Introduction

The protests that have shaken the world over the past three years - from Tunisia and the so-called Arab Spring to the uprisings in Turkey and Brazil - have spawned many debates about the role that digital media have played during these mobilizations, hence enlivening discussions on the complex relations between media and movements, and the controversial contributions of media to social change. This new cycle of contention has also brought to the fore questions on how media intersect with crucial aspects of social movements over time: patterns of participation, organizational structures, forms of protest, and visibility of protesters. While some authors have welcomed a new era of social media driven insurgencies, labeling these recent mobilizations as "Revolutions 2.0" (Cocco & Albagli, 2012), or "wiki revolutions" (Tapscott, 2011), these inquiries are not new in existing literature about media and social movements, although the many answers that scholars have given to these questions usually remain only partial.

Indeed, what is lacking is a comprehensive conceptual framework that recognizes the intricacy of interactions between media and movements. The difficulties in the development of such a framework can also be linked to the very fragmentation of social movement studies that are rooted in different fields – among which are sociology, anthropology, political sciences, psychology, and history – that seldom speak to each other (Roggeband & Klandermans, 2007). In the last years, scholars have attempted to bridge the gap between social movement studies and media studies toward a better understanding of this multi-faceted relationship (Bennett and Segerberg, 2013; Bimber, Flanigan and Stohl, 2005; Downing, 2001, 2008, 2010; Juris, 2008). In

line with this literature, our article tackles this fragmentation by addressing the relationship between media and social movements through the lens of concepts such as media practices, mediation, and mediatization. In doing this, we aim to elaborate a conceptual framework that, in contrast to short-term, instrumental and enthusiastic accounts on the role of media within mobilizations, is able to support further empirical analysis on how past and present social movements interact with the media at large. This, in turn, might increase scholarly knowledge about the actual impact of media technologies on activism, but more broadly also on structures and processes of social change. At the same time, our article also aims to offer some 'food for thought' to enhance activist's self-reflection on their own relationships with the media.

This article is structured as follows. First, we provide a critical literature review that summarizes the body of knowledge produced about media and social movements, underlining the main flaws and biases by which it is characterized. Second, we delineate a conceptual framework to better investigate the relationship between social movements and the media. We discuss our understanding of social movements as processes in which activists develop a variety of activities on a daily basis and according to different temporalities. We then consider three pivotal concepts in media studies – media practices, mediation, and mediatization – that can serve as analytical lenses that enable more encompassing and inclusive research on social movements and media. Third, we explore the potentials of our conceptual framework starting from some concrete examples drawn from secondary and primary sources about the Italian student movements in 1990 and in 2008. In the conclusion, we discuss how our conceptual framework might work as a useful analytical tool in overcoming the main flaws in scholarly literature about media and social movements.

A critical literature review: Biases in studying media and/in social movements

Early social movement studies, such as those adopting the collective behavior approach, gave attention to communication processes, but almost exclusively under the lens of the manipulation of the masses by leaders and dictators (Gusfield, 1994). In the early versions of the political process model, authors mentioned that the presence of a "communication network or infrastructure" (McAdam, 1982, pp. 46–47) in social movements was also crucial in determining the patterns of diffusion of the movement itself. Moreover, social movement scholars frequently evoked the importance of communication – and media – when theorizing about social movements: when, for instance, social movements are said to "take place as conversations" in which activists interact with "multiple audiences" (Tilly 2002, p. 89); or when collective identities in social movements are said to require a continuous act of recognizing and being recognized that implies a conspicuous passage of information between social movement actors and the environment in which they act (Melucci, 1996). Overall, however, traditional approaches to social movements only pay tangential attention to communication and media: works rooted in resource mobilization theories, political process approaches, and new social movement theories often evoke media, but never systematically address their role in mobilizations (Downing 2001, 2008; Gusfield 1994; Lievrouw, 2011; Van de Donk, Loader, Nixon, & Rucht, 2004). In particular, literature suffers from two main biases: the one-medium bias and the technological-fascination bias.

