort of mission: "do something for my country".

> "The revolution also has changed my perspective for the future. I mean (...) before I knew I wanted to be a journalist, but I didn't know where and how, but now I know I want to be a journalist and I have role models of Egyptian journalists and I want to be a journalist for telling injustices, for informing people and for really helping my country". (Iman, F, 21 years old)

> "I want to return because I really want to help! Then, from there, I can help other countries like Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Palestine. From there it's easier because we are closer!" (Rabia, F, 20 years old)

Arab Spring has resulted in a stronger orientation to Egypt, with the exception of one population group, that is the Christian Copt Egyptians. In fact, their desire to return became less due to the Arab Spring. For Christian Copt Egyptians the political change seems to bar their present and future entrepreneurial initiatives in Egypt.

> "In the Muslim world we can't do the things that we do here. Muslims dress differently, eat differently from us, and for me this is not good. For this reason I don't want to return to Egypt". (Kebir, M, 48 years old)

> "I don't think about a definite return to Egypt because the situation is getting worse. I worked in Egypt for 10 years and I saw the bad things of our Muslim Brotherhood, I saw so many bad things, bad words and bad actions even by my

students. I don't like this. Egypt is our country, it's our land, we can't forget it all but we can't live like this." (Gamila, F, 45 years old)

The Egyptian Muslims, on the other hand, seem to hope that also an economic change will happen since the corruption and the lack of attention given to Egyptian citizens abroad by the government of Mubarak were some of the elements that were highlighted as obstacles to the possibility of a return or the creation and development of business and economic activities in Egypt. As happen for first-generation Moroccans (de Haas and Fokkema 2010), the experience of bankruptcy of many small and medium investors seems to have created a strong distrust with respect to investment opportunities offered by Egypt. Corruption, lack of transparency and the difficult economic situation in Egypt had slowed any kind of investment and financial and economic planning. Among my interviewees there were, before the Arab Spring, attempts to return in order to create entrepreneurial projects. Some of them, a minority, have been successful, while others failed, forcing the migrants to come back to Italy:

"I was born in Turin, then when I was 4 we came back to Egypt and we meant to remain there, but after four years, when I was 8, we came back (…) In the four years we stayed there my father was a civil engineer and founded a construction company, but we didn't make it and closed it." (Dalia, F, 21 years old)

"The last time my father tried to start a business in Egypt, he immediately lost money". (Sara, F, 21 years old)

"We return to Egypt together and I wanted to open a pizzeria there. But business didn't go well, because if you don't have the right connections there you can't do anything." (Ashraf, M, 48 years old)

According to the Egyptians interviewed, after the presidential elections, the institutional changes regarding investment projects have not improved until today. But by the new government, they are witnessing a change and a growing interest towards the second generation in particular. For instance, the consulate was present at the second general meeting of the Egyptians in Italy, which took place in Milan

in May 2012. As described in Chapter 6 the meeting was organized by the second generation (members of different Facebook groups) coming from Milan, Rome, Turin and other Italian cities. From the meeting, the idea came out of creating an association for helping Egyptians living in Italy but also for being a bridge between Italy and Egypt. The consulate showed interest in the initiative and showed la volontà di supports the association.

3.3. Impact of ICT on return intentions

Generally, the first-generation migrants' links with the extended family in Egypt remain strong. While they are economically and socially integrated, they continue to be strongly linked to the country of origin in cultural and social terms. The first generation's cultural space, in fact, continues to be that of the homeland and their individual lives continue to be dictated by family ties and reproduction cycles, especially with regard to marriage choices (CeSPI 2005a) as Chapter 3 describes.

Thanks to the Arab Spring the second-generation Egyptians have discovered or rediscovered ties with relatives and friends in the country of origin and developed a new reflection on their identity and their "being transnational", from a lack of consciousness, to a way of belonging, or from an inherited transnationalism to a more elective, chosen, conscious and thoughtful transnationalism (Glick Schiller 2004; Levitt 2002). These reflections have been influencing their present and future plans.

We can identify four types of media used by the Egyptian first and second generation in Italy to keep themselves in contact with their country of origin: Egyptian online newspapers; Egyptian TV channels broadcasted by satellite or internet; Arab Channels like Al Jazeera and Al Arabya, and online social networks. Today, social media like Facebook play a key role in defining the formative experiences of a generation, not only because they are so deeply embedded in everyday practices that they became a "natural" element of the social landscape and common sense, but also because historical events as well as cultural values and

their symbolic forms, are often mediated by them. This is what has happened, for example, with the Arab Spring.

By now it is well-known that social networks have become an essential element in one's life, on- or off-line, and one of the main methods of social connection and interaction around the world, whether between individuals, or with businesses and governments. Moreover, internet facilitates contacts with diaspora groups that often "act as bridges or as mediators between their home and host societies" (Shain and Barth 2003: 450).

> "The first time I surfed the internet was to know about life in Egypt, to watch the Egyptian news (…) Now I use it to get informed, to know, to talk and get in touch both with Italian and Egyptian people." (Aidha, F, 38 years old)

> "I think Facebook is very important because it's a communication network which is essential, not that much for friends who see each other frequently, but especially for my cousins who live in Egypt. I just want to thank Mark who invented Facebook because it's easier to communicate with relatives in Egypt. You feel closer when making comments on Facebook statuses, and thanks to the pages on Egypt, on its news, politics, sports, films, Egyptian society, or thanks to other news in general (…) you understand what's happening between you and the world." (Shuruq, F, 21 years old)

The interactive and participatory web 2.0 makes the encounter and definition of new identities easier as it was the case of the rediscover of the Egyptian national identity, facilitated through continuous contacts with other Egyptians living in Italy, in Egypt and in the rest of the world, and that can lead to the emergence of new social and political actors (as the association created by the second generation that wants to act as a bridge between Italy and Egypt). Furthermore, such online communities can be effectively translated into forms of off-line political mobilization as it was the case of the different Facebook groups of Egyptians that met off-line during the meeting in Milan as described above. Especially for the second generation we can say, using Boccagni's words (2011: 462), that "return thus occurs not only in real terms but also in a symbolic sense, involving emigrant

connectedness and affiliation to the motherland via information and communication technology (ICT) mediated through the support of associations". ICT has for sure produced an inevitable revival of interest and emotional involvement in the Arab Spring, which has probably the merit of the transformation of the second generation from passive transnational receivers to transnational actors both at emotional and practical level. For sure, transnational ties at economic, political, social and cultural levels do support the idea of returning, although a definitive return will probably not occur, neither for the first nor for the second generation, but rather encourage a transnational way of living, especially for those who can take advantage of their skills and social and financial resources.

