

ing” (p. 94). Thus, specialized procedure of *visibilitization* become pivotal, insofar as they provide the essential tools to identify relevant social media data and make sense of them. The capacity of an institution – be it a university or the police – or a market actor to effectively surveil a target population is proportional to its ability to ‘visibilize’ – rather than merely visualize – information, that is, to crawl through the crowds of information available in order to extract or reconstruct readable patterns. To this, it should be added that, just as other digital media, social media are interactive by definition. In such a fast-changing scenario, skilful surveillance may function by elicitation, turning, once again, into something akin to cooptation.

With this book, Trotter has provided a valuable contribution to the empirical study of everyday surveillance practices. The book is clear and well organized, two qualities which also make it suitable for teaching purposes. While his empirical research is limited to a tiny case (the use of Facebook at a specific Canadian university) and does not include ethnography – which would have arguably made it more exciting – it nonetheless manages to flesh out all the major points and issues in current social media research.

* * *

Antonello Ciccozzi

Parola di scienza. Il terremoto dell’Aquila e la Commissione Grandi Rischi. Un’analisi antropologica [The Word of Science. The L’Aquila Earthquake and the Major Risks Committee. An Anthropological Analysis]
Verona, DeriveApprodi, 2013, pp. 188

Gemma Maltese *University of Calabria / Lancaster University*

The book by Antonello Ciccozzi can be described as an open path through the anthropological rooms and cultural semiospheres – as the author describes them – of the earthquake in the city and among the citizens of L’Aquila. Through the case of the earthquake of L’Aquila, on the 6 April 2009, Ciccozzi shows the divisions, conflicts, dominations, subordinations, alienations that are reproduced through the current relationships between forms of subjected and dominant ‘knowledges’, in contemporary capitalist societies.

In that earthquake, Ciccozzi was directly involved in several senses: he is a citizen of L’Aquila; he survived the earthquake; he was a ‘privileged’ witness during the different phases of the trial, appointed to investigate the management of the earthquake of L’Aquila, and, in particular, the

Major Risks Committee (MRC), which was established by the Italian government in the period before the earthquake. In fact, Ciccozzi was called as a cultural anthropologist in order to provide technical advice on the forms of governmental communication and intervention on the perception of citizens of L'Aquila with respect to the different earthquakes and seismic swarms that were occurring in this territory for more than three months before the 6 April. His research experience can be defined as an observant participation of what it meant to be part of the places and community, and of the dynamics of management relating to the earthquake. From this convergence of experiences, this anthropological analysis is aimed at drawing attention to how the forms of communication of the members of the Commission led to an underestimation of risk by a part of the population of L'Aquila that, in turn, encouraged citizens to stay at home during the earthquake. In the "word of science" – in this case, the word of the MRC – and in the desire of the population of L'Aquila for calming and reassuring messages with regard to the several months of earthquake activity, scientific-media communication, structured on the wave of "rassicurazionismo" – being reassuring and persuasive through "science" – were able to penetrate and modify those stratified popular 'knowledges' and 'traditional-instinctive behaviors' that over time in the face of previous earthquakes had prescribed precautionary behavior.

The author does not intend to suggest that the way in which the Commission managed its communication with citizens was the primary or only factor which determined the tragic loss of life in L'Aquila. Nevertheless, Ciccozzi points out how, in particular, the well-publicised visit of the members of the Commission at L'Aquila in front of all the citizenship, the day before the earthquake, had, among other elements, a strong influence: the communication of this Commission acted as a mixture of normative-reassuring knowledge, transmitted to the population of L'Aquila, in a moment of particular individual and collective emotional weakness and fragility. The author reports the testimony of several survivors who tell their stories and the stories of their relatives who were casualties in the earthquake, showing how that night some people decided not to leave their houses during the earthquake, because they were influenced by the reassuring diagnosis of scientists. Observant participation, direct testimonies, in connection to themes of anthropology of risk and the theory of social representations, construct this analysis of the 'scientific' 'manipulation' of the L'Aquila semiospheres of the earthquake: in other terms, the way in which the normative power of technoscience, in politics and the public sphere, particularly in the management of risks and dangers, seems to act as a sort of arbiter-peacemaker in social conflicts and public concerns, and also, ambivalently, as a (modernist) cultural source of both reassurance and risk in current social imaginaries.

In the earthquake of L'Aquila, the condemnation – the blame and anger that Ciccozzi explores, as a member of the (different) communities

that were playing in the ‘show’ of the governmental management of “Major Risks” – is not against science, but it is against the negligence that has characterized the word of its interpreters. Technicians, scientists, experts have been called to assume their responsibility for risk assessment and communication, and not because they had to be able to predict the earthquake: as Ciccozzi underlines, earthquake-risk assessment and management and its communication are different from the prediction of earthquakes. Nevertheless, particularly in situations of emergency and risk, scientific communications can have – even in the face of a particular cultural semiosphere ‘accustomed’ to earthquakes and their effects – profound social impact in the perception, representation and evaluation of disasters.

Although Ciccozzi, at the end of his analysis, puts more emphasis on the question of scientific communication in the public sphere, the “word of science” recalls in any case the problem of the technoscientific domain in the relationships between citizens and power (rationalized) institutions of knowledge societies: the word of science is a discourse-dispositive of power. Its normative character is tangled with juridical, political, economic and cultural beliefs, in the construction of our cognitive maps and interpretations of the world and its phenomena. In this sense, imagining reflexively the hierarchical structure between forms of knowledge, and its centrality in capitalist democracies, inside the rooms of the Court of L’Aquila Ciccozzi’s analysis played a key role in the trial that ended with a “shock judgment”. This was shocking particularly for the national and international scientific community; in many case the press reported comments which link this judgment to the story of Galileo: six years in prison for the Commission of scientists.