With regard to the one-medium bias, we refer to the persistence in prioritizing the analysis of one medium or platform over the others, also with regard to the differentiation concerning the type of content – mainstream vs. alternative – vehiculated through the medium or platform. For instance, some scholars, focus primarily on how mainstream media covers social movements and has an influence on them (see among others Amenta, Garrity Garner, Tierney, Yerena & Eliott, 2012; Kutz-Flamenbaum, Staggenborg & Duncan, 2012; Rohlinger, Kail,

Taylor & Conn 2012; Sobieraj, 2011), often behaving as powerful institutions supporting the dominant discourses of the elite in power. In his seminal work on the Students for a Democratic Societies, Gitlin (1980) also worked on mainstream media, going beyond the analysis of media coverage by looking at how movements and media interacted with each other over a decade. Other scholars focus on media produced by social movement actors – often conceptualized as "social movement media" (Downing, 2010), but also labeled "alternative media" (Atton, 2002; Couldry & Curran, 2003) and "citizens' media" (Rodriguez, 2001). As a result of the one-medium bias literature remains fragmented, even when social movement scholars address media-related issues. Studies on mainstream media and alternative media, indeed, usually do not speak to each other, and there have been only seldom attempts to look at the role of both mainstream and alternative media during the same episode of contention or for the same social movement actor. A valuable example of such attempts is Sreberny and Mohammadi's (1994) research on communication processes during the 1979 Iranian revolution, in which the authors focus on the mass media system in Iran, but also on what they name "small media", like fax machines and tape cassettes, that had a pivotal role in creating an oppositional public sphere able to support political participation. Despite some early works on past mobilizations and some more recent exceptions (Padovani, 2013), overall the fragmentation linked to the one-medium bias still remains a trait of literature dealing with media and social movements. Something similar happens in the case of research focusing on specific media technologies. As far as the mainstream media literature is concerned, scholars have addressed the radio (Roscigno & Danaher, 2004), the television (McLeod & Detenber, 1999) or the press (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993; Kielbowicz & Scherer, 1986) but seldom the interaction between movements and several forms of media. The one-medium bias also applies to the growing literature addressing specific (digital) technological platforms in social movements. For instance, there are authors investigating websites (Stein,

2009; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2002) or mailing lists (Kavada, 2010; Wall, 2007), and others who look at bulletin boards (Nip, 2004) and online groups (Fung, 2002; Ayres, 1999). More recently, attention has shifted to the use of blogs (Cammaerts, 2008; Kahn & Kellner, 2004) and social networking platforms such as Facebook (Harlow, 2012), and Twitter (Penney and Dadas 2014; Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012). However, restricting the focus to only one of the many online technological manifestations of social movements can risk overlooking important aspects such as the role and evolution of different platforms within a movement and the connections between multiple technologies, actors, and their practices.

With regard to the technological-fascination bias, we refer to the tendency of treating the latest technological platform as a fetish when considering social movements. Although the disciplinary roots of social movement studies are well anchored in the work of historians, when it comes to research on media and social movements, literature appears diachronically fragmented due to the absence of a historical perspective on the development of the media/movement relation (Monterde & Postill, 2013; Padovani, 2013; Scalmer, 2013). Overall, this leads to focus on the very latest technological supports, such as Internet applications and Web platforms, often neglecting the relevance that prior technological supports had and continue to have in social movements. The technological-fascination bias can also lead scholars to collapse the complexity of social movement practices in the use of technologies during mobilizations and to overestimate the role played by the media. For instance, in the case of the Zapatista movement, some scholars (Bob, 2005; Hellman, 2000; Pitman, 2007) have convincingly shown the importance that usually neglected media, such as local radios and the press (such as the Mexican newspaper *La Jornada*), played in the insurrection, even if the internet seems to have attracted all the scholars' attention at first. The global justice movement represents another example, in that it has been conceived as "mediated mobilization", defined as a genre of alternative and activist media projects (Lievrouw,

2011). In this case, one relevant aspect of the global justice movement – that is activists'
engagements with digital media practices – becomes synonymous with the global justice
movement *in itself*. While defining the whole global justice movement through one of its aspects
can be an effective rhetorical artifice to point out the undeniable innovations that it was able to
bring about at the level of media appropriations, it risks overshadowing other relevant features of
the transnational wave of contention. For instance, the fact that within the global justice
movement, the coexistence of specific movement political cultures and identities contributed to
the development of different and sometimes contrasting approaches to communication
technologies (Kavada, 2013).

These two biases show that literature on media and social movements is not only quite
fragmented, but also in need of more encompassing analytical concepts that are able to grasp the
multiple dimensions that characterize the interaction between activists and the media they use in
different moments and for different purposes in the context of protest politics.

How social movements and media interplay: Toward a broad conceptual framework

In this section, we argue that the adoption of a pragmatic approach might help scholars to better
understand and analyze the complex and intricate empirical phenomena that characterize the
interactions between activists and media at large. As can be seen in the figure below, we
introduce six main concepts in our conceptual framework - three social movement related
concepts and three media related concepts - which we further discuss in the three sub-sections
below.