CHAPTER SIX

Perspectives of belonging and new forms of community

New forms of community?

The development of new practices and forms of transnational political participation has led to the emergence, among Egyptians in Italy, of a discourse and a reflection, hitherto absent, on being a community. The activism that followed the development of the Arab Spring, and the renewed pride in being Egyptians led the second generation to try to build up a community. Observation of this process has been the goal of this research, made particularly interesting by the fact that studies carried out so far (Ambrosini and Schellenbaum 1994; Martinelli, D'Ottavi, Valeri 1997; Ambrosini and Abbatecola 2002) described it as a "non-community".
Facebook groups are configured as the place where the discourse about being a community was articulated, especially since this was led by the the second generation. Facebook groups have in fact fostered renewed pride in being Egyptian and facilitated the emotional, but sometimes also physical, participation in what was happening in Tahrir Square and, in the months following the revolution, they were places for confrontation (and sometimes conflict) that then went offline.

1. From a "non community"…

The Egyptian community in Italy seems quite fragmented within itself, according to findings of previous research (Ambrosini and Abbatecola 2002), which defined it as a "non-community" because of the scarce cohesion among migrants and the lack of an "associative or community network" (Martinelli, d'Ottavi, Valeri 1997).

As Ambrosini highlights (in CeSPI 2005b), “national, religious identity works effectively as a creator of weak ethnic networks from which one can derive social capital useful on two levels: work placement and living arrangement”.
The presence of an ethnic-national network, however, has never led to the construction of an Egyptian communit in the strict sense: national affiliation has never been sufficient to develop collective action.
The elderly respondents, however, express nostalgia for a time when they were few and the community was very close-knit. “Community”, however, here means groups of Muslim men who emigrated alone.

> “I will be honest. The Egyptians have become more numerous in these years. 20 years ago they were few and they were all together. When you're a minority in a place you stay with the others. I remember all the friends of my father, who have been here for 20 years, they are still very close. They grew up working together... But now so many people came and it started to grow into a country within a country... those of my father’s generation are the ones who are close-knit and help one another out. The new arrivals, even the young and those who are starting to arrive now, do not know each other and begin to create problems”. (Said, M, 20 years old)

> “Among the elderly Egyptians, those who have been here for a long time, we few, there was trust: my pocket is your pocket. If one did not work the other helped him. Now everything has changed”. (Edfu, M, 58 years old)

This perception of an original time of unity seems to contradict what happens to other communities that tend to be more individualistic, linked to the family and less willing to engage in community activities in the early stages of migration (CNEL 2000). It highlights, however, the fact that, among Egyptians, family reunifications strengthened forms of social relations based on family ties (both in Italy and in Egypt) (Cingolani and Ricucci 2013).

But the Egyptian migrants themselves say they are individualistic, family-bound, and not prone to engage in community activities.

> "When I arrived in Italy thirty years ago, there were few Egyptians in Milan. In the 1980s we managed to establish a union for Egyptians in Milan, but this didn't work as the Egyptians here don't work as a group and they individualize everything" (Mohamed, M, 58 years old)

For the first-generation interviewees, integration into the destination country doesn't reduce Egyptian migrants' ties with Egypt, but rather produces a change towards a sort of dual identity. In a social, cultural and symbolic way, they live simultaneously in Egypt and in Italy, and they have networks "here and there" that connect the two spaces.

> "I was born and raised in Egypt, my family lives there, one day I may go back, but even if I don't, I am interested in the future of Egypt because my roots are there... I live in two countries, I want to know everything about Egypt". (Bahaa, M, 58 years old)

Both differences from the Egyptian community in Milan, larger and tighter, (apparently in contradiction with the idea that smaller groups are more supportive for the greater ease of direct interaction between members) and from other immigrant communities, such as Moroccans, are also highlighted by Turin respondents.

> "It doesn't exist (the community) and there are no meeting places, unlike other Egyptian communities in Italy. That of Turin is not a community, but they are families who know each other. No more than that. In Milan there are many more Egyptians and they are much more close-knit: they always try to help each other, for example, when someone new comes they try to find something for him. Few Egyptians come here and therefore the community is not very close-knit". (Hanas, F, 21 years old)

"No, I think in Turin (the community) does not exist. In Milan, it is more important, they are much more numerous and, knowing the people of Milan and seeing the pictures on Facebook, I see that there are also boys and girls who meet in the evening, go to a restaurant, etc.." (Hind, F, 19 years old)

"The Moroccans are closer. We Egyptians are few, and so wherever we go we are not so close-knit. We are suspicious, each one lives on his own..." (Abasi, M, 57 years old)

The only bonds of solidarity found among Egyptians, apart from family ties, often depend on the place of origin, urban or rural, of the respondents:

"Here in Italy there is no unity among us, because there are only twenty of us from Cairo, others are from Suez, but then most of them are from the countryside, not the city. From Afghor, a village near the town of Kalubia, or from Saleh, near Mitom. Those from the countryside I notice right away from the face (...) Those who come from small towns are closer, each with its own tribe, they meet together" (Amir, M, 50 years old)

"We are absolutely not a tight group because the mentality of the Egyptians is different. I live in Cairo, people from the countryside have a different mentality". (Kebir, M, 48 years old)

"I was born in Suez, and then we moved to Cairo when I was young; I grew up in the city. But I had never heard of those who come from small towns (the countryside), until I met them here. First one left, then his brother came here, then his cousin.

Some of them have never seen Cairo; they left their land, their home, they tied up their cow and came here. They are uncivilized, although they have been here for ten years and have a university degree. I recognize it from their face". (Abasi, M, 57 years old)

Elderly immigrants came here thirty years ago and tried, as we saw in Chapter 3, to develop formal and informal community initiatives in the past, while it seems that this does not interest the most recently arrived immigrants. It also seems that the edlerly and younger people tend not to mix, rather do those who arrived first blame those who have arrived recently for supposedly deviant behaviour, and for not respecting moral and religious rules which were a source of "community" cohesion.

