“The new capitalism” (Varaldo and Di Minin, 2009) is oriented towards a system based on the centrality of information and knowledge (knowledge-based economy) as distinct sources for the sustainable competitive advantage (Drucker, 1969; Rullani, 2004).

In recent years various models of internal and external knowledge sharing have been proposed. The traditional model of innovation is based on the traditional vertical integration model where internal R&D activities lead to internally developed radically new products that are then distributed by firms’ (Chesbrough,
2006: 1). But in the last decade the traditional model of innovation is being replaced by an alternative ‘open innovation’ model in which external sources of information and knowledge sharing outside the organization are seen as the key resources for the development and execution of innovation, in services and in manufacturing (Chesbrough, 2003; 2006). It thus comprises both outside-in and inside-out movements of technologies and ideas, also referred to as ‘technology acquisition’ and ‘technology exploitation’ (Lichtenthaler, 2008).

Moreover open innovation is defined as any system of innovation or production that relies on goal-oriented yet loosely coordinated participants, who interact to create a product (or service) of economic value, which they make available to contributors and non-contributors alike. This definition captures multiple instances, all joined by similar principles (Levine and Prietula, 2015).

These principles of open collaboration are current in the open source software project and show, how communities that are spread over the whole planet create knowledge intensive products for free.
The free encyclopaedia Wikipedia, a prime example of such collaboration, has come to match the quality of Encyclopaedia Britannica, which, after 244 years in circulation, has ceased printing.

Wikipedia represents an online community of more than 3,000,000 participants who voluntarily maintain the site, add content, and monitor the progress of the project. These volunteer online open projects aimed at creating new knowledge, are called online “communities of creation” (Rullani and Haefliger, 2013).

Some scholars as G. von Krogh, Spaeth, and Lakhani (2003) show that motives that drives people to contribute are a mixture of several aspects like reputation, personal learning and technology leadership. So an Open Source Software can be seen as based on a private-collective model (von Hippel and von Krogh, 2003).

The intriguing point is that even if Wikipedia was born as a “community of creation” characterized by an open and voluntary approach of the contributors, some forms of resistance to change are emerged and, at today, old-timers contributors has significant power,
enhanced by a growing body of formal rules, compared to newcomers contributors, which are deterred from participating (Jemielniak, 2014).

As other studies have highlighted the egalitarian ethos of open community is questioned by the necessary gatekeeping mechanisms of control that create inequality between incumbent members and newcomers (Shaw, 2012).

This contribution tries to highlight the mechanisms of resistance against a real “open” participation in a very specific environment that apparently does not hide personal and pecuniary interests such as the “communities of creation” (Rullani and Haefliger, 2013).

Some peculiar forms of power seem to emerge in this field; as O’Neil stated: “Means of domination are not limited to the crude use of blocking tools. In fact, such measures are less effective than more subtle means relying on superior project knowledge” (2011b).

The paper tries to identify the reasons why and how forms of power and resistance emerge in an apparently “seminanarchist decision making” (Jemielniak, 2014: 8) community, adopting an analysis of secondary data from a previous
ethnographical study about Wikipedia community (Jemielniak, 2014).

Keywords
Resistance, power, open collaboration, ethnography, open source software, Wikipedia.

Reference List


von Hippel, E. and von Krogh, G. (2003) Open source software and the “private-collective” in-