Figure 1 - A conceptual framework to study social movements and the media

Temporality, actors and actions in social movements

Temporality in social movements

Social movements are neither concrete objects, such as a poster calling for a demonstration, nor palpable subjects, such as an association composed of members, and located in offices. They are, instead, ongoing and evolving processes (see among others, Blee, 2012; della Porta & Diani, 2006;Melucci, 1996; McAdam, 1982) that interface with societies at the political, cultural, economic and, of course, social level. The time dimension is hence crucial to understand social movements: as processes, they follow patterns of transformations as the weeks, months, years, and sometimes even the decades, go by. As Gitlin shows in his research on the Students for a Democratic Societies in the 1960s and the 1970s, adopting a diachronic perspective is important to see the "grammar of interaction" (Gitlin 1980, p. 22) at work, which explains "the terms with which [movement and media] would recognize and work on the other" over time.

We propose to tackle three specific temporalities characterizing social movements. First, short-term temporality in which "punctuated events" (McAdam & Sewell 2001) during a mobilization might function as crucial transformative moments for social movements. Second, medium-term temporality according to which social movements develop in "cycles" (Tarrow, 1998), "waves" (Koopmans, 2004) and "tides" (Beissinger, 2002). While cycles, waves and tides are associated with stages of mobilization, in which there are intense protests on the side of activists, there are also moments in which activists do not organize contentious collective action. During these stages of latency, social and political actors that participated in protests engage in daily practices of resistance, focused on the continuation of interactions among activists and the circulation of information about contentious issues, that will then render the emergence and diffusion of other stages of mobilization possible (Melucci, 1989). Third, long-term temporality

that refers to "cultural epochs of contention" (McAdam & Sewell 2001) in which certain templates for collective action are available to protesters who select their contentious performances within specific "repertoires of contention" (Tilly 1978, 1995).

Actors in social movements

Social movement processes see the joint participation of several social movement actors: we consider three different societal levels - micro, meso and macro - that allow us to examine the different subjects that sustain social movement processes. At the micro level we find individual activists. Social movement scholars usually focus on individual activists when they want to investigate their motivations, values and beliefs (Klandermans 1997, Stryker, Owens & White 2000). However, the role of individual participation received renewed attention due to the most recent wave of mobilization - that included the uprisings in the MENA region, the so-called Indignados protests in Spain and Greece, and the Occupy Wall Street mobilization - in which crowd-enabled protest networks (Bennett, Segerberg & Walker 2014) heavily relied on the participation of individuals not connected with social movement organizations. The rise of information and communication technologies, indeed, rendered less central than in the past, collective actors in the organization of mobilizations (Earl & Kimport, 2011; Mercea, 2012).

That said, collective formations in which some individuals come together and interact on a rather stable basis did not disappear: they are not only relevant when considering past mobilizations, but they continue to have a role in contemporary ones and might be positioned at the meso level of social movement processes. The main trait that differentiates collective social movement actors is their organizational structures, which influence the way in which they act (Tilly, 1978, p. 7) and refers to how social movement actors actually work. Social movement groups usually lack formal hierarchies, adopt decision-making processes based on participation,

and value the first-person commitment of activists, often because they frequently lack material resources such as money. Their daily life, moreover, is often regulated through loose organizational routines (Blee, 2012; Della Porta & Diani, 2006). On the contrary, stricter organizational routines regulate the daily life of social movement organizations, which tend to have formal hierarchies, employ decision-making processes based on delegation, and value many forms of material support for the cause (e.g., donations) (Della Porta & Diani, 2006). Social movement organizations and/or social movement groups frequently act together, coordinating their efforts to engage in contentious collective actions aimed at shared objectives. When this happens, social movement actors shift toward a different level of complexity. Again, depending on the organizational structure, scholars speak of social movement networks and social movement coalitions (Smith, Chatfield & Pagnucco, 1997): the former being characterized by loose organizational routines, informal communication channels, and decentralized decision-making processes (Smith, Chatfield & Pagnucco, 1997) and the latter resting on more structured organizational routines, formal communication channels, and centralized decision-making processes.

Finally, from a macro-level perspective, we can then group collective social movement actors according to their political culture able to shape mobilizations and, of course, the relationship between activists and media. Social movements are not only diachronically differentiated, with their political culture often evolving over time: they also vary according to their constituencies, targets and objectives. In other words, there might be a number of "social movement families" (della Porta & Rucht 1995, 233) active in the same country and in the same period of time, as it emerges from the work of Kavada (2009, 2013) on the different communication cultures within the social movement network of the European Social Forum in the early 2000s.