> "The Egyptians who have been here for a long time are very serious; the guys who come here nowadays are a little crazy. There are those who go dancing, smoke and sell hashish. In our religion selling drugs is a bad thing; if I know they are doing this I'm going to go and talk and tell them to change". (Abdel Rahman, M, 50 years old)

Also the relationship between first and second generations is becoming more and more complex, and new challenges and issues are arising because of differences in lifestyle choices and in ties with the country of origin. Often first-generation migrants blame Italian society for the change and because they worry about the loss of values of the second-generations, as stated by some interviewees:

> "There are the young people who were born here, they have the same mentality as the Italians. They speak Italian perfectly and speak Arabic at home. They have the same attitudes as their Italians peers, they are 16-17-year-old teenagers. Although their parents are Egyptian, they go out in the evening, they go to pubs, they have the same mentality. They don't go to the mosque either". (Abasi, M, 57 years old)

> "Those who were born here have a different relationship with Italy. We migrated when we were 20, with our culture; at the beginning it was not easy to get integrated. A child who was born here has a different relationship. I realise it with my children, they are more Italian than Egyptian, while I am torn. We parents have managed to make them retain good values. But they have absorbed Italian culture and today, like many teenagers between 14 and 15, they are no

longer like in the past. In the 1980s there was more respect for the elderly, for parents. But today teenagers haven't learnt this, this is a change. They think that freedom is to go out with their underwear in full view. Is this freedom? Family ties get lost". (Bahaa, M, 58 years old)

Moreover, after September 11, 2001, and as a reaction to perceived Islamophobia, many Egyptians, especially the first generation, not only in Italy but also in other Western countries (Zohry 2010), began to sacrifice their Egyptian identity for a broader, supranational Arab or Muslim identity and solidarity.

With regard to the second generation interviewees, born in the majority of cases in the '90s the rejection of their "being Egyptian" was not a reaction directly related to September 11th. Rather was it, on the one hand, the hostile attitude of Italian society which prompted them to describe themselves as fully integrated as 100% Italian, and, on the other hand, Egypt's perceived lack of interest in them and their parents, who had even been forced to leave the country without any attempt on the part of Egyptian institutions to keep them. This situation prompted them to describe themselves as "more Italians than Egyptians", and then to sacrifice their Egyptian identity for an alternative identity:

"Before, if you had asked me this question I would have said that I was 90% Italian and 10% Egyptian (or 99% and 1%) because Egypt has never done anything for me and my parents: I have never had anything" (Abderrahim, M, 20 years old)

1.1. Attempts at associations and religious affiliation

Regarding the establishment of associations or official institutions of the Egyptian community in Italy, in most Italian cities, as already seen in Chapter 3, there are no important unions, hometown associations or any other organization networks to strengthen links with the villages and cities of origin. The existing associations are weak, with small numbers, disconnected at the national level, and depend on the

character of the association's president. Existing Egyptian associations are interested principally in sustaining the local integration of migrants and the preservation of the Arabic culture and language.

The Egyptians that migrated in the 1970s were also among the founders of several mosques and worship centers that have become meeting places for the community. With regard to the religious sphere, Allasino and Ricucci (2004) showed how religion occupies a prominent place in the lives of Muslims, who identify themselves with the faith in which they were educated, considering it a point of reference for their lifestyle. The same can be said for Egyptian Copts.

Dassetto and Bastenier (1993; Berzano 2000:1) have pointed out, moreover, that the construction of prayer halls, mosques and cultural centers is driven not only by spiritual needs, but also "needs to give to their children the culture of origin". The mosque is thus not only a place to pray, but it is also an important center for meetings, training and information.

For some of the respondents the worship center is a place to meet the whole Muslim community, and not only Egyptians - a place of appropriation of identity, for themselves and their children - particularly on special occasions such as the traditional religious celebration of Ramadan and the ceremony for its conclusion, or the Feast of the Sacrifice. These are important occasions were young people, together with their families, meet with relatives who live in Italy and the entire Muslim community.

2.…to a virtual community?

As previously mentioned, community ties among Egyptian immigrants are weak, but the present research attempts to analyze whether and how the collective identity, the Egyptian "imagined community" (Anderson 1983), is being increasingly set up and unified thanks to the use of new media (and as a consequence of the Arab spring) (Premazzi and Scali 2011).

On the emotional level, Internet might alleviate the difficulties and challenges imposed by international migration, with all the internal and affective

transformations on the self, by offering a space where people can find others with common experiences.

In the Egyptian case, in particular, we can find many virtual Egyptian organizations which are sometimes more active than the physical ones. The increase of internet penetration has made it possible for Egyptians to communicate and create virtual organizations regardless of their current residence. Before the Arab Spring many Egyptian diasporas had already established groups on Yahoo, MSN and Facebook. As the Study on the Dynamics of the Egyptian Diaspora: Strengthening Development Linkages (Zohry 2010) shows, in 2010 there were more than 200 Facebook groups created by Egyptians abroad. The number of members in each of these groups varied according to the location. The members of such virtual organizations are usually young (between 18 and 39 years old) and computer literate. Many of these groups gained dynamism and visibility during and after the Arab Spring.

The first generations are recognizing this change and the new activism/participation of the second generations:

> "They do not want to be under their parents, they live in another time and want to do their things: they were born here but they are Muslims and Egyptians and they want to do something. They are young and they want to do something, when we were young we did not do anything like that. There were fewer of us than there are now and there was no Facebook or internet" (Ibrahim, M, 53 years old)

Social media can help to build a sense of community. Indeed, during the revolts, as Zhuo, Wellman, Yu (2011) point out, social media became platforms where discontented Egyptians could voice their frustrations, share relevant expertise, spread hopes, and overcome the fear that comes with living under an oppressive regime, minimizing their feeling of isolation. As long as you feel in the minority you're too scared to do anything at first, but if, thanks to social networks, you are able to express your opinions and dissatisfaction, even often anonymously, and find other people online, both near and far, who share the same conditions and

experience the same feelings, you feel less alone and more powerful, and also ready to take to the streets and risk your life.

During the protests, as we have seen before, the activists recorded events on their cellphones and shared them with other people in the country and around the world via YouTube and Facebook, often with live streaming. They made decisions on Facebook and coordinated actions through Twitter (Castells 2012); they were in contact with their peers abroad, from whom they received support and encouragement.

2.1. From Many to One: (Italian-)Egyptians on Facebook

Among the Facebook groups created before, during and after the Arab Spring, the group Egyptians of Italy was the first. The group had already been set up in 2008 on the initiative of a young second-generation man who lived in Rome. The group had tried to meet physically, but the organized meeting was a total failure due to the very low participation of the members of the group.

> "I am the founder of the group Egyptians of Italy... the idea came to me about 4 years ago... and it was useful to talk and chat all together... then slowly, year after year, talking with a friend of mine who now lives in Egypt we said... why do we not meet and get to know the others? The first meeting was in Rome but it wasn't very successful because only 8 persons showed up..." (Mohamed, M, 24 years old)

The Egyptians in Turin group was also born before January 2011 on the initiative of a girl of Egyptian origin who lived in Turin and, inspired by an Egyptian TV programme which had the precise objective of acting as a link between Egypt and all the Egyptians abroad, decided to set up the group Egyptians in Turin on Facebook.