Emphasizing the dimension of scientific communication, Ciccozzi elaborates upon one of the key themes of this story: a linguistic misunderstanding about the meaning of the intervention of the MRC. The author explores how those scientists in that meeting and in the previous communications kept telling the citizens of L’Aquila to remain calm: by saying that nobody is able to scientifically predict earthquakes, discrediting any other technical analysis that could go in other directions, the commissioners reassured citizens, and the result was that after the meeting with the MRC everyone in the city of L’Aquila was equivocally talking about “non-alarm”. The contradictions of this communication produced, in many people, a subordination of their own memory and cultural-instinctive behavior in an earthquake to the reassuring idea that was transmitted by ‘scientists’, according to which those continuous quakes could just represent the way in which the earthquake was dissipating. The author expands on the meaning of “non-alarm”, explaining in this way why the diagnosis of the MRC was not at all a “failure to alarm” but a “disastrous reassurance”. The conclusions which lead his analysis are constructed on the idea that the advice of the MRC was based on two main themes. On the one hand, the author underlines the difference be-

tween the non-alarm and reassurance provided by this institution of power directly to the citizens of L'Aquila. Articulating the "word of science", in the final days of the earthquake authoritative scientists came, delivered and reaffirmed a version that they had already started to communicate to the population during the intensification of the quakes in the weeks before. The theory of power was that the tremors should not be understood as the possible prelude to an earthquake, but as its antidote.

On the other hand, he focuses on the explanation of how these reassurances communicated by scientists led to a change in the behavior of the citizenry, or rather part of it. The author here uses a theory of social psychology, the social representations of Serge Moscovici. The element of this theory that Ciccozzi particularly stresses is the fact that in "advanced" societies people base their behavior on models of reality that are predominantly predetermined by scientific institutions. Science, in its social uses and functions, provides common sense categories that influence the actual behavior of people. The analysis of Ciccozzi intends to show that the MRC did not alter the ability to judge or act of citizens, but it did determine a collective interpretation that this type of phenomenon (seismic swarm) was 'positive': there was both the construction of a reassuring social imaginary and the persuasion of citizens through the ambivalence of that scientific communication. In effect, in the confusion that the MRC generated, superimposing its assessment and management of the risk of earthquake on the prediction of this event, from this mistake, many people, despite the quakes of the days before and that night, thought that they could safely stay at home. And this reduction in the perception of risk, together with the vulnerability of some buildings, determined the loss of human lives.

After that night, it is not only the buildings but also the "word of science" that has not stood up to the earthquake. From this perspective, this anthropological analysis can be defined partly as a critique of bad science, or more precisely, it is specifically against the quackery and amateurism that pollute the world of science. Furthermore, it shows the irreducible normative dimension of 'science', and, representing also the singularities and some peculiarities of the Italian relationships between scientific and political institutions, Ciccozzi's writing makes visible that form of scientific authority held up through acquisitions of power from politics. The judgment – which is a sentence for negligence – has, in this sense, the value of condemning these forms of the reciprocal admixture of power, strengthening rather an idea of science and politics as independent and autonomous constitutional authorities. In any case, as in that of the earthquake of L'Aquila, in contemporary capitalist democracies, between the divisions and cracks of modernity, the reality is closer to the situation of power acquisition from politics to science, from science to politics, reciprocally, and from political and scientific institutions to economic enterprises and interests. It is a tangled relational process of power, working through the co-production of that normative knowledge which ultimately

finds legitimation in the “word of science”, in the name of the maintenance of social order, especially in emergencies, risks, dangers and crises. But when the events contradict this word, memories, fears, old angers re-surface and the conflict of subjected knowledges emerges as an open crack in the damaged walls of the rationalized structures of modernity. Through the cracks, the day after the earthquake, between the dust and the rubble, something that was already happening in the days and weeks before the 6th April became clearer: in that period L’Aquila was in fact turned into a sort of laboratory of public fear and reassurance, that was produced by the degeneration of the social function of scientific institutions. The ‘bio-political’ experiment was to intervene through a “media operation” (as the ex-head of Italian Civil Protection, Guido Bertolaso put it) on a population weakened by weeks of earthquake, with the goal not to discuss, make evaluation, research information: the aim was to reassure people, persuading them that there would not be an earthquake. This is the accusation of Ciccozzi against that “word of science” which provokes death and pain with the negligence and incompetence of power.

* * *

Mathieu Quet

Politiques du savoir: Sciences, technologies et participation dans les années 1968 [Knowledge Politics: Science, Technology and Participation in the 1968s]

Paris, Editions des archives contemporaines, 2013, pp. xii+226

Francesca Musiani MINES ParisTech

When participatory mechanisms fail, it is because their promoters have taken for granted the founding elements of the very definition of participation – a reductionist view that ends up breaking against the wall of “reality” and complexity of today’s political processes. Using as an introductory example the spectacular failure of the 2009-2010 public cycles of discussions on nanotechnology organized by the French Commission for Public Debate (CNDP), this is how Mathieu Quet (researcher at the Parisian *Institut de la Recherche et du Développement* – IRD), introduces us to the central argument of his book, based on a PhD dissertation defended at the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* in 2009. The definition that the promoters of participatory mechanisms make of participation – often too narrow and reductive, if not outright incomplete or based on powerful assumptions – should be put on trial so as to highlight the plurality of organizational, social and political forms that constitute