Actions in social movements

Be they individual or collective, social movement actors engage in different undertakings that render mobilizations possible, and sustain them in different ways. Before, during and after a protest event occurs, activists perform many actions, frequently in a coordinated manner, whose outcome becomes visible also outside the social movement milieu once a mobilization occurs. We draw on practice theories (Bräuchler & Postill, 2010; Reckwitz, 2002, Schatzki, 2001) to look at social movements from the point of view of specific ensembles of social practices performed at the micro level of social movement processes. Social practices are not just single interactions, but rather an array of different elements including "forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250). Translated into the social movement realm, we can therefore conceive social practices as a set of bodily performances, mental frameworks, uses of objects, some degree of self-reflection and also emotions and motivations that sustain interactions among activists, and between activists and other social actors external to the social movement milieu in the accomplishment of different tasks related to mobilizations. We think that a focus on social practices might be a useful starting point to further discuss how media intertwine with social movements. However, social movement literature seldom takes into consideration social practices alone in mobilizations, looking instead at more complex mechanisms and processes that rest on social practices (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007; Tilly, 2008a). Moving at the meso-level, mechanisms might be seen as more complex arrays of social practices that characterize social movements and are able to alter some of their dimensions on a medium-term basis. Mechanisms, in turn, combine in processes (Tilly & Tarrow 2007) that might also develop along a long span of time influencing the macro level of contentious

collective action.

Existing literature focuses on various dimensions that help us to group social practices, mechanisms, and processes into four categories oriented toward: participation, organization, protest and symbolic activities. Participation practices, mechanisms, and processes include those social practices through which social movement actors are able to involve other individuals in the daily projects of activists during stages of latency, spreading their concerns and protests in order to attract other social movement actors in the early stages of mobilization, and finally attracting protest participants in demonstrations, strikes, petitions and the like during the height of mobilizations. Organization practices, mechanisms, and processes include those social practices through which activists are able to plan meetings, arrange protests, and coordinate actions. They sustain the very existence of social movement actors during the latency stages and allow the occurrence of protests during mobilization stages. Protest practices, mechanisms, and processes entail the performance of public protests. Although the preferences for specific forms of protests usually go back in stages of latency, in which organization practices, mechanisms, and processes pave the road to public collective action, it is during stages of mobilization that social movement actors bring to life contentious collective action that render them visible to the general public and to the political realm. Finally, symbolic practices, mechanisms, and processes include those social practices linked to the development of discourses, meanings and interpretations about contentious issues and protests.

Disentangling the media: Media practices, mediation processes, and mediatization

Media practices

The focus on media practices allows us to see media at work in a number of contexts and

situations, and - more importantly – to understand how media practices arrange, combine, and more generally intersect with other social practices (Couldry, 2004, 2012). We hence suggest to focus on 'activist media practices' (Author, 2012), defined as routinized and creative social practices in which activists engage and which include, first, interactions with media objects – such as mobile phones, laptops, pieces of paper – through which activists can generate and/or appropriate media messages, therefore acting either as media producers or media consumers; and, second, interactions with media subjects – such as journalists, public relations managers, but also activist media practitioners – who are connected to the media realm.

This definition keeps together two relevant meanings that are commonly assigned to the term media: the twofold nature of media as both objects and messages (Silverstone, 1994), but also the existence of media people that produce media messages on a regular basis from within specific media organizations and institutions. When referring to media objects, the emphasis is on media as technological supports and devices that surround people in their daily lives. When referring to media people, the emphasis is on the existence of individuals that interact with the media not simply because they are audiences of media messages, but because they produce media messages on a systematic and continuous basis, like media professionals working as journalists or practitioners, working on a voluntary basis.

In his review of the limitations of the media practice approach, Postill (2010) points out that, while effective for the study of media in everyday life, media and the body, and media production, this approach is not particularly helpful when investigating political processes and global media events. Agreeing with Postill on the limitations of the approach, below we introduce two other concepts - mediation processes and mediatization - that can integrate media practices, in order to account for broader processes in relation to media and movements.

Mediation processes

Mediation can be defined as a social process in which media supports the flow of discourses, meanings, and interpretations in societies (Couldry, 2008; Silverstone, 2002). Mediation is an encompassing concept that brings together a number of activist media practices, paying attention to the flow of media productions, media circulation, media interpretation and media recirculation (Couldry, 2004, 2008) that supports and surrounds social movements. The concept of mediation has been central in the Latin-American tradition, especially since the publication of the pivotal work of Jesús Martín-Barbero (1987), who urged to move 'from media to mediations", i.e. from functionalist media-centered analyses to the exploration of everyday practices of media appropriation through which social actors' enact resistance and resilience to domination and hegemony. In doing this, Martín-Barbero restores the agency of concrete social actors participating in the reception process intended as a process of production and exchange of multiple meanings. At the same time, we can conceive mediation as a circular and situated process that intertwines with a number of social activities (Couldry, 2008), including social movement activities. Communication supported through mediation is a means – activists use the media to communicate a message through which they achieve something – but also an end – activists use the media and in doing so they constitute flows of media production, circulation, interpretation and recirculation (Martín-Barbero, 2006). In this sense, media are a social, cultural, and even political and economical situated infrastructure that intertwines with the constitution of political subjects, In addition, mediation processes are circular: they consist of social practices that do not exhaust the simple use of media technologies and/or the production of media messages. On the contrary, mediation also implies the reconfiguration of media technologies and the remediation of media meanings (Lievrouw, 2011). Through reconfiguration, activists appropriate and adapt media technologies for their own purposes, while through remediation