> "Then there were guys who, during the Wesal programme, said, "We have a group on Facebook", and "we know each other, we meet up…" and then I said, "What about creating a group?!". So, first I started searching on Facebook; I said, "Maybe it exists and I don't know it". Then I found two or three "Egyptians in Italy" groups, with few participants, then pages of Egyptians in Milan and Rome, but in Turin there was nothing, so I created the group "Egyptians in Turin" and tried to get the majority of Egyptians in Turin to join it.… The group was formed one-and-a-half years ago; in the beginning they were not many of us, then a lot of friends joined and, since I created the group, I have wanted us to meet up one day to get to know each other better." (Rania, F, 19 years old)

In the Facebook group "Egyptians in Turin", the Egyptian second generations living in Turin could find a space to share feelings and experiences, where one could meet people who had travelled a similar path and who shared a relationship, at the beginning still not very clear, with the country of their parents.

> "Not all the people from the group live in Turin, but we all share the same love for Egypt. There are also people who live in Egypt and want to provide news live from Egypt, but most of these people are from Turin and I am very happy when I meet people who share this homesickness for our country with me". (Rania, F, 19 years old)

The group was very active during the revolution in January 2011, becoming a space for the sharing of information related to what was going on there, for sharing different views and a support tool, through messages, songs and images posted on the "wall", for those who were demonstrating in Tahrir Square.

> "The group was very helpful during the revolution, because we posted everything: patriotic songs, songs for the country, songs for the young men and women who died in the square, songs that make us cry, make us dream of

being in Egypt, we published the news and everyone did it" (Rania, F, 19 years old)

Facebook was, also, an important tool for creating a sense of belonging for Egyptians living in Turin as well as maintaining contacts with people, relatives or friends, staying in Egypt:

"I think Facebook is very important because it is a communication network, which is essential not so much for friends who see each other frequently, but for my cousins who live in Egypt, I just want to thank Mark (Zuckerberg) who invented Facebook because it is easier to communicate with relatives in Egypt. You feel closer making comments on Facebook statuses, and thanks to the pages on Egypt, on its news, politics, sports, films, Egyptian society, and thanks to news in general… you understand what is happening between you and the world…" (Rania, F, 19 years old)

In the months after the revolution, the idea of creating something over the Facebook page, something that would represent them and that would give to the Egyptians in Turin that dimension of community that seemed to be missing among the first generations began to circulate among the members of the group. The idea was to create an association of young people that could be a community and the voice of Egyptians living in Turin.

"There is a community, there are many associations… we have created one for the young people because young people have a different view from those who are arriving from Egypt now and they want only to work. Instead we have a culture that we want to put on the table. We want to understand and see experiences like ours... I felt this in the last two years while I stayed away from my compatriots because I was with the Italians. Now we have met each other, we saw and now we know that we have the same thoughts and problems..." (Said, M, 20 years old)

> "We are trying with the group to create a little this atmosphere of community, but it is not easy" (Raja, F, 19 years old)

A year after the revolution, on January 25th, 2012, the Egyptian second generations gathered in the Facebook group Egyptians in Turin decided to organize an event to celebrate the anniversary. The event was organized at the ATC theatre of Turin and, although it was initially an idea of the second generations, it was shared and supported by all the Egyptian community in Turin. In addition to the Muslim community there were in fact also members (first and second generations) of the Coptic community and representatives of other Egyptians and North African associations from different Italian cities.

> "The revolution happened on January 25th. In Turin we had an event to celebrate it, in the ATC building. And they asked: young people made the revolution. We want young people here to take part in this event. It was a proposal, an idea. And this proposal united us: there were three of them and they asked other peopleas well as me. Eventually we arrived at about twenty and we organized this event. There was a lot of desire to prove that we too shared the desire, which was implicit in the revolution..." (Said, M, 20 years old)

After the organization of the event of January 25th, which was a great success, the members of the Facebook group Egyptians in Turin stopped to reflect on the next steps. The initial idea was to form an association and to act as the voice of the Egyptian second generations in Turin. The attempt and the desire to engage, however, clashed with real daily problems such as lack of time, poor organizational skills (due to the young age of the members), and, above all, the lack, after the revolution and the celebrations, of clear and precise objectives for an association active not only in virtual space, but also offline. What Morozov (2011) describes as a situation like Waiting for Godot: now that the group was created… what would happen?

> "We did this event and after that there were no more needs and goals. We tried to motivate people but we were a bit lost. It was flat: participation, enthusiasm… with the period of examinations at the university. Things happen only as a result of felt needs. This is what happened to this association". (Said, M, 20 years old)

> "We tried to create an association, with the group Egyptians in Turin but it failed. More than anything else because there was nothing new and the group split up. We started with great enthusiasm but we weren't able to keep it up... so it was inevitable..." (Asmaa, F, 21 years old)

On the second anniversary of the revolution two events were organized in Turin (a sign of new divisions within the community caused mainly by the results of the elections). One of the two celebrations was attended also by members of the Egyptian government. The event was organized by a new Egyptian Association, linked to the General Union of Egyptians Abroad, which we have already discussed in Chapter 3, created by some Egyptian first generations, called the General Union of Egyptians in Italy (UGEI) with the aim of involving the second generation in the future.

The last group in chronological order was Negma (New Egyptian Global Movement Association). Egyptians in Italy, born after the Arab Spring, from its earliest stages tried to define specific objectives such as the creation of an association and the participation in Expo 2015 in Milan. We can read the purpose of the association in the description of the Facebook group:

> To create, organize, and make interactive an association of Egyptians, first-and second-generation, in order to constitute a united and proactive working group that can participate in the public life of Italy, also in view of Expo 2015, the international exhibition which will be in Milan [...] The Association, that will be born under the name of Negma – New Egyptian Global Movement Association - is secular, apolitical, non-partisan, and

> aims only to bring together the new Egyptians in Italy, in order to keep alive the many cultures of our country, and to encourage integration and professional growth of young Egyptians in Italy.

According to the views of the creators of the groups, these would allow members to communicate about Egyptian news, rumours, commercials, jokes, to organize activities to promote Egyptian culture and national solidarity, to share experiences and emotions, to exchange advice and opinions, and to present proposals and claims lobbying for current political issues and debates in Egypt, but they could also represent them and give to the Egyptians in Italy that dimension of community which was missing among the first generations.