social movement actors create new meanings starting from already existing cultural works and media products (Lievrouw, 2011).

Mediation can thus help us to understand the extent to which activist media practices - considered as a composite whole - allow social movement actors to engage with the reconfiguration and remediation of media technologies and meanings, and act according to patterns of appropriation and subversion, with regard to both mainstream and alternative media, digital and analogue technologies.

Mediatization

In the last few years, the importance of the concept of mediatization has grown exponentially within media studies. According to the institutionalist tradition, the term is used to denote adaptation of different social fields or systems of the "media logic" (Altheide & Snow, 1979) For this tradition, the difference between the concept of mediation and that of mediatization is that the former "describes the concrete act of communication by means of a medium in a specific social context", while the latter "refers to a more long-lasting process, whereby social and cultural institutions and modes of interaction are changed as a consequence of the growth of the media's influence" (Hjarvard, 2008, p. 114). Thus, while mediation also considers situations where the media do not affect social institutions, mediatization would focus only on processes where social and cultural institutions are modified by media influence. However, according to the social-constructivist tradition, the concept of mediatization goes beyond that of "media logic" and refers to the process of communicative construction of socio-cultural reality, exploring the role of multiple media inside that process (Hepp 2012, 2013; Krotz, 2009).

Recently the two traditions have converged and a basic understanding of mediatization has emerged as "a concept used to analyze critically the interrelation between changes in media

and communications on the one hand, and changes in culture and society on the other" (Couldry & Hepp, 2013, p. 197). Mediatization can be conceived as a long-term process (Hepp, 2012; Krotz, 2009), a category designed to describe change and to grasp how "the overall consequences of multiple processes of mediation have changed with the emergence of different kinds of media" (Couldry & Hepp, 2013, p. 197), with the ability to capture "long-term interrelation processes between media change on the one hand and social and cultural change on the other" (Hepp, Hjarvard & Lundby, 2010, p. 223). Thus, mediatization can be particularly useful to look at the interplay between media and social movement processes through a cross-time perspective, in order to grasp the emergence of specific combinations of "discursive, media and organizational structures" (Steinberg, 2004, p.125) in social movements. Indeed, just like social processes in general, the use of media within and around social movements is characterized by "temporal and spatial interdependencies" (Tilly, 2008b, p. 134) that should be considered in order to understand how social movements evolve over time.

Applying the conceptual framework: Evidence from Italian student movements

So far we outlined the building blocks of our conceptual framework, which we show at work in what follows with reference to the Italian student movement in 1990 and in 2008. In January 1990, students from all over the country occupied their universities demanding the dismissal of the proposed law about the autonomy of public universities: the so-called "Pantera" movement was born. The protest, having spread to different Italian cities, caused the students to use a new means of communication to keep in contact: the fax machines in the administration offices of the occupied faculties. Bypassing the mainstream media coverage of the protests, via fax they were able to spread information about local initiatives almost instantaneously. In the two months of intense mobilization, the rapid exchange of decisions and resolutions of local assemblies, as well

as the quick diffusion of cartoons and jokes about the protests, created stable networks of relationships among activists at a national level. In November 2008, Italian university students in Rome occupied a number of faculties of their university in order to fight against severe financial cuts to the budgets of public universities. The occupation began after many weeks of mobilizations in a number of Italian cities and led to faculties being occupied all over the country. Internet platforms created by students of the occupied faculties flourished as the mobilization spread, and proved to be valid allies of the so-called "Onda Anomala" movement. Activists relied on "traditional" mailing lists and on both commercial and autonomous platforms to connect people, comb blogs, websites, Web radios, Web TVs, and social media in a variable socio-technical geometry.

Taken together, these two sketches show how protesters used different media devices, from fax machines to Internet platforms, as means of communication within and beyond the movement. Our aim in this section is not to offer an extensive reconstruction of the interactions between the Italian student movement and the media at large. Rather, we seek to illustrate the potentials of our conceptual framework through concrete examples. The data that we use in this section come both from secondary sources, in the case of the student movement in the 1990s, and primary sources with regard to the student movement in 2008, that was at the center of an empirical investigation of Author (2011): a multimodal ethnography comprised of 17 semi-structured interviews, 5 months of participant observation (October 2008 to February 2009) and media texts analysis.

The starting point to reconstruct interactions between social movements and the media is to look at the wide range of media practices that activists develop during specific moments in protests. With regard to the student movement in 2008, individual activists performed a wide array of media practices when mobilizations reached their heights and university students

occupied their faculties to oppose the severe financial cuts proposed by the government in charge. Participant observation carried out during protests in Bologna, a middle-size university town in central Italy, showed that students were indeed including media during the most intense moments of protest: they created and maintained *ad hoc* blogs to speak about the direct actions they engaged in on a daily basis; posted additional information on already existing blogs and forums in which they explained the reasons of their protests; covered protests from their own point of view, producing reports and accounts to be published in alternative informational websites; employed pre-existing and established new ways to share practical information about local and national assemblies as well as news about protest actions that were taking places in other Italian cities; created collective profiles on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube so that groups, pages, accounts, and channels quickly became other platforms on which to share information about protests, attempting to involve more and more students in the mobilization. At the same time, individuals - be they experienced activists or students sympathizers of protests - contributed to the student movement through their personal profiles on Facebook liking, commenting and sharing media contents about protests within social media platforms to the extent that mainstream media began to label the student mobilization as a protest supported through Facebook. Moreover, through participant observation and interviews, it was possible to gather information about media practices that were oriented towards other types of media technologies and organizations. The student movement in Bologna, as well as in other Italian cities, organized press conferences where, in an attempt to partially control the mass media coverage on the mobilization, mainstream journalists were invited and provided with first hand information. Many forms of alternative media were also used to increase the awareness of students who were not involved in protests: the porticoed streets of the city center were plastered with posters and flyers announcing forthcoming demonstrations and other contentious performances.

Describing the variety of activist media practices that social movement actors perform during specific moments in mobilizations is a relevant first step in the analysis of interactions between social movements and media. Though, it is possible to go a step forward and construct a taxonomy that would take into consideration not only the different media technologies and organizations with which activists interact, but also the social practices that intertwine with them. Mailing lists, for instance, were mainly used to spread practical information about forthcoming protest events and this, in turn, was relevant in the coordination and organization of national demonstrations: calls for actions were commented on and discussed in such mailing lists, continuing a dialogue among activists that also took place in local assemblies and meetings. Facebook groups and pages, instead, were more linked to the diffusion of information about mobilizations well beyond activists circles, as pictures, videos and other visual materials could travel quickly from one circle of friends to another thus, also reaching individuals who were not originally involved in the student mobilization. In this sense, social media platforms functioned as brokers in the diffusion of ideas related to the student protests having the potential to increase the participation rate in the mobilization. Comparing how diverse activist media practices functioned with regard to participation, organization, protest and symbolic social practices that intertwine within students' mobilizations in 2008 can lead to a more nuanced understanding of the role that different media technologies and organizations had within the student movement.

At the same time, however, our conceptual framework suggests that the analysis of activists' media practices represents a starting point in the understanding of broader mediation processes within social movements. Contrasting and comparing activist media practices at work during specific moments in mobilizations - a massive demonstration, for instance, or a peculiar direct action - shift the analytical glance at the meso-level of social movement actors and, also, help focus attention on the medium-term temporality of protests. Thus, from the analysis of this

wide array of media practices, we can move to the recognition of broader mediation processes within multiple groups, in this case student collectives, observing and comparing the combinations, articulations and flows of multiple communication technologies in the continuum between mainstream and alternative media. In the case of the student movement that developed in 2008, we see that activists were able to act, negotiate and engage with the media on their own terms. For instance, while some Italian newspapers' articles celebrated the fundamental role that Facebook played for the organization of the movement, a more nuanced exploration based on our framework can help us understand that social media were used mainly for processes of information diffusion, and that other cultural and political practices were of more pivotal importance within the activities of student activists. Student collectives took advantage of the wide array of available communication technologies using blogs and social media mainly as unidirectional platforms of information diffusion, because of issues related to privacy, surveillance and commercialization, while at the same time they intensively used mailing lists as a medium of internal coordination. These mailing lists were often hosted on alternative/autonomous servers such as A/I (Autistici/Inventati). This case represents a clear illustration of reconfiguration, one of the constituent processes of mediation, intended as "the ongoing process by which people adapt, reinvent, reorganize, or rebuild media technologies as needed to suit their various purpose or interest" (Lievrouw, 2011, p. 216). Other processes of reconfiguration and remediation within the Onda Anomala movement included the hacking of the official website of the Italian Ministry of Education, various Google-bombing actions, and the symbolic occupation of the Facebook account of Mariastella Gelmini, the Minister of Education (Bazzichelli, Borrelli & Caronia, 2009). Our conceptual framework can also shed light on the dynamics of mediation between digital (e.g., blogs, mailing lists, social media, mobile messages) and analogue media (e.g., flyers, gazettes, fanzines), evaluating the importance of students'