> "We really hope to be able to move forward and in the future to have a point of reference for Egyptians... a true community that has a recognized name" (Mohamed, M, 24 years old)

Due to the celebration organized by the group Egyptians in Turin on January 25, 2012, and thanks to the use of new technologies, the Turin group got in touch with other groups active in Italy, Egyptians of Italy and Negma-Egyptians in Italy and, guided by the rediscovered pride in being Egyptians and by wanting to do something for their country, they organized two national meetings of Egyptians in Italy, in Milan (where the Egyptian community is bigger), one in February and one in May 2012. The objective of the first meeting was mainly to get to know one other, while the second was organized with the aim of creating the association to which they all aspired. Meeting in a restaurant in Milan, 80 Egyptians, first and second generations, men and women, Copts and Muslims, engaged in a participatory process aimed at creating an association of Egyptians in Italy. During the meeting they discussed objectives, methods and beneficiaries of the activities of the future association. The atmosphere of the meeting was dynamic anf full of hope.

> “There was a feeling that people had come into contact, that is, to understand "Ah, but there are others like us", like super-heroes who recognize each other and say "Oh, well", and then there was this air of "Oh, but I've always been alone, I know few Egyptians, now I have finally found a group" and in fact, from there, things are going a little bit better” (Heba, F, 36 years old).

The novelty of the event in Milan was, in fact, the idea of not doing something just for second generations or starting from them, as was the case of the association in Turin, but to create a group that was really open to all the community. In Turin, the young people had also confronted the difficulty of acting as representatives of the community, “threatening”, involuntarily, to obscure personalities who had had positions of responsibility within it for a long time. The difficulty was perhaps also due to the fact that the community in Turin was smaller than that in Milan and the divisions between Copts and Muslims were particularly strong (Premazzi and Scali 2013).

Some also hoped that a new group made up of young people could also overcome the division between Egyptian Copts and Muslims within the community, especially in Turin:

> “I know Copts here in Turin, and some are really nice people, they would like to join in this community, but they know from the beginning that they are defeated, then they do not even try. I and the group of young Egyptians in Turin, I know it and follow it, because Egyptian friends have advised me so on the Facebook page. That page can be a way to create a community, they have also done some nice things. I like them also at organizational level, however, as I have said; between Copts and Muslims there is deep division” (Hilb, F, 18 years old)

In addition, the Egyptian second generations active in Turin were very young and therefore more inexperienced. The event in Milan rather created the opportunity for young Egyptians to act as representatives of the entire community:

"Different from Turin, where people do not believe that a group of young people can represent them: they are oriented towards someone they trust who is 60 years old, not the young man who is 30 or 25. In Milan, on the other hand, I saw that the people trust us, are more open: even talking to older people, they said they want to support an association with this purpose [...] 'It is much better that one of you (second generations) represents Egypt on important occasions, rather than one of us (first generations)' they said. "But he/she must have in mind when he/she speaks that there are also immigrants from Egypt, in addition to the second generations...' they said... I think that the more categories we can include the better it is... We would like to include all Egyptians, because we want to represent them also from the official point of view. We would like to put ourselves in the middle between Italy and Egypt: we already are in the middle, we just want to make it official and then when there is an event where they need someone to represent Egypt, instead of sending the same old man that you have been seeing for 30 years, sending some of these young people. The objective is to create an Egyptian community". (Ahmed, M, 20 years old)

"The initial project is to get to know one another and then to create a community, a real community, which is respected by the municipality, by the institutions, and also by the consulate and the Egyptian authorities in order to meet the needs of Egyptians, of all Egyptians here and not just the second generations. The third step would be to expand this association with projects and achieving the goals that we defined. Doing something for Egypt is definitely a goal but it is a bit more long-term in the sense that it is certainly more difficult than to do something here". (Asmaa, F, 21 years old).

3. A social movement approach for the Egyptian diaspora in Italy

In his article *Mobilizing in transnational space: a social movement approach to the formation of diaspora*, Sökefeld (2006) counters concepts that essentialize the idea of diaspora arguing that diaspora identity and the imagination of a diaspora community is an outcome of mobilization processes. The development of diaspora identity is not simply a natural and inevitable result of migration but a historical contingency that frequently develops out of mobilization in response to specific critical events. Using the social movement approach, he suggests that "there must be opportunities, mobilizing structures and practices, and frames that enable this mobilization".

In the Egyptian case, the Arab Spring appears to have been the critical event that led to the birth of a discourse about community among Egyptians in Italy. But, according to Sökefeld events are only critical when they are perceived and framed in a particular way. Actors are needed to articulate that such events require "new forms of action, discourse and ways of conceptualizing the world". This can be done individually or in collective forms it was the case of the Facebook groups created by the second generation which carve a new discourse of community through which a particular diasporic imagination has been negotiated (Sökefeld and Schwalgin 2000).

Discursive zones then create a virtual place where people interact and have experinces of crossing cultural and imaginary borders, creating perhaps a sense of belonging; the psychological dimension of citizenship (Tastsoglou 2006) or "emotional" "citizenship" (Bernal 2006).

Community is the context where the similarities and the differences that constitute what we really are and what we have become (Hall 1990) turn into a shared discourse. The discourse includes representations of identities produced and consumed communally in a way that the sense of belonging and the symbolic boundaries of Us as insiders and Them as outsiders are actively and continuously produced (Georgiou 2011).

Sökefeld (2006) adds also that 'mobilizing practices are not only required at the beginning of the formation of a diaspora but perhaps even more urgently later when

the initial urge for the community, springing from specific critical events, is gone'. In the case of Egyptian second generations this happened and the "hot nationalism", as it was called by Sökefeld, had to be replaced by everyday "banal nationalism", by daily practices. As pointed out by Abdelfattah (2011), the Arab Spring, in fact, has given to the majority of Egyptians, 'a feeling of belonging and patriotism' to their country. Appadurai (1996) calls the increased diasporic interest in their original homeland's politics "new patriotism". He argues that new media and communication technologies play a key role in the process of connecting and engaging. Part of what the media makes possible, thanks to the opportunity to share readings, critiques and pleasures is what elsewhere Appadurai (1996) called a "community of feeling", a group that begins to imagine and feel things collectively. They are communities *in* themselves, but always potentially communities *for* themselves, able to move from shared imagination to collective action. These patriotisms also imply new forms of links among diasporic nationalism, delocalized political communications and renewed political commitments. Online discussions provoke new forms of association, discussion and mobilization that influence politics.

Online spaces foster a sense of belonging to Egypt, second generations can post every day on Facebook groups, but when they tried to switch from online to offline, from enthusiasm to commitment, from "hot" to "banal" nationalism, they encountered different problems, as we have seen before. But, as Castells (2012: XXVI) says, "The big bang of a social movement regards the transformation of emotion in action".

So it is important to consider that the limit of the online groups, based on what Clay Shirky calls "the embarrassing ease with which they can be formed" - that in fact they can act as spaces for leisure or clickactivism[35] which can produce a kind of satisfaction, the idea of having done and doing their part, for which greater offline effort is not required. According to Morozov (2011: 175), it does not take long because a group of people feel they have a common identity; it is much more

[35] The term "clickactivism" negatively means a type of online activism that doesn't consequently lead to a real commitment in the offline dimensión because, as demonstrated by Morozov (2011: 174), "activism facilitated by social networks happens for reasons that have nothing to do with individual commitment towards ideas or politics in general, but rather to impress friends".

difficult to ensure that they act in the interest of that community or that they are willing to make sacrifices. It is much easier, using the definitions proposed by Appadurai (1996), to be a community of fantasy rather than one of sentiment. Of course, the weaker the common denominator is among the members of a particular group, the lower will be the desire to act as a cohesive group, and to make sacrifices in the name of common good, but, as we saw earlier, it is also important to support and promote the sense of belonging of the members through daily practices and celebrations.

Sökefeld suggests that some moments of commemorations, celebrations and symbols may have an important function in turning the imagination of community into a tangible experience as, in our case, the celebrations for the anniversary of the revolution. In both cases, institutions are the backbones of the diaspora community. It is via institutions that a discourse is produced and disseminated recreating the image of community, for instance by constantly referring to others (Sökefeld and Schwalgin 2000).

The objective of the Facebook groups that wanted to build up an association was in fact to capitalize on the enthusiasm of online participation with concrete actions in support of the Egyptian community in Italy. Digital tools can indeed be catalysts of enthusiasm that need, however, a real organizational commitment, responsibility and a deep sense of the affections (Benhabib 2005) in order to survive and to be really effective.

> "We have understood that somethings do not go on Facebook: more than creating a link and posting some funny comments, you cannot do" (Said, M, 20 years old)

CONCLUSIONS

1. Transnational actors or just spectators?

This thesis aimed at answering the question whether Egyptians became transnational actors after the Arab Spring or they remained mere spectators of what was happening in their country of origin. At the end of this work and after years of research, the question still remains partially unanswered. The changes in Egypt are still underway and the tumultuous social phase that Egypt has been going through for almost three years has aroused great concerns regards winners and losers of the new political scenario and insecurity that is now rooted at the level of daily micropractices, creating new social cleavages.

The revolts in the Arab countries represented a turning point in the relationships, interests and participation in the country of origin for the first and second generation. Arab Spring resulted in a stronger orientation to Egypt, leading the second-generation to rediscover their pride in being Egyptian and reconsider the migratory networks and ties with their parents' country of origin.

This rediscovery and pride were due, on the one hand, to what was happening in Egypt, and that from hour to hour, day by day, through satellite TV and the Internet, were spread around the world, but also, on the other hand, to what was going on in everyday life and relationships of the second-generations, in the interest and curiosity of teachers, classmates and friends: at last people were interested in them (and they were no longer considered as being only problematic) for something positive, they were looked upon with admiration, the spotlight was on them.

But for some of the young second generations, the rediscover of their Egyptian identity, due to the Arab Spring, makes them to feel a moral obligation toward their country of origin pushing them to a new reconfiguration of their present and future life, study and work plans, between "here" and "there". It becomes a sort of mission: "do something for my country".

Revolution in Egypt strengthens what Cohen (1997: 155) calls "an emotional tie between 'communities' scattered abroad and a homeland, which continues to have appeal on their processes of identification, their reality and their feelings".

Transnationalism, used in literature with reference to the ability demonstrated by many immigrants to be active at the same time in the country of origin as well in the hosting country and to maintain social, economic, political and cultural relationships between the two contexts (Ambrosini 2008), was initially referred only to adult and recently settled migrants, often in opposition to the classical model of assimilation. This idea was, however, challenged by the work of Portes (2005) and Guarnizo (2003) who have argued that often the most integrated immigrants, too, are the protagonists of transnational practices.

Many studies on transnationalism among second-generations emphasize a trend of detachment of the second-generations by their parents' countries of origin: they would be the third generations to recover the interest in culture, language, history and politics of the places that the first generation left.

On the contrary more recent researches have showed how for those second generations that grow up in families and co-ethnic communities where life and social networks are shaped by a continuous exchange of ideas, people, norms, practices and goods from the ancestral home and the country of settlement (Levitt 2001), even if the ties with ancestral home do not manifest, they are latent.

The scholar (2009: 1226) while agrees that the children of immigrants will not participate in their ancestral homes in the same ways and with the same regularity as their parents, argues that "we should not dismiss outright the strong potential effect of being raised in a transnational social field". When children grow up in households and participate in organisations in which people, goods, money, ideas and practices from their parents' countries of origin circulate in and out on a regular basis, they are not only socialised into the rules and institutions of the countries where they live, but also into those of the countries from whence their families come. They develop ties and acquire social contacts and skills that are useful in both settings. As can be seen also among the young Greeks of the second generation grown up in Germany and the United States (King and Christou 2010b) or for the children of Italian immigrants in Switzerland (Wessendorf 2010), such

structural ties will thus be available to be revitalized when and if historical circumstances dictate; often these ties are abandoned in childhood and adolescence, especially if the peer group is not made up of coethnics, but they may become important at particular lifecycle stage on in response to a specific event (Levitt 2002, 2009), as it was the case of the Arab Spring.

But their experiences are not just a continuation of the first generation's involvement in their ancestral homes but an integral part of growing up in a new destination. Rather than being caught between the pressure both to assimilation and to preserve homeland traditions, the children of immigrants create a complex set of practices of their own.

We can so consider the second generation as the "transnationalism test" according to Ambrosini (2008): on one hand, according to Queirolo Palmas (2010), the second generation can live "transnational lives" (Smith 2005) and discover new identities and forms of belonging. On the other, they are often victims of transnational forces that weaken the transnational commitment, forcing them to taking roots (contracts and work careers, real estate requirements, new births) in the hosting country.

Internet seems to have given a great impulse to these trends, increasing the opportunities for the young people, native and of migrants origin, to consume goods, images and representations which provide them with global and transnational cultural references.