alternative media practices within more complex mediation processes. This is in line with recent studies that have studied the intersections and changing dynamics between old and emergent communication technologies in the realm of activism (Dunbar-Hester, 2009; Funke & Wolfson, 2013).

We can then move to the exploration of broader processes that also allow us to compare the student movement of 1990 with the one that emerged in 2008. Here, the concept of mediatization allows us to see to what extent mediation processes have changed over time and if media have come to play an increasing role in protest and mobilizations. The Italian student movement that emerged in 1990 was dramatically different from the one that developed in 2008. The former had stronger linkages with the political culture of radical left-wing social movements that took place late in the 1970s, with a strong orientation toward the production of independent communication and a parallel diffidence towards mainstream journalists. The latter grew at the end of a decade in which the global justice movement spread in Italy, bringing with it a more pragmatic approach toward the media: although independent media had an important role in the global justice movement, activists also began to adapt their political actions to the logic of mainstream media. This attitude was further developed in 2008: despite the massive use of digital media and Web platforms to support their protests, students participating in the "Onda Anomala" also maintained good relationships with mainstream journalists. Moreover, we can observe that the Pantera movement of the 1990s used fax machines to exchange information across the different cities in which protests were organized not only to reinforce the sense of belonging to the same national mobilization, but also in order to attract the attention of the mainstream media who were covering the protests because of the novel use of fax machines by activists. In this case, we can appreciate a change in the media tactics of the student movement in order to be recognized by the media system. Activists of the 2008 movement could instead rely on a broader

media ecology that, as we saw, offered plenty of alternatives for multiple activities and possible media recombinations that students of the early 1990s could not even imagine. In this case, mediatization is able to grasp changes that occurred in the media on one side and the changes at the societal and cultural level of social movements on the other. These reflections could be expanded to take into account and compare cultural epochs of movements and the changing media landscapes through decades and centuries.

Discussion and conclusions

According to Gitlin (1980) interactions between activists and media might be considered a "dance" between two social (and political) actors whose interactions shape, to some extent, the way in which both will act in the near future. The conceptual framework we presented in this article goes even more in depth: it suggests to move beyond a conception of media as mere social (and political) actors by looking at media also as technologies that might be appropriated and transformed by activists in the course of such a dance at three different levels. In other words, and building further on Gitlin's dance metaphor (1980), our conceptual framework would help to investigate the media practices that social movement actors developed before, during and after their mobilizations, hence highlighting the 'dance steps' involved in the media-movement dance. Additionally, our discussion also offers some insights into how to look at the more general media-movement 'dance' when looking at it from the perspective of social movement actions and how they interlace with mediation processes. Finally, we also propose to go a step further and look at the broader 'dance style' that characterize the media-movement dance in a certain period of time, hence considering the stages in which social movements happen to be, as well as the encompassing mediatization forms that are at work in that very historic moment.

The model we presented above should be further developed, also through additional

empirical research. For instance, it is clear that our conceptual framework involves some mutual interactions among its building blocks; these are not isolated from one another, as we point out through the connections drawn in Figure 1 above and, also, from the application of our conceptual framework to the concrete examples of the student movements in 1990 and 2008. Further empirical research would certainly foster a better understanding of the dynamic interactions between the different concepts and the empirical phenomena to which they refer. Nevertheless, the discussion of its building blocks and the examples provided already constitute a step to go beyond the main flaws in literature focusing on media and social movements.

First, the conceptual framework's reliance on three different aspects of social movements - their temporality, actors, and actions - is able to avoid the traps of the technological-fascination bias. When looking at social movements from the viewpoint of their temporal dimension, the framework is easily rendered to avoid the trap of focusing on the latest technological platform because it introduces a diachronic perspective on media practices and mediation in movements. Second, having a focus on media practices, mediation, and mediatization – rather than on specific categories of media devices, organizations and/or people – the conceptual framework can contribute to overcoming the 'one-medium bias' by unveiling how social movement actors have employed different types of media at the same time, both in the past and in present time. Third, the introduction of the concept of mediatization may represent the missing theoretical lens that various media scholars, interested in exploring processual changes in movements and the media (Padovani, 2013; Postill, 2012; Scalmer, 2013), were looking for in order to diachronically investigate these long-term changes and to understand to what extent social movements have become more or less mediatized over time, for what reasons, and with what consequences. We think that the proposed framework provides a necessary counterbalance to recent myopic, instrumental accounts that strip revolts from their historical contexts and reduce the complexity

of multiple societal processes to the revolutionary force of social media (Rodríguez, Ferron & Shamas, 2014). The multi-faceted communication processes that characterize present and future mobilizations across the world requires conceptual frameworks able to impart the interconnectedness of the different elements on which media practices rest when it comes to social movements. But also past mobilizations, and the much needed comparisons between the role of media in newest and older protests, might be read once again from a communication perspective looking at the various level at which media and movements interact.

Finally, as we pointed out in the introduction, the concepts we proposed in this article, and the discussion about how they intertwine in a consistent conceptual framework might be seen as relevant for activists as well. Not only as a means to foster self-reflection on how media are used during mobilizations, but also as starting material to envisage participatory action research with activists, with the ultimate aim of elaborating more effective strategies and tactics to deal with media technologies and outlets.

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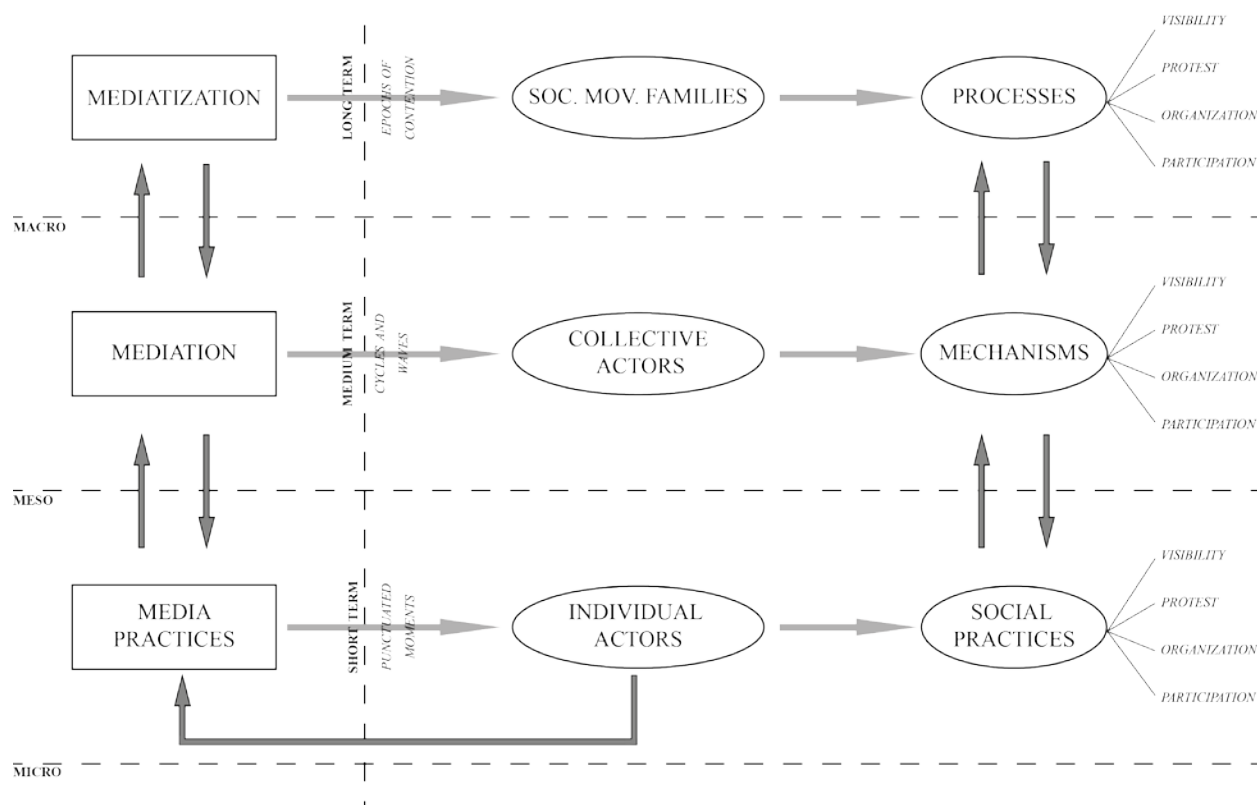[i]   See: http://www.autistici.org/en/index.html

Figure 1 - A conceptual framework to study social movements and the media