Mass media such as the Internet and satellite TV, play a crucial and ambiguous role in this regard, favoring richer forms of "global imagination" (Giulianotti and Robertson 2006: 174): they provide to migrant groups an "electronic proximity" with their culture of origin and, thereby, they produce social and informational resources to create deterritorialized "community of sentiment" (Appadurai 1996).

In his book *Modernity at Large*, Arjun Appadurai (1996) recognized that there are two forces that have changed the world and "have altered the ways imagination operates", allowing the creation of new worlds: mass migration and electronic mediation. These two pillars are also in constant "flux". The circulation of people and digitally mediatised content proceed across and beyond boundaries of the nation states. They provide a space for an alternative community, for identity

formation and the creation and maintenance of transnational ties and practices (Leurs and Ponzanesi 2011).

Moreover, the development of multiple practices of distance communication has produced the most important change in the life of the migrant (Di Bella 2008), accompanying the transition from what was called a "double absence" to the emergence of a social space of co-presence (Diminescu 2008) where the second generations can play their hyphenated identity and sense of belonging (Andall 2002).

But, in contrast with their parents, second generations, can invoke transnationalism more as a symbolic representation by including references to their country of origin on their personal profile page on Facebook o posting on Facebook groups, as a way to signal ethnic pride.

Through social networks they can show in public, to their parents and the Others, that they have not forgotten their roots, that they are still linked to their country of origin. Videos, posts and songs can in fact sustain feelings of nostalgia and promote emotional bonds with an imagined homeland. But symbolic, emotional transnationalism as such sparks a sense of affective belonging to a community, which is more imagined and virtual than a physically grounded connection.

If returns in summer or during holidays, sending remittances and celebrating important festivities in the country of origin are, for the the first generations a way to keep the link, to continue to be member of the community, but especially to expiate the guilt and counteract the disruptive effect caused by emigration (Sayad 2002), for the second generation social networks are the new space where to "expiate for their guilt", and to keep the immigrant bargain with their parents (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995, 2001; Smith 2000, 2002).

Therefore social networks reinforce symbolic and emotional transnationalism, producing a kind of satisfaction, the idea of having done and doing something, for which greater offline effort is not required.

Are the Egyptian second generations, therefore, become a transnational actors from the Arab Spring?

The events of Egypt, the turmoil that followed, the sense of guilt for not being there and the pride of being Egyptians, have strongly questioned the emotional

transnationalism, showed through the social networks, of the second generation bringing back at the center of the lives of the young people interviewed the issue of identity and cultural belonging, triggering processes of transnational participation on-line and off-line, stimulating a sense of loyalty and responsibility to their ancestral home.

Emotional involvement following the Arab Spring, strengthening by the social network use, led Egyptian second generations to a new reflection on their "being transnational", on their sense of belonging, on their role toward Egypt: from an unconscious way of being, into a conscious way of belonging (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004), from an inherited transnationalism to a more elective, chosen, conscious, individual, interconnected transnationalism which tried to develop new practices and institutions to become effective also offline. Levitt and Glick-Schiller (2004), discussing the significance of "ways of being" and "ways of belonging" in a transnational space (Somerville 2008), define "ways of being" the actual social relations and practices in which individuals engage, whereas "ways of belonging" as a connection to a homeland through memory, nostalgia or imagination (Levitt e Glick-Schiller 2004; cfr. also Haller e Landolt 2005; Vertovec 2004; Somerville 2008). "The ways of belonging combine action and awareness of identity that action means" (Levitt and Glick-Schiller 2004: 1010). People can thus engage in social relations and practices that go beyond the boundaries and therefore exhibit a transnational way of being without recognizing it. But when they recognize it and emphasize the transnational elements of their identity, they express a transnational way of belonging.

In conclusion we can say that social networks can help in involving and strengthening the development of a symbolic and emotional transnationalism (Wolf 2002). The majority of my respondents were very active, posting and sharing news and video and through the creation of Facebook groups and online discussions. In the early stages of the protests, these online groups, along with all the news coming from Egypt, certainly fostered a renewed pride in being Egyptian and facilitated the emotional, but also physical, participation, through organization of demonstrations, events and conferences, to what was happening in Tahrir Square (Premazzi and Scali 2011). Also over the following months they stayed in touch with those who

were in Egypt, sharing information and making comments about political news with relatives and friends, but also updating the pages of the official Egyptian and Italian groups with news, videos and posts. But the triggering event in the country of origin has also strongly questioned their emotional transnationalism, showing potentials but also limits of online participation and pushing them to try to develop actions but also institutions offline.

2. Egyptian diaspora?

As discussed in Chapter 6, until the Arab Spring the Egyptian community in Italy was known as a "non community" because of the little cohesion among migrants.
Between first and second generation emerged also major differences with respect to the idea of community: association, for the first generation migrants, meant doing activities and anchored to a physical location, often the mosque; associations was supportive, aimed at promoting intra-community links in emigration, and to support the inclusion in the new environment by offering spaces of identification. The association for the children, however, lives and develops through the web, and then sometimes materializes in one place, a demonstration, a mobilization. Facebook, social networks and websites are the tools and the places for discussion.
The associations of the second generation are not different just for the strong use of new technologies but also for the meaning that is attributed to participation. For young people to be members of an association becomes an opportunity to initiate processes of mediation between cultures, to play and show that "hyphenated identity" which they feel.
Regarding Egyptian community, the Arab Spring was reflected on the lives of the protagonists, bringing back the issue of associations in its traditional and new forms, favored by the spread of social networks. The second generation, joined in Facebook groups have tried to create an Egyptian community and social networks were the space where the discourse on community was developed.

But have Egyptians become a diaspora thanks to and starting from the Arab Spring? And has the conceptualization of themselves as a diaspora led them to develop transnational practices?

A great collective energy and planning, especially among the younger generation, have accompanied the creation of Facebook groups and the attempt to create an association to represent Egyptians in Italy. At the end of this research, however, the situation is that of a weakening and scaling, in words of the protagonists also because, as demonstrated by previous research (Kivisto 2001: 571), "the political and economic crises in the homeland may stimulate the emergence of initiatives addressed to it, but once these crises assuage, immigrants tend to focus their energies on the place where they live".

Considering, however, the attempt to construct an Egyptian community in Italy and following Sökefeld (2006) approach that takes the imagination of a transnational community and a shared identity as defining characteristics of diaspora. I agree with the author that the formation of diaspora is not a "natural" consequence of migration but that specific processes of mobilization have to take place for a diaspora to emerge. Also according to Ambrosini (2008: 78) considers the diasporas not as something given, but rather as a social construct, in which the narrative, interactions and imagined community ties play an important role and Brah (1996) argues that diasporas are therefore "imagined communities" whose identity is far from be fixed or given *a priori*, but that changes according to historical circumstances. It involves the homing desire which is not equivalent to the desire to move towards an ancestral homeland, since not all diasporas sustain an ideology of return.

Therefore, Sökefeld suggests to define diasporas as "imagined transnational communities". The assumption of a shared identity that unites people living dispersed in transnational space thereby becomes the central defining feature of diasporas. Rejecting ideas of migrants' natural rootedness and belonging to places of origin, he argues that diaspora identity and the imagination of a diaspora community is also an outcome of mobilization processes. The development of diaspora identity is not simply a natural and inevitable result of migration but a

historical contingency that frequently develops out of mobilization in response to specific critical events. Diaspora is thus firmly historicized.

So I have tried to describe the path that has been going through from three years the Egyptian community in Italy, questioning whether it can be defined or not a diaspora. Many features of the process would seem to confirm the emergence of an Egyptian diaspora even if the uncertain results and reactions of Egyptians abroad of the confused events in the country of origin make it difficult to define it risking of essentializing a process that is still ongoing.

But for the Egyptian diaspora transforms from an imagined, emotional online community into forms of off-line social, economic and political mobilization there is the need for a mediation through formal organizations and national governments (Kasinitz at al. 2002), that at the moment in Egypt is difficult to achieve.

Institutional opportunities, in fact, strongly influence the degree to which the diaspora enacts transnational practices. When powerful, expansive organizations involve the migrants in activities that bring them into contact with their ancestral homes on a regular basis, so they are more likely to become transnational actors (Levitt 2002).

Therefore, in conclusion, we can argue that social networks strengthen the develop of an emptional transnationalism and the creation of imagined transnational communities. The concept of diaspora, however, expresses attitudes, a diasporic "conscience": a sense of belonging, a myth of the distant homeland, an emotional bond with their compatriots around the world. It is on a cultural level and in some ways emotional. Though in fact diasporas are known and recognized for the wide range of activities and institutions that have created, the concept itself does not imply a verifiable commitment in this regard. Crucial to the paradigm of diasporas then, even more than for the transnational one, is the duration in time and then the intergenerational continuity of the diasporic identity. Only in the long term it is possible to recognize if a community of immigrants has kept a sense of belonging to a distant homeland, an effective internal solidarity, a link with other groups around the world, distinctive codes, all elements necessary to define a diaspora.

In the first generation of migrants, these elements are often widespread, although their intensity may vary, however, it is in the transmission of identity traits to the second and subsequent generations that there is the test for the formation of a minority community that can be called "diaspora".

3. Limits and suggestions for future research

It is important at the end of this work also to highlights limits and paths for future research: regarding the study of transnational activism and return intentions it is important to provide for research that use a long-term longitudinal approach, because as Peggy Levitt (2002: 144) argues "if we only examine the activities of the second generation at a single point, we miss significant ebbs and flows in involvement, because the second generation's interest in, need for, and ability to participate in their ancestral homes varies considerably over time".
The Egyptian revolution has triggered the hope of the renovation of the socio-economic situation among the first generation and the revival of identity, interest and moral obligations toward Egypt among the second generation together with the reconsideration of their future life between "here" and "there". Future research should therefore use a long-term longitudinal approach and address more in depth the importance of political, economic and cultural changes in both home and host countries.

Internet and the social networks allow not only to maintain ties between Egypt and migrants in Italy but also to connect Egyptians all over the world. As the Study on the Dynamics of the Egyptian Diaspora: Strengthening Development Linkages (Zohry 2010) shows, in 2010 there were more than 200 Facebook groups created by Egyptians abroad. The number of members in each of these groups varied according to the location. The members of such virtual organizations are usually young (between 18 and 39 years old) and computer literate. Many of these groups gained dynamism and visibility during and after the Arab Spring. Studying the links

among the different diasporas and whether and how these have been strengthened following the Arab Spring could be the theme of further research.

The last consideration arises instead from some methodological limits I encountered and it is the organization of research that adopt a transnational perspective. In the present study, in fact, the behaviors and transnational practices that I have documented are the ones I have been told by the interviewees, encountered exclusively in Italy, and mapping their online behaviors. They are therefore the result of narratives in which the subjective and imaginative component is crucial; interesting would have been to verify in the field, in Egypt and in other European countries, such as the practices described actually take shape and develop.

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ANNEX 1 – TRACCIA DI INTERVISTA

Qualche informazione su di te:
- paese di nascita;
- stato civile;
- età;
- anno di arrivo in Italia;
- con quale titolo di ingresso?

• Hai la cittadinanza italiana?

• Qualche informazione sulla tua famiglia di origine (genitori, fratelli):
- luogo di provenienza in Egitto;
- luogo di residenza attuale della famiglia di origine;
- altre esperienze di migrazione in famiglia (zii, cugini... non solo in Italia, ma anche in altri Paesi/Continenti).

• Quale è stata la tua formazione scolastica e/o formazione professionale e dove? (Egitto, in altri Paesi, in altre città italiane)

• Perchè hai fatto quella scelta? Ti ha consigliato qualcuno? (genitori, insegnanti...)

• Chi frequenti nel tempo libero? Connazionali, altri immigrati, italiani?

• Frequenti qualche sala di preghiera?

• Svolgi qualche attività o hai qualche posizione di responsabilità/ruolo di coordinamento delle attività all'interno?

• E' diverso il tuo modo di vivere la religione rispetto a quello dei tuoi genitori?

• Hai contatti con chi è rimasto in Egitto (quali persone, dove, frequenza, come è cambiata nel tempo)?

• Da quando sei in Italia quante volte sei rientrato? Per quali motivi (vacanze, business...)?

• Cosa fai quando ritorni?

• Ci sono stati eventi negli ultimi anni (Primavera araba) che hanno modificato le relazioni con l'Egitto?

• Quali sono le tue prospettive future (rimanere in Italia, tornare in Egitto, andare all'estero...)?

• Usi Facebook? Da quando e perchè? E' cambiato l'utilizzo negli ultimi anni?

• Fai parte di gruppi su Facebook? Quali e perchè hai deciso di farne parte? Hai qualche ruolo/responsabilità in questi gruppi?

• Partecipi alle discussioni su Facebook? Su che temi principalmente? In che lingua posti principalmente?

• Esiste una comunità egiziana nella tua città? Ci sono differenze generazionali, religiose o di provenienza?

• Il cambiamento politico in Egitto ha cambiato la tua o la vostra idea di partecipazione? Ha influito sulla necessità di incontrarsi fisicamente?